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Plan at a Glance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This chapter introduces Spokane County's strategy for planning for growth and protecting critical areas and natural resources for the next 20 years. It also provides a brief overview of the planning framework under which this plan was created, and how the plan will be implemented.

URBAN LAND USE ELEMENT

This element serves as the primary vehicle for implementing Spokane County's growth strategy within its urban growth areas. It includes an Urban Future Land Use Map. Goals and policies address community priorities, Growth Management Act requirements, open space, stormwater, and climate change, among other topics.

RURAL LAND USE ELEMENT

This element designates rural land uses outside of the urban growth areas and outside of designated agricultural, forest, and mineral lands. It includes a Rural Land Use Map.

HOUSING ELEMENT

This addresses the preservation, improvement, and development of housing and identifies land to accommodate different housing types. It also makes provisions for the existing and projected housing needs of all economic segments of the community.

TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

This element guides the development of the transportation system, including multi-modal transportation, to accommodate existing and future growth described in the Land Use Element.

CLIMATE ELEMENT

This is a new element that sets goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, strategies for adapting to climate change impacts, and mechanisms for implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. It also includes goals and policies to help reduce the risks of extreme weather events and shifting climate patterns with the aim of protecting people, infrastructure, economic assets, and the natural environment.

NATURAL RESOURCE LANDS ELEMENT

This element provides criteria for designation of agricultural, forest, and mineral lands of long-term commercial significance. Its goals and policies govern densities, uses, and limitations that are implemented through the County's development regulations. This implements the Growth Management Act's mandate to protect natural resources.

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NATURAL ENVIRONMENT ELEMENT

This element integrates several environmental topics, including critical areas, tree conservation, shorelines, surface water quality and quantity, and air quality and provides goals and policies intended to protect Spokane County's ecosystems.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

This element provides for the maintenance, preservation, and expansion of Spokane County's park system and helps to ensure a healthy recreational and open space environment.

CAPITAL FACILITIES AND UTILITIES ELEMENT

This element guides the maintenance, preservation, and expansion of county-owned or operated facilities and services, including public buildings, streets, parks, water, stormwater, and sewer. It also establishes levels of service for public facilities and utilities to implement the Land Use Element and guide investment over the planning period.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

This element establishes a new countywide economic development strategy consistent with the growth strategy and land use elements.

CULTURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT

This element contains descriptions and definitions of Spokane County's cultural resources, including historic properties, traditional cultural properties, and archaeological sites, as well as goals and policies that direct the county's protection of these resources.

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Message from the Board Chair

Placeholder, if desired

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CHAPTER 1

Executive Summary

Statement of Principles

Insert statement of principles - Scott

Introduction

This comprehensive plan was prepared by Spokane County in accordance with 36.70A RCW, the Growth Management Act (GMA), to plan for growth, prevent sprawl, and protect the natural environment and natural resources. Spokane County's Comprehensive Plan is the foundational policy document that guides growth and development over the next twenty (20) years after adoption, through 2046.

Funding for the Comprehensive Plan Update and new Climate Element was provided by the Washington State Legislature through the Periodic Update Grant (PUG) Climate Commitment Act (CCA), both administered through the Washington State Department of Commerce.

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Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan

This comprehensive plan is the county's foundational policy document. It plays a vital role in preparing for future growth and emerging challenges such as housing availability, traffic congestion, and economic stability. Through the comprehensive plan, the county sets goals and policies to guide future decision making on the following topics:

- Designation and use of land to accommodate twenty years of growth and change;
- Transportation, including improving multimodal connectivity and managing congestion on county streets and state highways;
- Parks and open space;
- Capital facilities and how the county will invest in facilities needed to serve growth;
- Ensuring that Spokane County's homes and businesses will be adequately served with utilities in accordance with the needs of urban and rural lands;
- Planning for and accommodating housing that is affordable and available to all economic segments of the community;
- Economic development;
- Cultural resources; and
- Climate change, including greenhouse gas emissions reduction and resiliency to climate change impacts.

County-Wide Planning Policies

The county-wide planning policies provide the framework for the planning processes of all the jurisdictions within the county, and a measure for ensuring coordination and consistency between Spokane County and the cities within the county. These policies address urban growth areas, housing allocations, and the twenty (20) year population forecast accommodation, means to promote contiguous and orderly development and provision of urban services, siting of county-wide and state-wide public capital facilities, county-wide transportation facilities and strategies, the need for and distribution of affordable housing for all economic segments, joint planning between the cities and county within the urban growth areas, economic development and employment, analysis of fiscal impact, and environmental quality. All the individual elements in the plan have been integrated along with the county-wide planning policies to ensure consistency.

Goals of 2026 Update

The goals of this update are to achieve compliance with the Growth Management Act, establish a regional framework for the economic sustainability & development of the greater county, create a new pattern of suburban development that encourages complete, well-connected neighborhoods rather than isolated, homogenous individual developments, and support & maintain the county's smaller

towns and cities as vibrant rural centers. The Plan must be updated every five years but no more frequently than once a year.

Community Engagement Summary

Community engagement during the preparation of the comprehensive plan periodic update entailed a range of outreach activities and efforts over more than two years. These included community workshops, letters to tribal entities, attendance at special events, postcard mailers, email notifications, website updates, presentations to organizations, responding to public comments, numerous Planning Commission meetings, and public hearings. See below for further details.

Insert summary of engagement activities

Urban Growth Areas

Under the GMA, counties must designate Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) where urban development is encouraged, while areas outside of UGAs are reserved for non-urban uses, protecting rural and resource lands. This ensures that urban services and infrastructure are provided where they are needed.

During the comprehensive plan periodic update, counties must review their UGAs to determine whether adjustments to UGA boundaries are needed to accommodate the next twenty years of growth.

A UGA may include territory that is located outside of a city only if such territory is already characterized by urban growth or is adjacent to a UGA or is designated as a new fully contained community.

Spokane County plans for and provides services to a range of UGAs across the county.

Plan Implementation and Monitoring

This section outlines implementation of the plan and monitoring procedures developed to measure progress in implementing the goals, objectives, and policies in Spokane County's 2046 comprehensive plan. This process also prepares the county for updates in the future. Annual continuous evaluation should ensure that the following items are addressed:

- Public participation in the process;
- Updating appropriate baseline data and measurable objectives to be accomplished in the first six-year period of the plan, and for the long-term period;
- Accomplishments in the first five-year period, describing the degree to which the goals, objectives, and policies have been successively reached;
- Obstacles or problems which resulted in the underachievement of goals, objectives, and policies; and
- A means of ensuring a continuous monitoring and evaluation of the plan during the five-year period.

Although adopted by ordinance, a comprehensive plan has traditionally been a policy document with implementation through land development regulations and other ordinances. However, the GMA encourages a variety of innovative implementation methods, regulatory and non-regulatory, which should be considered. The county will continue its public participation program following plan adoption in order to inform the entire community about the rationale and goals of the plan, as well as the changes that will take place in the county because of the plan's implementation.

Existing development regulations must be updated to be consistent with the plan. In reviewing regulations for consistency, the county should ensure that the development patterns suggested in the plan are encouraged. In addition to the new development regulations identified in the land use plan, other regulations (i.e., design review guidelines, drainage regulations) will be enacted as necessary to implement the land use plan during the annual review periods.

Planning is an ongoing process, and improved data or changing circumstances will require amendments to the comprehensive plan. In particular, the plan will be reviewed periodically as required by the GMA (every ten years) to ensure that the county's comprehensive plan, capital facilities planning, transportation planning and land available in the UGA are adequate to accommodate the projected 20-year employment and population growth. The 20-year growth projections shall be based on the Office of Financial Management's population estimates. The update will also address any specific concerns, clarify inconsistencies that were identified during the year, and review the adequacy of the adopted level of service standards. If necessary, adjustments will be made to revenues, land use classifications or level of service (LOS) standards to ensure that probable funding meets the projected needs of the county.

Comprehensive plan goals provide long-range guidance for the county. To maintain consistency and allow sufficient time for decisions to take effect, these general guidelines should not be changed more than every five years. However, as specific objectives or policies are achieved, revision of the plan in each element may be required to continue progress toward the overall goals.

Amendments to the comprehensive plan can be requested by the Board of County Commissioners, Planning Commission, or by any affected member of the public or property owner. However, the plan may not be amended more than once a year.

Consistency with State Growth Management Goals

The data used to develop this comprehensive plan is to the greatest extent possible the best available data. The county has coordinated its plan with those of adjacent jurisdictions as well as special districts and service providers to achieve compatibility and external consistency. In addition, the GMA requires consistency and/or compatibility with the planning goals set forth in the Act. The following are the goals from the Act (shown in italics), below which are listed the policies from the Spokane County Comprehensive Plan that support and/or are consistent with these goals.

Goals and Policies

The goals and policies set forth throughout the comprehensive plan are the result of months of drafting of proposed element revisions through the Planning Commission and numerous technical advisory committees.

It is envisioned that the adoption of some of these goals and policies will require several years to enact. Spokane County will actively work to implement these goals and policies within the next ten years until the next required major update of the comprehensive plan. These goals and policies will be incorporated into the County's code and capital facilities plan as necessary and annually as amendments to the comprehensive plan.

Growth Management Act Goals

GOAL GMA1: Urban Growth: *Encourage development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner.*

GOAL GMA2: Reduce Urban Sprawl: *Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development.*

GOAL GMA3: Transportation: *Encourage efficient multi-modal transportation systems that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and per capita vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and are based on regional priorities and are coordinated with comprehensive county and city plans.*

GOAL GMA4: Housing: *Plan for and accommodate housing 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.*

GOAL GMA 5: 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, and encourage growth, all within the capacities of the state's natural resources, public services, and public facilities.*

GOAL GMA6: 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.*

GOAL GMA7: Permits: *Applications for both state and local government permits should be processed in a timely and fair manner to ensure predictability.*

GOAL GMA8: Natural Resource Industries: *Maintain and enhance natural and resource-based industries, including productive timber, agricultural, and fisheries industries.*

GOAL GMA9: Open Space and Recreation: *Retain open space and green space, enhance recreational opportunities, enhance fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop parks and recreation facilities.*

GOAL GMA10: Environment: *Protect and enhance the environment and enhance the state's high quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water.*

GOAL GMA11: Citizen Participation and Coordination: *Encourage the involvement of citizens in the planning process, including the participation of vulnerable populations and overburdened communities, and ensure coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts.*

GOAL GMA12: 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.*

GOAL GMA13: Historic Preservation: *Identify and encourage the preservation of lands, sites, and structures that have historical or archaeological significance.*

GOAL GMA14: Climate Change and Resiliency: *Ensure that comprehensive plans, development regulations, and regional policies, plans, and strategies under RCW 36.70A.210 and chapter 47.80 RCW adapt and mitigate the effects of a changing climate; support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and per capita vehicle miles traveled; prepare for climate impact scenarios; foster resiliency to climate impacts and natural hazards; protect and enhance environmental, economic, and human health and safety; and advance environmental justice.*

Goal GMA15: Shorelines of the State. For shorelines of the state, the goals and policies of the Shoreline Management Act as set forth in RCW 90.58.02, along with the goals and policies adopted in the 2021 Shoreline Master Program (SMP) shall be considered an element of the county's comprehensive plan.

Refer to the Spokane County Shoreline Master Program.

CHAPTER 2

Urban Land Use Element

Introduction

The Urban Land Use Chapter provides policy guidance for the development of Spokane County's unincorporated urban areas. The policies, designations, and maps in this chapter strive to improve quality of life, create and improve functioning places that serve the surrounding community, provide opportunities for innovative approaches to land use, that support climate resilience, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and protect existing communities. The policies work in tandem with the Comprehensive Plan map, which illustrates the location of various land use categories. The Comprehensive Plan map illustrating the urbanized areas in Spokane County is located on page UL-4.

Placemaking Vision

Spokane County's Urban Lands are a mix of vibrant and connected communities. They feature integrated parks, trails, natural areas, and civic gathering places, a mix of housing types, and an accessible, pedestrian-friendly neighborhood center. They will be resilient and integrate natural features as a community amenity.

Figure UL-1. Example Urban Land development that fits with Spokane County's Placemaking Vision. It includes a connected street grid with an integrated park and trails and a mix of housing types arranged to foster a sense of community. (MAKERS)

General Goals

UL.1a **Provide a healthful, safe and sustainable urban environment that offers a variety of opportunities for employment and housing that is affordable and available to everyone in the community.**

UL.1b **Create a future rich in cultural and ethnic diversity that embraces family and community values and recognizes the interests of the whole community.**

UL.1c **Ensure goals and policies of this chapter are consistent with the relevant Spokane County Countywide Planning Policies.**

Goals and Policies

Urban Land Uses and Administration

UL.2 **Establish an urban development pattern consistent with the County's placemaking vision. Guide development in a manner that balances certainty with flexibility to adapt to future challenges and opportunities.**

UL.2.1 Provide a reasonable supply of development capacity through the Urban Comprehensive Land Use Map and zoning standards to create a variety of opportunities for residential development, housing choice, housing affordability, commercial enterprise, jobs-housing balance, and general redevelopment and infill.

UL.2.2 Establish land use categories as shown in Table UL-1.

UL.2.3 Use the Urban Comprehensive Land Use Map (see Figure UL-2), land use goals and policies, and other elements of the Comprehensive Plan as a guide for zoning decisions and development regulation amendments.

UL.2.4 Manage and maintain the County's Official Zoning Map to ensure continued consistency with the Urban Comprehensive Land Use Map.

UL.2.5 Adopt and maintain user-friendly development regulations that facilitate Spokane County's preferred land use pattern.

UL 2.6 Create and maintain a development review process that is timely, predictable, and complies with Washington's legislated requirements (e.g., clear and objective standards, concurrent processing and public meeting limits).

UL.2.7 Implement land use categories through a clear regulatory process that ensures transparency, fairness and predictability in the land development process.

Table UL-1. Land Use Categories

Land Use Category	Description	Implementing Zones
Neighborhood Residential	Purpose: This category provides for a mix of urban residential development within neighborhood-friendly setting. Expected uses and forms: A broad mixture of housing types including detached single-family residences, middle housing types, and multifamily residences. Opportunities for house-scaled neighborhood commercial uses are provided in established contexts. Opportunities for neighborhood center development are provided for the development of larger sites, featuring more and larger neighborhood-serving commercial and public uses. The form of development is largely house-scaled in developed contexts and a mix of house-scale and low-rise forms of development, with an opportunity for midrise development for mixed-use buildings in planned neighborhood center areas. Design standards are important to increase climate resilience, help achieve placemaking goals, with an emphasis on streetscape, development frontages, and pedestrian-friendly design.	Neighborhood Residential 1 (NR-1) for sites within developed contexts Neighborhood Residential 2 (NR-2) for larger undeveloped sites
Neighborhood Business	Purpose: This category functions as the "center" for surrounding neighborhoods due to its combination of location, uses, services, and amenities. Some of these areas may have the form of a corridor	Neighborhood Business (NB)

Land Use Category	Description	Implementing Zones
	rather than a center, but may still have those mix of uses, services, amenities, and scale attributes. This category requires development at densities that make efficient use of public investments in infrastructure, facilitate public transit, and promote pedestrian and other nonmotorized transportation. Expected uses and forms: A broad mixture of business uses, multifamily residential, service uses, and public uses. Built forms range from single-story buildings served by surface parking lots to mid-rise buildings (up to seven stories) depending on the context of the area and transit capabilities. Design standards are important to help increase climate resilience, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and achieve placemaking goals, with an emphasis on streetscape, development frontages, and pedestrian-friendly design.	
Regional Commercial	Purpose: This category allows for an intensive mix of commercial uses in accessible locations with access to major transportation corridors to draw customers from the County-at-large and outlying areas. Expected uses and forms: A mix of business and service uses that serve the larger region. The built form of these areas ranges from one-story buildings served by surface parking to mid-rise buildings. As these areas often function as gateways to the County and region, creating a welcoming design to these developments is important. This includes landscaping along streets, parking lots and buildings, provisions for safe pedestrian access, attractive building entries, and the screening of blank walls	Regional Commercial (RC)

Land Use Category	Description	Implementing Zones
	and service areas.	
Industrial	Purpose: This category provides for a mix of light and heavy industrial and business activities in locations requiring access to major transportation corridors, airports, and/or water routes. Separation from residential uses is particularly for heavy industrial areas, which may have significant impacts to surrounding areas, including noise, odor, or aesthetic impacts. Expected uses and forms: A mix of a mix of industrial and business uses such as light manufacturing, hi-tech, warehousing, biotech, business parks, vehicle and equipment repair, as well as heavy industrial activities. This category also allows limited retail and service uses to support employees and users of these industrial areas. Residential uses, except for caretaker residences, are prohibited. The expected built form is predominately single-story structures, with an opportunity for taller structures to support permitted uses. Light industrial areas have special emphasis on aesthetics, landscaping and community compatibility.	Light Industrial (LI), Heavy Industrial (HI)

Urban Comprehensive Land Use Map

To view the map please click on the above link or contact the Planning Department at (509) 477-1500.

Community Design

UL.3 Promote compact and connected development forms designed to be integrated with their existing and planned context and foster a sense of community and place.

UL.3.1 For established neighborhoods, adopt zoning provisions that maintain the general form and scale of development while offering opportunities for compatible infill development.

UL.3.2 For large undeveloped or underdeveloped sites, adopt zoning and design provisions that allow flexibility to create dynamic new neighborhoods that accommodate a mix of housing types and lot sizes plus neighborhood center areas that accommodate neighborhood-scaled retail and service uses and public uses. Key features:

a. Provide the opportunity through notes on the plat to designate portions of subdivisions for lower (single family and duplex) and medium (townhouses and multiplexes) density residential, and areas appropriate for commercial and mixed-use development.
b. Adopt zoning that provides an opportunity for unique dimensional standards (setbacks, lot coverage, and height) based on the planned context and uses in large subdivisions.
c. See Policy UL 4.1 for circulation and maximum block size guidance.
d. Adopt clear and objective design standards for new development on large subdivisions that promote pedestrian-oriented design and provide for a minimum amount of useable open space for residents.

UL.3.3 Adopt and administer clear and objective design standards for commercial and multifamily development that emphasize the concepts below. Evaluate the effectiveness of adopted standards and guidelines over time and make adjustments as necessary to achieve community design goals and policies. This includes:

a. Place an emphasis on the design of block frontages that reinforce the desired context of areas or blocks. This includes regulating the amount of parking versus buildings along street frontages, including a minimum amount of transparency on facades for public safety and creating a welcoming design (depending on the building's setback), and including pedestrian entries visible or facing the street. Block frontage standards should be tailored to fit the mix of current and intended contexts of blocks/areas.

b. Promote thoughtful pedestrian-oriented layout of buildings, parking, circulation, service, emergency access, and on-site amenity elements.

c. Integrate usable outdoor amenity space into new residential developments that is suitable for leisure or recreational activities

d. Employ architectural elements and scale that articulate large buildings into smaller, cohesive, and identifiable pieces.

e. Emphasize human-scaled design details that contribute to the area's unique sense of place for buildings placed up to the sidewalk edge and in planned storefront contexts

f. Ensure that lighting contributes to the character of the streetscape and protects against light pollution. Encourage adequate lighting for nightlife in commercial areas.

g. Create welcoming and memorable community gateways and enhance mixed-use/business district identity.

h. Provide strategic, climate-appropriate landscaping standards that enhance the streetscape, mitigate the impacts of large parking areas, soften the appearance of buildings and screen visible blank walls, provide a visual buffer between residential and non-residential uses, and provide stormwater management benefits.

i. Incorporate interior and exterior climate-friendly design elements including awnings, shade trees, insulation, and stormwater management to reduce emissions and impacts of extreme heat and flooding.

UL 3.4 Adopt clear and objective design standards for both small lot infill development and middle housing types. Key design emphasis:

a. Provide covered entries visible from the street for those ground level units built adjacent to the street.

b. Provide design standards that accommodate vehicular access while minimizing negative impacts of driveways and street-facing garages on the pedestrian environment.

c. Ensure that homes have access to a minimum amount of usable open space.

d. Provide simple facade massing standards for buildings with multiple ground level entries facing the street and large multiplex structures to maintain house-scale façade articulation patterns.

The above standards may vary depending on the site's context (within an

established neighborhood versus developing neighborhood).

UL 3.5 Integrate special design standards to address zoning and use/height transitions:

a. For commercial uses adjacent to residential uses, this includes a fence and modest landscape screen.

b. For outdoor storage and other similar uses, this includes a fence and more substantial landscaping buffer to residential uses, and a modest landscaping buffer to other commercial uses.

c. When an industrial zone abuts a residential zone, this includes a fence and a substantial landscaping buffer. When industrial zone abuts a commercial or mixed-use zone, this includes a fence and a substantial landscaping buffer.

d. For zone transitions featuring substantial differences in maximum height to a Neighborhood Residential zone, include a height step back that starts at the maximum height of the residential zone and steps back at an angle no less than a 45-degree angle up to the maximum height of the zone with taller height limit.

UL 3.6 Craft and maintain sign standards that balance the needs to promote local businesses while enhancing the design of highway corridors and neighborhood business districts. Specifically:

a. Taller signs are acceptable for freeway interchange areas

b. Monument signs and building-mounted signs are more appropriate in other Urban areas.

b. Freestanding sign standards should be regulated proportional to the size of the property or frontage, and/or size of the business.

c. Building-mounted sign standards should be regulated proportional to the size of the applicable building façade (e.g., no larger than 10 percent of the façade)

d. Consider options to allow larger signs for desirable sign form/design. For example, allow larger sign sizes for those signs that are not internally lit.

e. Integrate tools in the sign code to help manage sign clutter along street and highway corridors. This includes limiting the number and height of freestanding signs along street frontages and prohibiting new billboards and video signs. This could also limit the amount of information on signs based on the applicable speed limit (e.g., motorists can process less sign information at higher speeds).

UL 3.7 Leverage public projects as models of high-quality design through use of design character and climate resilient building and landscape design and materials

UL 3.8 Integrate public art into capital facilities, parks, streetscapes, and other public spaces. Promote other public art efforts through expanded programmatic support, education, and public-private partnerships.

UL 3.9 Improve signage and wayfinding to strengthen community identity and support multi-modal transportation connectivity and accessibility.

UL.3.10 Recognize that the arts contribute to the character of the physical, mental, social and economic well-being of the community and encourage public and private commitment and investment.

UL 3.11 Encourage developers to work with neighborhoods to develop plans that take advantage of unique site opportunities and address neighborhood concerns, such as environmental protection, historic preservation, quality of life, property values and preservation of open space.

Coordinating Land Use & Transportation

Street design can have a significant impact on the form and function of existing communities. Closed development patterns, which often include dead-end and cul-de-sac roads, tend to isolate communities and make travel difficult. Integrated neighborhoods provide connected streets and paths and often include a central focal point, such as a park or neighborhood business. Integrated development patterns promote a sense of community and allow for ease of pedestrian/bicycle movement. The example below illustrates a connected pattern of development that include a mix of streets, alleys, and pathways that reduce travel distances between homes and amenities.

Figure X. An example of a development with connected grid of streets, alleys, and pathways that reduces block sizes and walking distance between homes and amenities.

UL.4 Provide for a connected grid of streets, alleys, and pathways that accommodates neighborhood development, promotes non-vehicular trips, and helps create a unique sense of place.

UL.4.1 Create connectivity/maximum block size standards that apply to new large site development and redevelopment. Specifically:

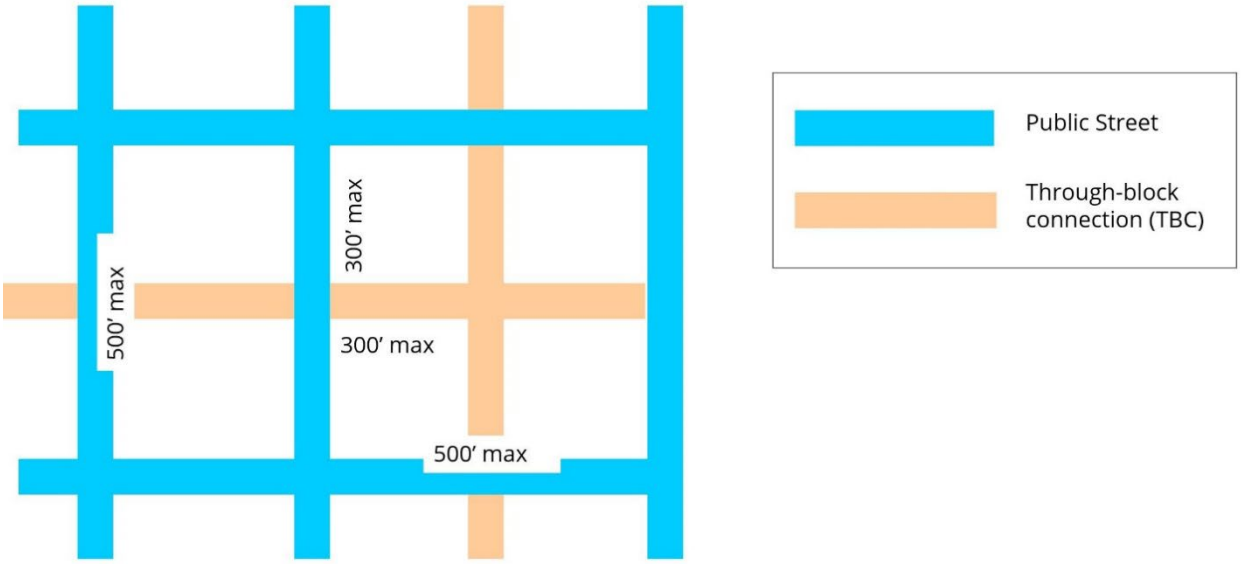
a. Provide flexibility for larger block sizes provided "through-block connections" are integrated to enhance connectivity.

b. Maximum block sizes should vary by zone and corresponding permitted intensity of development, with mixed-use zones being the smallest (no more than 300' long between a street and through-block connection).

c. Through-block connections may be a mixture of private streets, alleys, woonerfs (narrow curbless routes designed to allow pedestrians and vehicles to share the same lane), and pedestrian-only connections.

d. Integrate strategic flexibility and exceptions to the block size standards to account for contexts where topography, critical areas, rights-of-way, proposed permitted uses that require large site/building footprints, existing construction or physical conditions (that are likely to prevent a new physical connection for the foreseeable future), or other geographic conditions prevent compliance or impose an unusual hardship on the applicant.

e. For subdivisions, emphasize that through-block connections be provided in separate rights-of-way or public access lots or tracts. For other commercial and/or multifamily development, allow the option of (1)



separate rights-of-way or public access lots or tracts or (2) public access easement.

Figure X. Example of dynamic maximum block size standards for pedestrian-oriented areas.

Figure X. Examples of different types of through-block connections.

UL4.2 Promote a street grid and circulation system that:

a. Creates a focal point for the neighborhood, which could be a park, school, neighborhood commercial center or node, or other public facility or community gathering space.

b. Takes advantage of unique natural features and/or creates memorable terminal vistas. For examples, this could be a street grid oriented to unique topography and/or create street end views of a distinctive rock formation or landmark building (old or new).

c. Minimizes or avoids wall-lined streets. Except in cases for high-speed highways and other regional transportation corridors, adjacent uses and lots should be designed to front onto the street. For other collectors and arterial streets, choose designs that consolidate driveways and/or use alleys for vehicular access and create deeper front yards to mitigate vehicular impacts on adjacent residential uses.

Figure X. Avoid subdivision designs like the left example where rear yards and fences line arterial or collector streets. The right image illustrates a more desirable alternative – where alley-loaded homes line such streets.

UL-4.3 Design streets to:

a. Minimize pavement widths (allow safe passage & fire access, while moderating speeds for community safety and conserve land and resources).

b. Provide comfortable pedestrian access (provide for minimum sidewalk width to ensure accessibility and integrate native and drought tolerant planting strips between streets and sidewalks to enhance pedestrian safety and neighborhood character).

c. Integrate street trees (provide for large trees, preferably species with greater drought and fire resistance, that provide summer shade and enhance neighborhood character, while minimizing infrastructure impacts).

d. Accommodate variety (allow for a range of street designs, including streets with parking on both sides, only one side, and short narrow segments without on-street parking; allow alley access streets).

Figure X. Desirable examples of streets exhibiting minimized pavement widths, comfortable pedestrian access, integration of trees, and accommodating variety.

Figure X. Examples of streets that do not meet desired characteristics.

UL-4.4 Require the integration of off-street trails into large developments which provide both access and circulation benefits and a priority recreational asset to the community that can reduce emissions and car trips.

a. The requirement should be set at a level proportional to the size of the development and attain the ability to create a connected network of trails.

b. Provide design standards for the design of trails, corridors, and development frontages abutting trails to ensure they provide durable all-weather access in a safe and welcoming setting. Wall-lined trail corridors, for example, should be limited.

c. Require that trails in subdivisions be provided in public access lots or tracts, whereas trails built within commercial, multifamily, and mixed-use developments be within public access easements or in public access lots or tracts. Allow flexibility for the type of trail to vary to fit the context and anticipated level of use based on the segment/connection.

d. Trails that provide no meaningful connection should not qualify for credit towards this standard.

Figure X. Examples of trails and networks integrated with surrounding development.

UL.4.5 The County shall develop and maintain a fully connected active transportation system that reduces per capita vehicle miles traveled within the county without increasing greenhouse gas emissions elsewhere in the state.

Residential Land use and Development

UL.5 Provide for the full range of housing types (including middle housing types) and affordability levels in urban areas.

MIDDLE HOUSING

This term refers to buildings that are compatible in scale, form, and character with single-family houses and contain two or more attached, stacked, or clustered homes including duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, fiveplexes, sixplexes, townhouses, stacked flats, courtyard apartments, and cottage housing.

Middle housing types include duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, fiveplexes, sixplexes, townhouses, stacked flats, courtyard apartments, cottage housing, and accessory dwelling units.

UL.5.1 Accessory dwelling units (ADU). Allow for attached and detached ADU's in all residential districts provided size, design, and other provisions are included to promote compatibility with surrounding uses.

UL 5.2 Small lot single family. Allow for small lot single family development (lots smaller than 5,000 square feet) in the R3 zone provided design provisions that emphasize a pedestrian-oriented design and the inclusion of usable open space are included.

UL 5.3 Small lot single family. Allow for small lot single family development (lots smaller than 5,000 square feet) in the zone provided design provisions that emphasize a pedestrian-oriented design and the inclusion of usable open space are included.

UL 5.4 Duplexes. Encourage these housing types in the zones provided design provisions that emphasize a pedestrian-oriented design and the inclusion of usable open space are included.

UL 5.5 Townhouses. Encourage the development of townhouses in the ____ zones as an

efficient and popular form of housing for a large demographic of Spokane County's urban area population. Design standards emphasizing pedestrian-oriented design, façade articulation, and usable open space are particularly important.

UL 5.6 Multiplexes. Placeholder.

UL 5.7. Co-living. Placeholder

UL 5.8 Senior and assisted housing. Encourage these housing types in the zone and Design standards emphasizing pedestrian-oriented design, façade articulation, and usable open space are particularly important.

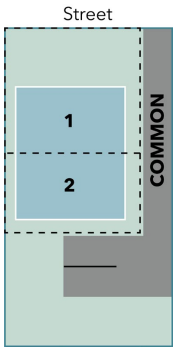
UL 5.9 Provide options for flexible subdivision design, including zero lot and reciprocal easement lots that allow efficient layouts of homes and yards.

UL 5.10 Adopt a Unit Lot Subdivision Ordinance to increase ownership options for middle housing development.

UNIT LOT SUBDIVISION

A unit lot subdivision (ULS) creates new lots much like a typical subdivision, except a ULS allows flexible application of zoning dimensional standards. In a ULS, the development as a whole on the "parent lot" conforms to zoning dimensional standards while individual "unit lots" are not required to. Unit lots (also called child lots) are individual, sellable, legal lots of record with their own tax or parcel identification number.

In 2023, state law changed to require that unit lot subdivisions be included in short plat regulations for all Washington cities, towns, and counties. This bill was intended to help increase home-ownership opportunities for middle housing types.



Also see policies under Goal LU-3 for the design and integration of housing into current and future neighborhoods.

Also see the Housing Element for additional goals and policies promoting the integration of a mix of housing types and affordability levels.

Commercial and Mixed-Use Development

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)

Transit-oriented development provides numerous economic and social benefits and supports emission and vehicle miles traveled reductions. TOD can allow people to live closer to where they work, recreate, or learn, reducing commute times, improving air quality, and providing other quality of life benefits. Spokane County has been collaborating with the City of Spokane on the Division Street TOD Project, which aims to make the most of our community's upcoming investment in public transit by encouraging accessible, mixed-use communities within close proximity to high-frequency transit stations. The project, which includes several stations within the County's jurisdiction, provides station-specific economic analysis, land-use recommendations, and multi-modal guidance to support long-term economic resiliency and employment along Division Street. Ultimately, the project has aimed to create a common vision for the next generation of development along Division Street.

Figure X. Division Street TOD Plan cover.

UL.6 Promote vibrant, compact, and connected mixed-use communities surrounding the planned Division Bus Rapid Transit stations to take advantage of public investments.

UL.6.1 Encourage a mix of residential, retail, and office spaces at midrise densities to serve the diverse needs of the community.

UL 6.2 Promote the integration and activation of spaces in TOD areas where people can gather, relax, and interact.

UL 6.3 Improve connections between neighborhoods, transit stops, and key destinations along Division Street to reduce individual car trips and increase transit and multi-modal transportation. This includes better sidewalks, bike lanes, and safe crossings.

UL 6.4 Require a fine grain of pedestrian connections in new developments in TOD areas to enhance access to and from transit.

UL 6.5 Implement complimentary, mixed land uses, such as locating businesses, parks and schools, as infill development to reduce driving in urban core areas.

Commercial and Mixed-Use Development

Neighborhood Business Centers and Corridors refer to other existing commercial centers and corridors that generally service multiple surrounding neighborhoods. These areas are intended to accommodate a mixture of uses and transition towards a more pedestrian-friendly environment. TO EXPAND ON INTRO STATEMENT.

UL.7 Emphasize "Placemaking" in the design of commercial and mixed-use areas: Places that are connected, welcoming, memorable, and rooted in their context of "place".

UL 7.1 Promote a mixture of retail, office, public, service, and residential uses that support and complement each other.

UL 7.2 Encourage the integration of plazas and other pedestrian oriented spaces in commercial and mixed-use zones to invite shoppers and enhance the setting for mixed-uses with housing.

UL 7.3 Encourage public/private partnerships to maximize placemaking opportunities, provided the partnership benefits both sides.

UL 7.4 Adopt zoning and design standards that promotes local economic development, serves local community and visitors, and promotes placemaking in a manner and scale appropriate to the local context:

a. Regional Commercial areas: Creating a welcoming design to these developments is important. This includes landscaping along streets, parking lots and buildings, provisions for safe pedestrian access, attractive building entries, and the screening of blank walls and service areas.

b. Business Center areas. Creating vibrant, compact, and connected mixed-use development. This includes a broad mix of uses to serve surrounding neighborhoods, provide employment, and function as a center for the mix of residents, workers, and visitors within these areas.

c. Neighborhood centers. This includes the development of new neighborhood centers that function as the heart of neighborhoods. These centers accommodate a mix of uses and include welcoming civic spaces for community gathering.

Also see the policies under Goal LU-3 regarding Community Design and Table UL-1 for Land Use Categories and descriptions.

Industrial and Manufacturing Land Uses and Development

Providing for industrial land is important for the economic health of Spokane County. Industrial businesses help drive the local economy and create an economic multiplier effect throughout the region.

Providing an adequate supply of usable land with minimal environmental constraints and infrastructure in place helps ensure that Spokane County will be an attractive place for industrial businesses to locate and prosper. (See Chapter 8, Economic Development, for additional policies that encourage recruitment and retention of industrial business.)

UL.8a Provide for the development of well-planned industrial areas that create higher-income jobs, provide economic growth, and improve the overall tax base of Spokane County.

UL.8b Maintain and promote active use of industrial lands to maintain a diverse economy while stewarding the County's natural resources and desired development patterns.

UL.8.1 Identify and designate industrial land areas for heavy industry and light industry adequate for expected industrial job and business growth. This includes flexible spaces for light industrial and large spaces for heavy industry.

UL.8.2 Ensure the long-term holding of appropriate land in parcel sizes adequate to allow for future development as industrial uses.

UL.8.3 Locate and develop industrial and manufacturing lands to minimize impacts on the environment such as air and water pollution, habitat degradation, and other ecosystem impacts and surrounding land uses, especially residential uses.

UL.8.4 Protect industrial and manufacturing lands from encroachment by other land uses, which would reduce the economic viability of industrial lands.

UL.8.5 Limit non-industrial uses to those that are complementary to industrial activities in terms of access and circulation, public safety, hours of operation, and other land use activities.

UL.8.6 Consider capital facility expenditures to facilitate the development of lands designated for industrial uses, including transportation and/or utility facilities.

UL.8.7 Encourage industries with low energy consumption and industries that recycle resources to locate in Spokane County.

UL.8.8 Encourage low-polluting industries to locate in Spokane County.UL.8.9 Encourage shared-use parking, pedestrian access and transit incentive programs in industrial development projects.

LU.8.9 Allow small scale manufacturing uses in commercial and mixed-use areas provided all activities are conducted indoors and applicable use minimizes external impacts to surrounding uses.

LU.8.10 Light industrial areas shall include sidewalks, bike lanes on arterial streets and landscaping to reduce transportation emissions and provide a safe and attractive working environment. Pathways for pedestrians and bikes may be substituted for sidewalks on local access streets.

UL.8.11 Industrial developments within the Urban Growth Area shall provide the following improvements:

a. Paved streets

b. Adequate parking for employees and business users (parking may be shared or communal)

c. Adequate stormwater control, including curbs, gutters and stormwater management facilities

d. Public sewer and water supply

e. Controlled traffic access to arterials and intersections

f. Improvements or easements for designated trail corridors, where present.

UL.8.12 Access points should be combined and limited in number to allow smooth traffic flow on arterials. Access through residential areas should be avoided.

UL.8.13 Standards for setbacks, landscaping and noise barriers shall be developed to mitigate impacts between industrial developments and adjacent land uses.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

UL. 8.14 Encourage the development of clean energy facilities (e.g., solar, wind, geothermal, battery storage) to increase the supply of renewable energy to the grid. Apply appropriate supplemental standards to minimize community impacts.

UL. 8.15 Evaluate the benefits and drawbacks of permitting data centers and similar uses with low employment density and high energy and water use.

UL. 8.16 Develop and promote a cooperative intergovernmental plan for the comprehensive development of industrial infrastructure and amenities to attract and support light and heavy industry.

UL. 8.17 Encourage growth in key industrial sectors, such as advanced manufacturing, processing, logistics, and clean energy, by supporting businesses that provide jobs paying a living wage to meet basic needs, including housing, food, healthcare, transportation, and other essential expenses.

UL. 8.18 Ensure regular compliance monitoring and best management practices for all industrial projects with the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and the Spokane County Code.

Parks, Trails & Community Gathering Spaces

INTRO PLACEHOLDER

UL.9 Preserve and integrate parks, trails, and community gathering spaces that contribute to community character, protect environmentally sensitive areas from climate hazards including flooding, wildfire, and extreme heat, and enhance recreational, educational, and aesthetic opportunities.

UL.9.1 Provide Spokane County UGA residents, workers, and visitors with a diversity of parks, trails, and gathering spaces equitably appropriately distributed throughout the County's UGA to support the health and well-being of residents, especially in overburdened communities.

UL.9.2 Use a variety of tools to preserve and integrate parks, trails, and community gathering spaces such as: flexible zoning and subdivision design standards, commercial and multifamily design standards, conservation easements, mitigation measures, critical area regulations, incentives for private preservation, and acquisition.

UL.9.3 Increase housing capacity and housing options near major parks, trailheads, and indoor recreation facilities to increase the population that can access parks and recreation by walking and biking.

See Policy UL-4.4 involving the integration of off-street trails into large developments.

See the Parks and Recreation Element for more details.

Integrated Environmental Design & Resiliency

INTRO PLACEHOLDER – EMPHASIZE THAT BY INTEGRATING RESILIENCY AND SMART ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN INTO NEIGHBORHOODS, WE ARE CREATING UNIQUE AND RESILIENT NEIGHBORHOODS…..

Figure x. Great neighborhoods can be climate-resilient neighborhoods with other community benefits, too.

UL.10 Design communities to be resilient and celebrate environmental features as part of the placemaking of the County's Urban Lands.

UL.10.1 Identify and protect critical areas and integrate as an amenity in surrounding development.

UL.10.2 Development proposals shall address and treat stormwater runoff.

UL.10.3 Development within floodplains should be avoided. If avoidance is not possible, the proposed development will require a floodplain development permit.

UL.10.5 Provide multiple access points into and out of the neighborhood

UL.10.6 Integrate more shade trees to mitigate summer heat

See the Climate and Resiliency Element for more details.

Urban Growth Area

The Growth Management Act mandates the establishment of urban growth areas (UGAs). The urban growth area (UGA) boundary identifies areas where future urban growth should occur and establishes a clear separation between urban and rural development. The intent of establishing a UGA is that urban growth should occur first in areas with existing public services and facilities that have sufficient capacity to serve development and second in areas where urban services can be economically extended. With adjustments for environmentally sensitive land which is unsuitable for development and reasonable market factors to avoid constraining the land supply, the UGA is sized to accommodate the projected 20-year population. A primary basis for the UGA requirement is the economical and efficient provision of public services. The urban land supply should be closely monitored and adjustments to the UGA made when necessary to ensure that land prices are not artificially inflated.

UL.11 **Maintain an Urban Growth Area (UGA) that provides a distinct boundary between urban and rural land uses and provides adequate land to accommodate anticipated growth.**

ALT **Maintain an Urban Growth Area (UGA) that balances provisions for compact growth while ensuring adequate land to accommodate anticipated growth and providing a distinct boundary between urban and rural land uses.**

UL.11.1 The County shall review and evaluate Urban Growth Area boundaries, as required by the Countywide Planning Policies (topic 1, policy 16) when growth triggers are met, no later than every five years, and the Revised Code of Washington, when conducting periodic updates to its Comprehensive Plan.

UL.11.2 The determination of UGA boundaries shall include consideration of environmental features, topography, jurisdictional boundaries and special purpose districts. When the boundary follows a utility line, consideration should be given to including adjacent parcels on both sides of the line to allow efficient use of the utility and provide fairness to property owners.

UL.11.3 Urban Growth Area boundaries shall follow parcel boundaries to avoid splitting an existing parcel of record, except when the inclusion of the entire parcel creates an irregular or illogical boundary.

UL.11.4 Consistent with availability of facilities and services, the County shall encourage development to urban densities in and up to the Urban Growth Area boundaries.

UL. 118.5 Amendments to the urban growth area that increase the total acreage of the UGA shall be consistent with limitations and conditions of a Settlement

Agreement between Spokane County and certain appellants of a land use action, as adopted under Board of County Commissioner Resolution #2016-0464 and attached as Appendix J.

UL. 18.6 For the 2025 to 2045 Comprehensive Plan Update the County shall adopt a population forecast based on the then-applicable OFM population forecast for the countywide urban growth area and consistent with a Settlement Agreement adopted under BCC Resolution 2016-0464

UL.18.7 For the 2025 to 2045 Comprehensive Plan Update the County shall provide notice, sent by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the designated representatives identified in Exhibit "G" of a Settlement Agreement under BCC Resolution 2016-0464. Designee changes may be made at any time without cause and become effective 30-days following written notice to the parties.

UL.11.68.8 A contingent Comprehensive Plan and Zoning map amendment was approved by the Board of County Commissioners in the 2017 to 2037 Comprehensive Plan Update for a proposed jail site on the West Plains, illustrated below, under Board of County Commissioner Resolution 2020-0129. Prior to implementation of the proposed map changes, a development agreement limiting the site to a jail facility shall be adopted and financing for the proposed jail shall be funded. Implementation of the proposed amendment shall not be subject to terms of a Settlement Agreement adopted by the Board of County Commissioners under Resolution 2016-0464. The contingent map amendment shall be illustrated on the official Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Maps until requirements within this policy are complete.

OTHER CONSIDERATION

UL. 11.XX Work with other jurisdictions and agencies, educational and other organizations, and the business community to develop and carry out a coordinated, regional approach for meeting the various needs of Spokane County communities, including housing, human services, economic vitality, public safety, utilities, infrastructure, parks and recreation, transportation, and environmental protection.

CHAPTER 3

Rural Land Use Element

Introduction

Rural lands are lands located outside the Urban Growth Area and outside of designated agricultural, forest and mineral lands. Typically, rural areas have received their identity from a rural way of life rooted in history and resource-based industries, including farming and forestry. Recreation, conservation and open space uses have played an increasing role in rural areas. Small towns and unincorporated villages provide services for surrounding rural areas and the traveling public.

Rural Character

Defining rural character is essential for development of rural goals and policies. Counties are required to include measures in the rural chapter that protect rural character. Through visioning and other public participation efforts, the following principles for defining and preserving rural character have evolved:

- The rural landscape should reflect a traditional development setting with low population density.
- Interconnected open spaces and natural areas should be provided through clustering and other innovative techniques.
- Rural communities should be relatively self-sufficient and accept a traditional lifestyle with low levels of governmental services.
- Rural towns and centers should provide a community focal point and offer opportunities for shopping and other services.
- Scenic roadways and vistas should be preserved by prohibiting billboards and strip commercial development.
- Agriculture and forestry uses within the Rural designation.
- should be accepted as being consistent with rural area lifestyles.
- Land use practices should be conducted in a way that protects the environment, providing for clean air and water.
- Rural lands should have low population densities, allowing much of the area to be retained in a natural state, providing wildlife habitat and the preservation of natural systems.

Rural Land Use Designations

Rural Traditional

Lands in this designation shall include large-lot residential uses and resource-based industries, including ranching, farming, mining and forestry operations. Industrial uses shall be limited to industries directly related to and dependent on natural resources. New non-resource-related industry would be allowed, provided it meets the requirement for a major industrial development outside the UGA (see policy RL.5.1 and RCW 36.70A.365). Rural-oriented recreation uses shall also play a role in this designation. Rural residential clustering is allowed in this designation.

Density

The permitted density of the Rural Traditional designation is 1 dwelling unit per 10 acres.

Rural Residential

The Rural Residential designation would allow a 1 dwelling unit per 5-acre density in areas that have an existing 5-acre or smaller subdivision lot pattern. The provision of public water service may be appropriate for these areas. Rural residential clustering is allowed in this designation.

Density

The permitted density of the Rural Residential designation is 1 dwelling unit per 5 acres.

Rural Conservation

The Rural Conservation designation applies to environmentally sensitive areas, including critical areas and wildlife corridors. Criteria to designate boundaries for this designation were developed from Spokane County's Critical Areas Ordinance, which sites the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife's Washington Habitat Connectivity Plan (WAHCAP). Previous boundaries utilized a 1998 study by the University of Washington titled, *Wildlife Corridors and Landscape Linkages, An Approach to Biodiversity Planning for Spokane County, Washington,* which helped inform the updates to the current best available science. The designation shall encourage low-impact uses and utilize clustering and/or other open space techniques to protect sensitive areas and preserve open space.

Density

The permitted density of the Rural Conservation designation is 1 dwelling unit per 20 acres, with a bonus density of 1 dwelling unit per 10 acres for preserving open space and environmentally sensitive areas through clustered development as described in this element and implemented in the Spokane County Zoning Code.

Urban Reserve

The Urban Reserve designation includes lands outside the Urban Growth Area that are considered for growth within a 40-year planning horizon. These areas are given special consideration, such as low-density, large-lot development, so that land uses established in the near future do not preclude their eventual conversion to urban densities. For example, a 1-acre to 5-acre per lot subdivision pattern in these areas would create parcels that would be difficult to divide to urban densities. Innovative techniques such as residential clustering may be used to allow residential development rights and ensure that these areas shall be available in the future. The use of public water systems or community wells is encouraged. Community drainfields may also be appropriate in the Urban Reserve designation.

Density

The permitted density of the Urban Reserve designation is 1 dwelling unit per 20 acres, which may be increased to 1 dwelling unit per 5 acres for clustered housing. Within a cluster subdivision, the remainder lot shall be reserved for future urban use. The minimum lot size in a cluster subdivision could be as low as 10,000 sq. ft; the maximum lot size is 1 acre.

Rural Activity Centers

The Rural Activity Center (RAC) category identifies rural residential centers supported with limited commercial and community services. RACs consist of compact development with a defined boundary that is readily distinguishable from surrounding undeveloped lands. RACs often form at crossroads and develop around some focal point, such as a general store or post office. Other typical uses might include a church, school, restaurant, gas station or other small shops. Commercial uses are intended to serve the surrounding rural area or in some instances the traveling public. RACs must have an identified boundary established on the Comprehensive Plan map.

RACs are a Type 1 Limited Area of More Intensive Rural Development (LAMIRD) as defined in the Washington State Growth Management Act.

Density

The maximum residential density in a Rural Activity Center category is 3.5 dwelling units per acre.

Limited Development Areas

The Limited Development Area (LDA) category identifies commercial, industrial and residential areas that were established prior to July 1, 1993 (Spokane County adopted Growth Management planning) but are not consistent with the criteria for designation as a Rural Activity Center. Limited infill and expansion of these designated areas may be appropriate. LDAs must have adopted boundaries delineated on the Comprehensive Plan map.

LDAs are a Type 1 Limited Area of More Intensive Rural Development (LAMIRD) as defined in the Washington State Growth Management Act. LDAs consist of two subcategories, a Commercial/Industrial category and a Residential category.

Rural Comprehensive Land Use Map

To view the map, please click on the link below or contact the Planning Department at (509) 477-1500.

Goals and Policies

General Goals

RL.0 Ensure that the goals and policies of this element are consistent with the relevant Spokane County Countywide Planning Policies (CWPPs).

Rural Residential Development

The Rural Residential section provides for development of a variety of residential uses consistent with maintaining rural character. Large lot development patterns and innovative techniques, such as clustering, are included as options for rural development.

RL.1 Provide for rural residential development consistent with traditional rural lifestyles and rural character.

RL.1.1 Unplatted property outside the Urban Growth Area (UGA) shall not be developed to urban densities unless it is designated as a master planned resort, rural activity center, limited development area or new, fully contained community.

RL.1.2 Designated rural lands shall have low densities which should be sustained by minimal infrastructure improvements such as septic systems, individual wells and rural roads without significantly changing the rural character, degrading the environment or creating the necessity for urban levels of service.

Residential Limited Development Areas

Some scattered areas of urban residential development exist outside the County's Urban Growth Area. In these areas it may be appropriate to designate these lands as Limited Development Areas and allow infill consistent with the existing pattern. Infill areas should be restricted to well-defined boundaries and not include large expanses of undeveloped land.

RL.1.3 The infill of urban-type residential development within rural areas may be allowed consistent with the following guidelines:

a) The area is designated and mapped within the *Limited Development Area (Residential)* category and is contained by logical boundaries, outside of which urban-type development shall not occur. These boundaries shall be illustrated on the Comprehensive Plan map.

b) In developing a logical boundary, physical considerations such as bodies of water, streets and highways, and landforms and contours should be considered. Abnormally irregular boundaries should be avoided.

c) The character of rural neighborhoods and communities is maintained.

d) Compatibility with basic design standards is enforced.

e) Public services and public facilities should be provided in a manner that does not permit low-density sprawl.

f) The boundary is based on urban-type development that was established prior to July 1, 1993.

g) Infill development shall be limited to small areas generally surrounded by urban-type development where conventional rural lots are not feasible.

h) Amendments to the logical outer boundary of a limited area of more intense rural development (Residential Limited Development Areas) shall be consistent with limitations and conditions of a Settlement Agreement between Spokane County and certain appellants of a land use action, as adopted under Board of County Commissioner Resolution #2016-0464 and attached as Appendix J.

Non-residential and accessory uses

RL.1.4 Nonresidential and accessory uses appropriate for the rural area include farms, forestry, outdoor recreation, education and entertainment, sale of agricultural products produced on-site, home industries and home businesses. New churches, schools, and community facilities in the rural area are encouraged to locate in rural cities or rural activity centers, provided adequate services are available and the extension of urban services is not necessary.

Exemptions to Subdivision Regulations

RL.1.5 Rural divisions of land shall comply with State Law pertaining to exemptions from subdivision requirements. Exemptions from subdivision laws should not be used to circumvent the intent of subdivision and environmental protection laws.

Innovative Techniques

Innovative techniques should be employed to protect environmentally sensitive areas, preserve open space and protect the character of rural areas.

RL.1.6 Jurisdictions should work together to develop and implement regionally consistent incentive-based programs such as Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) and bonus densities to protect natural resource lands outside of Urban Growth Areas (UGAs).

RL.1.7 Encourage the use of conservation easements through nonprofit land trust organizations and/or other organizations or similar measures to conserve and protect resource uses, open space and critical areas.

RL.1.8 Implement strategies for the acquisition of natural areas of high scenic value through techniques such as residential clustering, conservation easements, conservation futures funding, open space zoning and other techniques.

Rural Clustering

Large-lot (10-acre) zoning has been the conventional way to minimize population density and retain rural character in Spokane County's rural areas. This method, while effective at controlling population density, has divided our rural lands with little sensitivity to the effects on rural resources and the natural environment. Large-lot zoning, combined with a lack of road standards, has also created many miles of poorly maintained private roads, making fire and emergency access difficult. Rural clustering offers an alternative to large-lot zoning. Rural clustering encourages the grouping of home sites on areas of the site that are best suited for development, while retaining the remainder of the site for open space. Clustering allows for more flexible and environmentally sensitive rural subdivisions. The Urban Reserve, Rural Residential-5, Rural Traditional, and Rural Conservation categories are designated as appropriate areas for rural clustering.

Some of the advantages of clustering include the following:

a) Clustered homesites can significantly reduce the length of roadway necessary to serve the development.

b) Clustered home sites can utilize a community well, thus reducing water supply costs and potential groundwater impacts.

c) Clustered home sites improve the ability of fire departments to fight fires in rural areas.

d) Clustered home sites provide greater security and can help establish a sense of community.

e) Clustered home sites can preserve open space for agriculture, forestry, wildlife habitat, recreation, and natural drainage.

Some limitations of clustering may include the following:

a) Cluster developments may result in increased financing and costs in site planning design and engineering.

b) Management of the "open space" in a clustered development can be a problem. Without an active open space management plan, the area could become degraded through neglect.

c) Smaller lots in clustered subdivisions may create the expectation of urban services.

d) Land use conflicts between clustered home sites and forestry and agricultural use can occur if care is not taken in the design of the development.

RL.1.9 Clustering of rural development may be permitted as a tool for the preservation of rural open space as long as it can be demonstrated that the rural character of the area can be maintained and that urban services are not required to serve the new development.

RL.1.10 Provisions to allow clustered housing in rural areas should adhere to the following guidelines:

a) Development should be limited through density requirements that protect and maintain existing rural character, open space systems and water resources and control traffic volumes and road building.

b) Siting of cluster projects should minimize impacts on neighbors, infrastructure and the surrounding environment.

c) Permitting procedures for rural cluster projects should be no more difficult for cluster developments than for traditional subdivisions and should include incentives to encourage their use.

d) Standards should be established for minimum and maximum project size, so projects are large enough to support viable open spaces but small enough to prevent the residential cluster development from overwhelming the surrounding area.

e) The primary component of the project site is the open space system. The system should be a network of spaces designed to be usable for their intended purposes and permanently protected or explicitly designated for future development if located in an urban reserve area.

f) Preparation and implementation of an open space management plan should be required. The management plan should explicitly include details concerning ownership, taxes, liability, future use, etc.

g) There should be a pattern of cluster areas established within the project site which does not cause significant impacts on neighboring properties or interrupt the continuity of existing and planned agricultural and related uses.

h) Lots within a rural cluster in the Rural Traditional, Rural Conservation, and Rural-5 categories shall be one acre or larger to maintain rural character and allow for rural-type lifestyles, such as animal keeping, orchards and gardening. Lots within the Urban Reserve designation should range from 10,000-sq. ft. to 1 acre to preserve the area for future urbanization.

i) The number of home sites per cluster should be limited. Within the cluster, there should be a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 8 home sites. Clusters should be visually and physically separated from one another by open-space buffers. The scenic nature of roadways should be protected by varied setbacks and/or open space buffers.

j) Lot dimensions, building heights and setbacks should be compatible with rural character and provide the privacy, seclusion and access to open space that are normally expected in rural areas.

k) A minimum of 70% of the site in a rural cluster development shall be preserved for open space, wildlife habitat and/or resource use; or in the case of urban reserve areas, to avoid precluding future development options.

l) An aggregation of clustered developments cannot be so arranged that it forms the basis for a Type 1 LAMIRD.

m) Clustered housing should not become the predominant pattern of development throughout the rural area.

n) Special consideration should be given to clustered housing in Urban Reserve Areas to ensure that development does not preclude the eventual conversion to urban densities on the remainder parcel.

Urban Reserve Areas

Urban Reserve Areas (URAs) are lands outside the Urban Growth Area that have a land use designation of Urban Reserve that are considered for growth beyond the initial 20-year planning period but within a 40-year planning horizon. A 40-year planning horizon should be based on reasonable extrapolation of Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM) population projections. These areas are given special consideration so that land uses established in the near future do not preclude their eventual conversion to urban densities. Development in Urban Reserve Areas should be done in such a manner as to allow the orderly and efficient extension of utilities when the area is included in the UGA.

RL.1.11 Based on a 20-year planning horizon, the County should identify Urban Reserve areas and growth corridors; within these areas, densities and land use patterns which preclude future conversion to urban densities should be discouraged. This may include periodic de-designation of portions of UGAs designated Urban Reserve if the County finds that growth projections in specific areas do not justify growth into those areas.

RL.1.12 Development in URAs, including open space preserved through clustering, should be consistent with future urban design, including layout of buildings and roads.

RL.1.13 URAs shall be designated on the Comprehensive Plan map based on the following considerations:

a) Suitability of natural systems to accommodate growth. Sensitive watersheds, shoreline areas, wildlife habitat and corridors, or other sensitive environmental features should not be included in URAs. These areas should be identified on Spokane County critical areas maps and should be based on best available science.

b) Size of existing parcels. Land that is outside of the current UGA but exhibits the land division characteristics of urban development should be considered for inclusion in the URA.

c) The carrying capacity of natural, infrastructure, and environmental systems.

d) The logical and orderly outward extension of urban services.

e) Population projections for a 20-year planning horizon as described in this element.

RL.1.14 Clustered developments within URAs should provide urban transportation facilities (i.e., curbs, gutters, sidewalks and drainage facilities) at the same time as construction of the development.

New Fully Contained Communities

A new fully contained community is a development proposed for location outside of the existing designated Urban Growth Areas which is characterized by urban densities, uses and services and meets the criteria of RCW 36.70A.350. New fully contained communities shall receive a portion of the County's population allocation proportionate to the community's expected population.

RL.1.15 The County may establish "new, fully-contained communities" within the rural area, as provided for by the GMA. Future revisions to the Plan should consider new fully- contained communities as an option to accommodate population growth. Clustered Developments within URAs should provide urban transportation facilities (i.e., curbs, gutters, sidewalks, and drainage facilities) at the same time as construction of the development.

Rural Activity Centers

Providing for rural services and community gathering places without promoting sprawl development is a challenge in rural areas. Rural activity centers (RACs) provide a mechanism for addressing these needs. RACs are mixed-use centers comprised of commercial and residential uses and community services. RACs consist of compact historic development with a defined boundary that is readily distinguishable from surrounding undeveloped lands. RACs often are found at crossroads and develop around some focal point, such as a general store or post office. Other typical uses may include a church, school, restaurant, gas station or other small shops. Commercial uses are intended to serve the surrounding rural area or, in some instances, the traveling public.

To be classified as a Rural Activity Center, the area must have been in existence prior to July 1, 1993, which is the date Spokane County was mandated to plan under the Growth Management Act.

RL.2 Designated Rural Activity Centers are planned for a mix of residential and commercial uses to meet the needs of rural residents while retaining rural character and lifestyles.

RL.2.1 RACs shall be limited to isolated, rural communities and centers. RAC boundaries shall be defined by a logical outer boundary delineated predominantly by the built environment and the following considerations:

a) Preservation of the character of neighborhoods and communities

b) Preservation of natural systems and open space

c) Acknowledgment of physical boundaries, such as bodies of water, streets and highways and landforms and contours

d) Provision of public amenities, facilities and services in a manner that does not permit low-density sprawl

e) Designations should be confined to built-up areas, established prior to July 1, 1993, and not include large expanses of vacant land

RL.2.2 The following unincorporated communities may be included as rural activity centers and others may be designated as appropriate, consistent with adopted policies.

a) Elk
b) Eloika Lake
c) Riverside
d) Chattaroy
e) Colbert
f) Nine Mile Falls
g) Moab Junction
h) Four Lakes
i) Marshall
j) Plaza
k) Mica
l) Valleyford
m) Freeman

RL.2.3 Commercial developments within RACs should be of a scale and type to be primarily patronized by local residents and in some instances to provide support for resource industries, tourism and the traveling public.

RL.2.4 Encourage developers to work with local residents within RACs to develop plans that satisfy concerns for environmental protection, historic preservation, quality of life, property values and preservation of open space.

Rural Governmental Services

Rural character encapsulates a quality of life based upon traditional rural lifestyles and aesthetic values. A quiet, low-density environment focused on nature and privacy comes with the expectation of relative self-sufficiency and low levels of governmental services, with rural residents generally seeking to retain their traditional self-reliance within a supporting community framework. Rural areas are typically served by individual wells, on-site wastewater disposal, volunteer fire departments and lower levels of police protection. In some cases, extension of public water is appropriate when existing private wells fail to provide safe, reliable, or sufficient water, or when water quality poses a health threat. Additionally, some areas of development that were established prior to the Growth Management Act will have existing sewer services.

RL.3 Provide a level of rural governmental service consistent with maintaining rural character.

RL.3.1 Designated rural lands shall have low densities which should be sustained by minimal infrastructure improvements, such as septic systems, individual wells and rural roads, without altering the rural character, degrading the environment or creating the necessity for urban levels of services.

RL.3.2 Extension of storm and sanitary sewer services outside of Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) should only be provided to maintain existing levels of service in existing urban-like areas or for health and safety reasons or to accommodate a major industrial development approved pursuant to RCW 36.70A.365, provided that such extensions are not an inducement to growth.

RL.3.3 Rural governmental services shall include those public services and facilities historically and typically delivered at intensity usually found in rural areas and shall include domestic water service either through individual wells or public water service. Rural governmental services shall not include new storm and sanitary sewers except as provided for in RL.3.2.

RL.3.4 Support and encourage local community efforts to provide rural services.

RL.3.5 Establishment, extension, and maintenance of broadband communication systems in rural areas shall be supported.

Resource-Based Uses in Rural Areas

Rural lands, by definition, do not include agricultural, forestry and mineral lands that have been classified as resource lands with "*long-term commercial significance*." Resource lands with long-term commercial significance are considered in the Natural Resource Lands Chapter. However, rural lands may include viable resource uses which do not fit the criteria for inclusion in the resource land designation. Resource uses, including small scale agriculture, woodlots and mining, are appropriate in rural areas and certainly contribute to rural character. The maintenance and protection of these uses is one of the purposes of this section.

RL.4 Preserve and protect agriculture and forestry activities throughout the rural area.

RL.4.1 Encourage best management practices for agricultural and forestry uses to conserve the resource and protect the environment.

RL.4.2 Agricultural and forestry management practices shall be allowed in rural areas when carried on in compliance with applicable regulations, even though they may impact nearby residences.

RL.4.3 Encourage current-use taxation laws as an incentive to retain productive agricultural and timberlands.

RL.4.4 Create environmental standards for agriculture that protect environmental quality, especially in relation to water and fisheries resources, without discouraging farming. Note: See the Natural Environment Chapter for additional policies concerning environmental protection.

RL.4.5 Airstrips and helicopter pads shall be allowed in the rural area, consistent with the preservation of rural character.

RL.4.6 Encourage cluster development in areas with existing agricultural and forestry uses in the rural area.

Industrial and Commercial Uses

Industrial and commercial development in rural areas shall generally be limited to uses that serve the needs of rural residents or are related to natural resource activities. These uses typically shall include small-scale home professions and home industries, roadside agricultural sales and small commercial establishments within designated rural activity centers. Larger industrial uses generally shall be limited to industries directly related to and dependent on natural resources. In some cases, limited infill of areas with existing industrial or commercial development may be appropriate.

RL.5a **Provide for industrial and commercial uses in rural areas that serve the needs of rural residents and are consistent with maintaining rural character.**

RL.5b **Ensure the availability of adequate industrial land to accommodate major industrial developments that cannot be sited in the Urban Growth Area (UGA).**

RL.5c **Ensure adequate land for inert waste only disposal sites.**

Major Industrial Development

Major industrial developments outside the Urban Growth Area (UGA) are allowed in certain instances (RCW 36.70A.365). These developments are intended to meet the need for industrial uses in which adequate land within the UGA is not available to accommodate the development. For instance, the development may require a parcel of land so large that no suitable parcels are available in the UGA. Upon approval of a major industrial development outside UGAs, it shall be designated as a UGA.

RL.5.1 New major industrial developments shall be allowed in the rural designation consistent with RCW 36.70A.365, which states as follows:

a) "Major industrial development" means a master planned location for a specific manufacturing, industrial or commercial business that:

I. requires a parcel of land so large that no suitable parcels are available within an urban growth area; or

II. is a natural resource-based industry requiring a location near agricultural land, forestland or mineral resource land upon which it is dependent. The major industrial development shall not be for the purpose of retail commercial development or multi- tenant office parks.

b) A major industrial development may be approved outside an urban growth area if criteria including, but not limited to, the following are met:

I. New infrastructure is provided for and/or applicable impact fees are paid.

II. Transit-oriented site planning and traffic demand management programs are implemented.

III. Buffers are provided between the major industrial development and adjacent non- urban areas.

IV. Environmental protection, including critical areas and air and water quality, has been addressed and provided for.

V. Development regulations are established to ensure that urban growth shall not occur in adjacent non-urban areas.

VI. Provision is made to mitigate adverse impacts on designated agricultural lands, forestlands and mineral resource lands.

VII. The plan for the major industrial development is consistent with the county's development regulations established for protection of critical areas.

VIII. An inventory of developable land has been conducted and the County has determined and entered findings that land suitable to site the major industrial development is unavailable within the urban growth area. Priority shall be given to applications for sites that are adjacent to or in close proximity to the urban growth area.

c) Final approval of an application for a major industrial development shall be considered an adopted amendment to the Comprehensive Plan adopted pursuant to RCW 36.70A.070 designating the major industrial development site on the land use map as an urban growth area. Final approval of an application for a major industrial development shall not be considered an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan for the purposes of RCW 36.70A.130(2) and may be considered at any time.

Industrial/Commercial Limited Development Areas

Some industrial and commercial developments were built in rural areas prior to development of and/or adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. These developments may be considered as a Limited Area of More Intense Rural Development (LAMIRD) if they are designated and mapped within the *Limited Development Area (Commercial-Industrial)* category of the Comprehensive Plan. Allowing infill industrial development within these areas should contribute to the economic diversity of unincorporated areas of the County and provide employment opportunities for the nearby rural population. Any industrial and/or commercial development other than natural resource-based industry shall be delineated on the Comprehensive Plan map for it to be considered as a LAMIRD.

RL.5.2 The intensification and infill of commercial or non-resource-related industrial areas shall be allowed in rural areas consistent with the following guidelines:

d) The area is clearly identified and contained by logical boundaries, outside of which development shall not occur. These areas shall be designated and mapped within the Limited Development Area (Commercial-Industrial) designation of the Comprehensive Plan map.

e) The character of neighborhoods and communities is maintained.

f) Public services and public facilities should be provided in a manner that does not permit or promote low-density sprawl or leapfrog development.

g) The intensification is limited to expansion of existing uses or infill of new uses within the designated area.

h) The area was established prior to July 1, 1993.

i) Amendments to the logical outer boundary of a LAMIRD designated as an Industrial/Commercial Limited Development Area shall be consistent with limitations and conditions of a Settlement Agreement between Spokane County and certain appellants of a land use action, as adopted under Board of County Commissioner Resolution #2016-0464 and attached as Appendix J.

Commercial Development

Commercial development in rural areas should be limited to those businesses serving rural residents and supporting natural resources and tourism-related uses. Most commercial uses shall be located in rural towns or in designated rural activity centers. In some instances, the intensification of established commercial areas may be allowed, provided they are consistent with policy guidelines (see RL.5.2).

RL.5.3 Strip commercial development along state and county roads shall be prohibited.

RL.5.4 Use regulations in the Rural designation for tourism and recreation-oriented uses shall be developed based on the following guidelines:

j) Resource-dependent tourism and recreation-oriented uses such as commercial horse stables, guide services, golf courses and group camps may be allowed in rural areas provided they do not adversely impact adjoining rural uses and are consistent with rural character.

k) Tourism-related uses such as motels and restaurants serving rural and resource areas shall be located within existing rural towns or designated rural activity centers or Master Planned Resorts.

l) Agricultural tourism ("Agritourism") uses should be allowed in rural areas consistent with case law and where consistent with rural character.

RL.5.5 Isolated non-residential uses in rural areas, which are located outside of rural activity centers or limited development areas, may be designated as conforming uses and allowed to expand or change use provided the uses were legally established on or before July 1, 1993, are consistent with rural character, and detrimental impacts to the rural area shall not be increased or intensified.

Master Planned Resorts

Master planned resorts are self-contained, fully integrated planned unit developments in a setting of significant natural amenities, with primary focus on destination resort facilities. They consist of short-term visitor accommodations associated with a range of developed on-site indoor or outdoor recreational facilities. Master planned resorts should not be considered as a means to develop sprawling urban or suburban residential developments. Employment of local residents should be encouraged in Master Planned Resorts.

RL.5.6 New Master Planned Resorts (MPR) may be approved in an area outside of established Urban Growth Area Boundaries providing they meet the following criteria:

a) MPR approval shall not be a precedent for allowing new urban or suburban land uses in the vicinity.

b) The proposed development provides urban level public services that are strictly contained within the boundaries of the resort property by design and construction and protect health and the environment.

c) The proposed site for the MPR is sufficient in size and configuration to provide for a full range of resort facilities while maintaining separation from any adjacent rural or resource land uses to maintain the existing rural character.

d) Residential uses are designed for short-term or seasonal use. Full-time residential uses should be limited to employee housing. Procedures should be developed to ensure that overnight lodging within Master Planned Resorts cannot be utilized as full-time residential units.

e) Significant natural and cultural features of the site should be preserved and enhanced to the greatest degree possible.

f) Preservation of wildlife corridors and open space networks should be integral to the site design.

g) Commercial uses and activities within the MPR should be limited in size to serve the customers within the MPR and located within the project to minimize the automotive convenience trips for people using the facilities.

h) Adequate emergency services shall be available to the area to ensure the health and safety of people using or likely to use the facility.

i) Implementation of MPR sites may be allowed by conditional use permit in the rural zoning categories provided they meet the intent, standards, and criteria as prescribed in the Comprehensive Plan.

RL.5.7 Existing resorts may be considered as Master Planned Resorts providing the resort was established prior to July 1, 1990.

Home Professions and Home Industries

RL.5.8 Home professions, home industries, day-care facilities and accessory uses should be allowed outright or as conditional uses throughout the rural area, provided they do not adversely affect the rural character or conflict with resource-based economic uses.

RL.5.9 Development regulations for home professions, home industries, day-care facilities and accessory uses should protect adjacent properties from negative impacts and should be consistent with maintaining rural character.

Wildfires

Large-lot, low-density residential development in forested rural areas has dramatically increased the potential of life and property loss due to wildland fires. The problem is exemplified by the loss of 24 homes in the Hangman Valley area of Spokane County in July 1987 and by the loss of 114 dwellings in the Spokane County "fire storm" of 1991. This section provides policy direction for development of comprehensive wildfire standards.

RL.6 Development in rural and natural resource land areas shall be in a manner that provides for adequate fire access and fire protection.

RL.6.1 Develop comprehensive fire protection regulations consistent with recognized practice and recommendations and integrate them into zoning and other land use regulations as applicable; such regulation should include incentives to encourage development designed to mitigate wildfires.

CHAPTER 4

Housing Element

Insert photo - COUNTY

Introduction

The availability of affordable, healthy, and safe housing is foundational to the success and well-being of our communities. Ensuring everyone has access to housing is a critical investment and requires thoughtful land use policies, development regulations, funding, regional collaboration, community engagement, and infrastructure financing to help guide private and public sector development. The goals and policies of the Housing Chapter are intended to serve as a framework for long-term planning and daily decision-making on housing-related projects and programs to meet regional housing needs and local housing unit growth allocations. The policies seek to strengthen collaboration, improve housing tools and processes, increase the supply of diverse housing types, improve housing stability, and retain affordable housing stock.

The Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) requires all jurisdictions to plan for and accommodate the housing needs of residents at every income level. This includes housing units for moderate-, low-, very low-, and extremely low-income households, as well as emergency housing, emergency shelters, and permanent supportive housing (PSH). In addition, jurisdictions must document programs and actions needed to achieve housing availability. Table 1 shows the housing need for unincorporated urban and rural areas in Spokane County.

Photo 1. Table 1: Projected Housing Needs by Income Level in Unincorporated Spokane County

Total Units Allocated (2020-2046)	Permanent Housing Needs by Income Level (% of Area Median Income)							
	0-30%		>30-50%	>50-80%	>80-100%	100-120%	>120%	Emergency Housing Needs (temp.)
	Non-PSH	PSH						
20,292 (urban)	4,948	1,420	3,385	2,745	1,481	1,222	5,091	755
3,045 (rural)	-	-	-	-	-	-	3,045	-

Appendix x, Housing Needs Assessment, contains summary data and analysis regarding housing needs in Spokane County, including a residential land capacity analysis which analyzes the adequacy of the capacity of lands zoned in various residential categories to meet the needs of all economic segments of the population. The assessment includes information on the following U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) groups for household incomes:

- Extremely Low Income (less than 30% Area Median Income (AMI))
- Very Low Income (30% to 50% AMI)
- Low Income (<50% to 80% AMI)
- Moderate Income (<80% to 120% AMI)
- Above Moderate Income (<120% AMI)

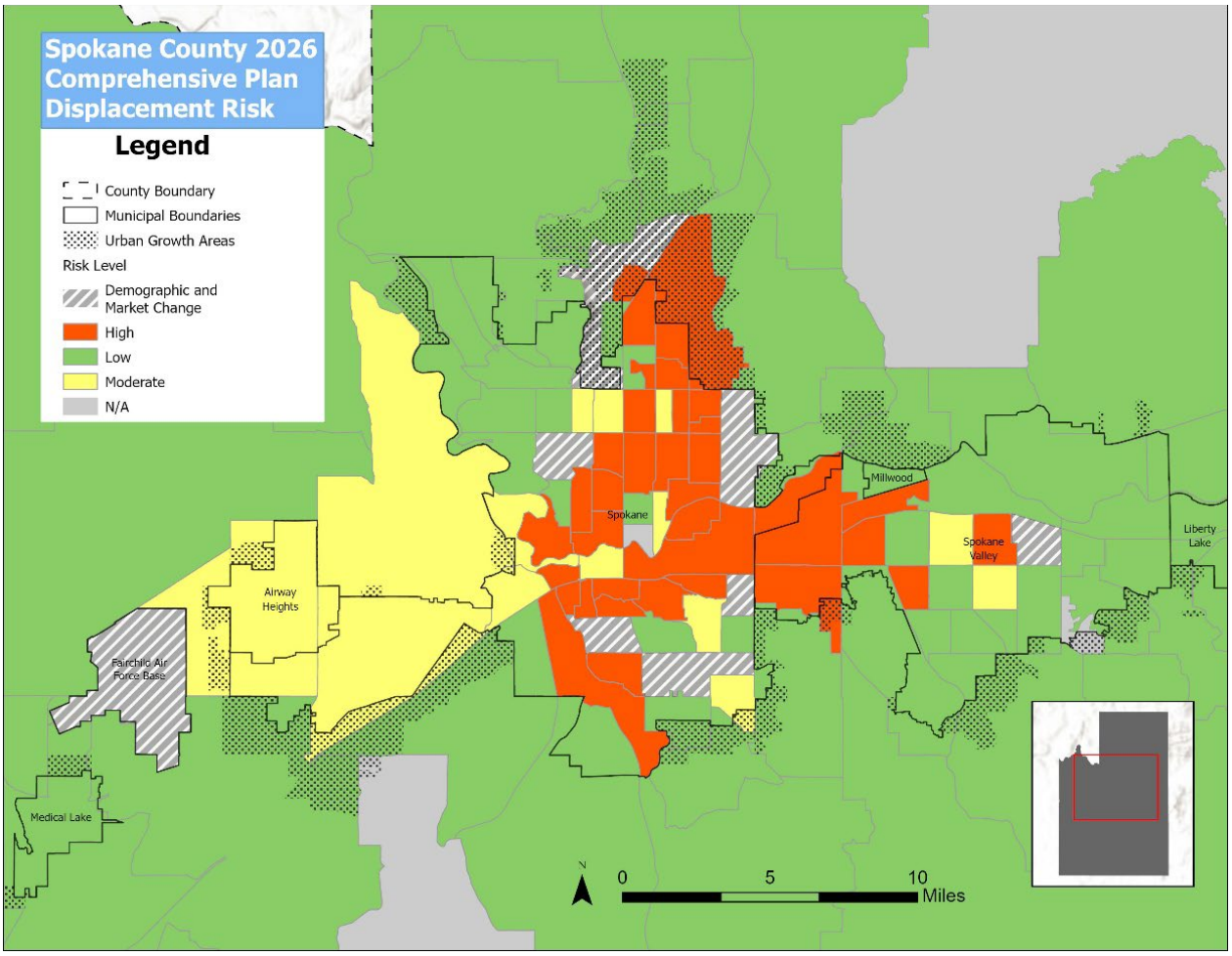
The findings demonstrate a substantial need for extremely low, very low-, and low-income housing. In addition, there is a significant need for more permanent supportive housing and emergency housing. The assessment of adequate provisions is included in the Housing Needs Assessment prepared for the

Comprehensive Plan. This report includes the identification of barriers and limitations of housing production and documents programs and actions needed to achieve housing availability. The policies in the Housing element intend to implement and ensure that sufficient land for housing is identified and will be available in an efficient and competitive land market, and assumes that market-rate housing will continue to produce housing for those in the upper economic brackets. However, a combination of zoning reform, regulatory incentives, financial subsidies, and innovative planning techniques will be necessary to ensure that housing is developed for lower income households.

The Needs Assessment also identifies areas that are at higher risk of displacement as well as policies that contribute to disparate impacts. In addition to market forces, systemic discrimination throughout the 20th century such as redlining, racial covenants, urban renewal and gentrification projects, and eminent domain displaced low-income and vulnerable populations throughout the County. These actions contributed to patterns of racially disparate impacts and exclusion in housing still seen today.

Map H-1 below identifies the areas that are at greater risk of displacement in Spokane County. The higher risks of displacement are primarily located within cities, although the unincorporated UGA to the north (North Metro) contains a large geographic area of high risk, with smaller areas of moderate to high risk located in unincorporated areas to the south and west. Renters are at a greater risk of displacement. As the unincorporated areas continue to grow and develop, policies that help create affordable housing, homeownership opportunities, and prevent displacement are necessary to give residents in these communities the option to remain and thrive.

Photo 2. **Map 1: Spokane County Housing Displacement Risk**



Housing Targets

The GMA requires allocation of the state Office of Financial Management's (OFM) population projection for Spokane County to county subareas to ensure that the 20-year growth expectations used for GMA local plans are consistent across jurisdictions. In addition, the Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) also require the development and adoption of 20-year housing unit growth targets, consistent with the population growth targets. Both the population and housing growth targets were developed by the Planning Technical Advisory Committee (PTAC), recommended by the Steering Committee of Elected Officials (SCEO), and adopted by the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC).

The SCEO reviewed and recommended the initial 2046 population allocation to the BoCC in March of 2024 and the subsequent housing allocation in January of 2025. The BoCC adopted SCEO recommendations for the initial population growth targets in May of 2024 and housing growth targets

in x date. As part of the process for preparing the 2026 plan update for the county, an analysis of different plan alternatives was conducted. Following the plan alternatives analysis, the BoCC selected a preferred alternative for adoption. The following table shows the 2046 housing targets allocated throughout the Region.

Photo 3. Table 2: 2046 Spokane County Housing Growth Targets

Area	2020 Census Housing Units	2046 Housing Unit Targets	2020-2046 Housing Unit Growth	
			Amount	% of Total County Growth
Cities	162,827	214,674	51,847	68.96%
Unincorporated County	59,013	82,350	23,337	31.04%
Total Spokane County	**221,840**	**297,024**	**75,184**	**100.00%**
Airway Heights	3,626	7,581	3,955	5.26%
Cheney	5,354	7,430	2,076	2.76%
Deer Park	1,902	2,985	1,083	1.44%
Fairfield	228	228	0	0.00%
Latah	88	88	0	0.00%
Liberty Lake	4,915	10,095	5,180	6.89%
Medical Lake	1,828	2,157	329	0.44%
Millwood	820	926	106	0.14%
Rockford	195	263	68	0.09%
Spangle	127	142	15	0.02%
Spokane	99,938	122,297	22,359	29.74%
Spokane Valley	43,751	60,412	16,661	22.16%
Waverly	55	70	15	0.02%

Goals and Policies

Regional Coordination

Because of housing mobility and market dynamics, housing markets are not limited to jurisdictional boundaries. Without collaboration, Spokane County, the cities in Spokane County, and the region will struggle to meet housing goals and needs. Therefore, it is important that housing programs and policies support a regional approach and collaboration among agencies. Additionally, localized neighborhood planning must be supported to ensure community members' concerns are coordinated with regional housing goals and targets. The following policies provide guidance to ensure coordinated housing programs.

H.1 Housing policies and programs are coordinated strategically and efficiently with other jurisdictions, agencies and neighborhoods.

H.1.1 Encourage regional coordination among jurisdictions, agencies, neighborhoods and housing providers to ensure housing is available for all economic segments of the community.

H.1.2 Support new and innovative financing programs that provide affordable housing for all, with special consideration of vulnerable populations.

H.1.3 Provide opportunities for early and continuous participation by community members and neighborhood groups in land use and community development planning processes.

H.1.4 Establish subarea planning programs that integrate neighborhood housing concerns into broader regional planning efforts..

H.1.5 Encourage the creation and continued operation and effectiveness of neighborhood associations through neighborhood and subarea planning programs.

H.1.6 Promote partnerships between public and private nonprofit organizations to increase housing and home ownership opportunities.

H.1.7 Ensure, through the use of interlocal agreements, that residential development regulations and standards are consistent for all jurisdictions within Urban Growth Areas.

H.1.8 Support regional coordination among jurisdictions, agencies, and non-profits that work to mitigate new homelessness and rehabilitate chronic homelessness.

Housing Regulations

Zoning and building regulations play a critical role in shaping the urban and rural environment, dictating where housing can be and what type of housing can be built. While these regulations are crucial for maintaining the health, safety, and welfare of the community, overly restrictive land use regulations and zoning laws have been linked to higher housing prices, reduced construction activity, and a decrease in the elasticity of housing supply. Additionally, historic zoning practices have had an exclusionary effect, used by affluent communities to boost property values, decrease tax burdens, and often impede the influx of non-white residents. For these reasons, it is important for Spokane County to carefully craft its regulations to prevent confusing, inconsistent and overly burdensome processes that create uncertainty, increase project costs, and contribute to socioeconomic divisions. This section addresses the availability of affordable housing by providing policies to ease regulatory barriers and increase flexibility while maintaining high-quality housing and life standards for its residents. Regulatory measures are also considered elsewhere in the plan, including the Urban Land Use, Rural Land Use, and Economic Development Chapters, which contain goals and policies relevant to the provision of affordable housing.

H.2 Regulations allow for greater flexibility in the housing development process and do not impede affordable housing provisions.

H.2.1 Periodically assess the effects of policies and regulations on the affordability of housing costs and examine if regulatory changes are needed to meet affordability goals .When developing housing regulations, ensure that housing affordability, environmental sustainability, design quality, and neighborhood vitality are considered.

H.2.2 Develop consistent, precise, fair and enforceable regulations that maintain environmental quality and public health and safety standards, while minimizing housing development costs.

H.2.3 Develop standards and incentives that facilitate restoration and relocation of existing structures, and rehabilitation of substandard housing.

H.2.4 Mid-to-high density and mixed-use housing types should be located within a reasonable walking distance to amenities, such as public transit, parks, and retail.

H.2.5 Provide for exemptions to or reductions of impact fees and/or permit fees to encourage the development of low-income housing *(See Capital Facilities Plan, Impact Fees)*.

H.2.6 Ensure regulations do not create impediments to fair housing choice.

H.2.7 Encourage creative housing design and appropriate open spaces in areas of high-density housing.

H.2.8 Ensure that the design of infill development is compatible with surrounding uses.

H.2.9 Encourage creative design practices that integrate residential and commercial uses.

H.2.10 Ensure that there is sufficient zoned capacity in the unincorporated area to accommodate Spokane County's housing need allocations and provide a variety of affordable, sustainable housing types.

H.2.11 Consider adopting pre-approved housing plans to expedite permits, reduce costs, and encourage design consistency.

Affordable Housing

Affordable housing applies to a wide range of housing types at varying costs that can meet the needs of a diverse community. Following the standard definition set by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), "affordable housing" is housing with monthly costs, including utilities, that do not exceed 30% of a household's monthly income. Households that spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs are considered cost-burdened, while those that spend more than 50% of their income are considered severely cost burdened. While housing affordability is an issue that can affect people of all income levels, those making less than 80% of the area median income are typically at more risk of being cost-burdened than those making 100% or higher.

As of 2023, market-rate rental housing is generally capable of meeting those making 80% or more of the county's AMI, while owner occupied housing typically only accessible to those making 120% of the county's AMI. Therefore, the primary focus of this element is on mechanisms to increase the availability of affordable housing for low-income groups and other vulnerable populations. Such mechanisms may include regulatory reform, mixed-use developments, financial incentives and subsidies, strategic use of county owned land, and support for programs that rehabilitate and preserve existing housing. Additionally, providing affordable home ownership opportunities maintains importance to support residents in building wealth and stability in Spokane County.

H.3a Develop a variety of housing options for all economic segments of the community.

H.3b Ensure that all present and future residents of Spokane County can obtain and retain adequate, safe and affordable housing.

H.3c Existing affordable housing stock is preserved and maintained.

H.3.1 Encourage a broad range of affordable housing options for extremely low through moderate-income households.

H.3.2 Support moderate density housing, such as townhomes, duplexes and triplexes, throughout urban residential areas.

H.3.3 Adopt standards that facilitate the development of lower-cost housing types, such as small-lot homes, accessory dwelling units, manufactured homes and single-room occupancy developments.

H.3.4 Encourage owner-built housing, adaptive reuse, rehabilitation, conversion, and other innovative techniques for increasing housing inventories.

H.3.5 Allow development of residential buildings that have shared facilities, such as single-room occupancy facilities, co-housing facilities and boarding homes. Ensure compatibility of residential uses through development standards.

H.3.6 Encourage the preservation and improvement of existing manufactured and mobile home rental parks.

H.3.7 Utilize key Federal and State initiatives that support affordable housing production and infrastructure.

H.3.8 Consider adopting local funding streams that generate revenue for affordable housing development.

H.3.9 Utilize funding streams and partnerships with public, private, and non-profit organizations to preserve existing affordable housing projects.

H.3.10 Utilize surplus, underutilized, vacant, and/or abandoned public land for affordable housing production.

H.3.11 Consider adopting land banking programs that strategically acquire and preserve multiple properties for affordable housing development.

H.3.12 Pursue techniques that minimize the displacement of extremely-low to moderate-income households and other vulnerable populations resulting from losses in the county's existing stock of affordable housing.

H.3.13 Support standards and programs that improve the quality of both new and existing housing, such as assistance for home safety modifications, homeowner rehabilitation assistance programs, lead abatement, and weatherization assistance.

H.3.14 Cooperate with public, private, and non-profit providers in applying techniques that facilitate affordable home ownership opportunities, community land trusts, co-op housing, and first-time homebuyer programs.

H.3.15 Support the efforts of low-income housing advocacy organizations and assist in the timely processing of applications for low-income housing.

H.3.16 Adopt inclusionary zoning that incentivizes or requires developments to provide affordable housing for extremely-low to moderate-income households.

H.3.17 Coordinate with the Spokane County Housing and Community Development Department to report annually on the progress made in the development and preservation of affordable housing and initiate corrections to the Comprehensive Plan when necessary.

Supportive, Emergency, & Special Needs Housing

As of 2023, Spokane County does not have any emergency shelters, emergency housing or permanent supportive housing within the unincorporated urban growth area but rather supports other jurisdictions through financial partnerships. These housing and shelter types support our most vulnerable populations, including those with special needs, and a shortage of available, decent and affordable living units makes it difficult for these community members to obtain and maintain an acceptable living standard. Therefore, the purpose of this section is to help increase the supply of these housing types within the unincorporated areas as well as continue supporting regional efforts to shelter and house vulnerable community members.

H.4a Adequate housing services provide immediate safety, rapid transition to stable housing, and connect vulnerable community members to resources.

H.4b Encourage housing that meets the requirements of special-needs populations in Spokane County.

H.4c Promote fair and equal access to housing in Spokane County for all persons with special needs.

H.4.1 The county shall facilitate the siting and equitable distribution of group homes, emergency housing, emergency shelters, and permanent supportive housing.

H.4.2 The siting of emergency housing, emergency shelters, permanent supportive housing, and special needs housing should be located in areas with adequate services and infrastructure.

H.4.3 Partner with regional bodies that lead other human service and prevention-oriented programs for people experiencing homelessness.

H.4.4 Support the coordination of housing and service providers to serve vulnerable community members.

H.4.5 Decisions on locating special-needs housing should be based on the facilities, impacts on infrastructure and services, and not be based on the circumstances of the occupants.

H.4.6 Ensure that codes and ordinances allow for a continuum of housing and care opportunities for special-needs populations, such as emergency housing, transitional housing, congregate housing, independent living, assisted living, family-based living, and intergenerational housing.

H.4.7 Encourage the de-institutionalization of housing for the special-needs populations by improving opportunity for small-scale group homes.

Fairness in Housing

The intent of fairness in housing is to encourage freedom of choice in the sale or rental of dwellings. Fair-housing rights are established through both state and federal laws. The private and public sector housing agencies are very familiar with these principles as they apply to buyer/seller or landlord/tenant relationships. Discrimination based on race, color, age, sex, religion, national origin, familial status and disability is prohibited. Additionally, "special-needs populations" are guaranteed fairness in housing.

H.5 Ensure fair and equal access to housing in Spokane County for all persons.

H.5.1 County regulations shall comply with state and federal fair housings laws.

Chapter 5

Transportation Element

New photo - COUNTY

Purpose

People and places are connected to one another by the transportation system. The transportation system consists of facilities that accommodate man modes of transport, including cars, trucks, buses, bicycles, trains, airplanes and pedestrian. The primary focus of the transportation element is meeting Spokane County's future transportation needs for roads, trails/pathways, walkways and transit, while supporting the health, equity, and safety of Spokane County's community for all ages and abilities. This includes promoting investment in active transportation improvements, and public transportation, to help create a safer transportation network while reducing the environmental harm produced from greenhouse gas emissions.

It also includes allowing people to easily and safely travel to areas that are important to them, including their work, school, shopping facilities, and recreational areas using different modes of transportation.

Spokane County's population and employment will increase by 100,065 people over the next 20 years by 2046. With a projected growth of 35,236 people in unincorporated Spokane County. This anticipated growth will result in additional demand on the transportation system. Transportation strategies must be developed to maintain acceptable levels of service for the transportation system as this growth occurs. This will also require Spokane County to continue to support public transportation in the unincorporated areas and investments in active transportation facilities to help ease demand on Spokane County's road network. The transportation element serves as Spokane County's action plan to provide the transportation strategies necessary to accommodate future growth. The transportation element combines technical and financial analysis for the County's transportation system through a methodology that meets requirements of the Growth Management Act. The Transportation Element identifies existing transportation system characteristics, establishes level of service ratings, identifies existing and future deficiencies based on the established levels of service, develops improvement projects and strategies to mitigate deficiencies and analyzes projected revenues to ensure that necessary improvements can be constructed as needed.

Design of the Transportation System

Urban Local Access

The primary purpose of residential streets is to provide access to adjacent residential property. These streets may be privately owned and maintained, but most are public streets. Street design can have a significant impact on community character. Contemporary residential design often features a street designed with cul-de-sacs and minimal connections to the surrounding street network. "Gated communities" have also become popular. An alternative street design is the traditional or grid, design. This traditional design, which is common in most older neighborhoods, features streets that are connected forming relatively small blocks.

The major advantage of the contemporary design is that through traffic is minimized and it is assumed that security is enhanced. Disadvantages of the contemporary design include more difficult access for emergency and service vehicles and increased traffic congestion on arterial streets. The contemporary design discourages pedestrian and transit use since generally one must travel a greater distance to get from point A to point B than with a traditional connected street pattern.

The traditional street design tends to disperse traffic more evenly since alternative routes are provided through many connections. The traditional street design better facilitates pedestrian and transit access to the transportation network. With the increased activity on the street, safety and security may be enhanced.

Rural Local Access Roads

The purpose of rural local access roads is to provide access to rural properties. They are designed for low speeds and may be paved or gravel. Some rural local access roads may be private roads. The main advantage of private roads is that the public is not burdened with maintenance costs for repairs and snow plowing. The primary disadvantage of private roads may be difficulties with emergency access associated with inventorying, signage, maintenance and design. Most of these difficulties can be overcome with adequate construction standards, provision for maintenance agreements and coordination with service providers.

Urban Arterial Streets

Urban arterial street designs are generally based on capacity or the volume of traffic they are intended to carry. The highest-capacity arterials are limited access arterials. They are generally constructed with four or more lanes and their purpose is to move traffic through an area rather than to provide access to adjacent property. The location of limited access arterials must be carefully considered. They tend to form a barrier to pedestrian as well as auto traffic. It has been well documented that construction of limited access arterials through residential areas often leads to the deterioration of adjoining neighborhoods.

Most urban arterials are multipurpose facilities providing access to adjacent properties as well as accommodating through traffic and are designed to carry moderate to heavy volumes of vehicular traffic. The multipurpose urban arterials should be designed to provide for various modes of transportation, including pedestrians, bicycles, transit, trucks and cars.

Rural Arterial Roads

Rural arterial roads are moderately fast facilities designed to provide for through traffic, to collect traffic from the local area and to route traffic to urban areas and other major traffic generators. Several new rural arterials and improvements to existing rural arterials are proposed in the Arterial Road Plan. The intent of these rural arterials is to provide additional and improved routes for pass-through truck and commuter traffic that is currently clogging urban arterials. Several issues associated with rural

arterials have been identified that should be addressed by the Comprehensive Plan policies. These major issues are listed below.

Preventing sprawl in rural Spokane County - Land use policies must prohibit anything other than low-density residential development and prohibit most commercial and industrial development in rural areas. The land use policies should be backed up by transportation policies that limit, manage and control access along rural routes. Rural arterials must be specifically defined as to their intended use and characteristics. Finally, policies must be in place that make it clear that rural arterials are not to be used as a rationale for extending sewer and water or expanding urban growth boundaries.

Maintaining rural lifestyle - To reduce impacts to the rural areas, roadways should be designed that are sensitive to the aesthetic and environmental qualities of the countryside through which they pass. This may include a special section design featuring native landscaping, bike paths and routing to minimize negative impacts.

Protecting natural areas - Wildlife habitat and corridors, open space, conservation areas and farmlands are important to the quality of life in Spokane, as expressed by participants in the *Blueprints 2000* planning process (Is this still a relevant planning document at 26 years old? Is there anything more contemporary it can be replaced with?) The conservation futures program to purchase habitat and open space, the Dishman Hills Natural Area and Riverside State Park are significant public investments worthy of protection. Rural routes must be carefully selected to avoid impacts to these valuable resources.

When transportation improvements are designed, it is important to address the needs of the general public, individual property owners and neighborhoods. When feasible transportation improvements should be designed as multi-use facilities that provide for active transportation transit and automobile use.

Arterial Road Plan Map

Provide appendix location and hyper link if possible

Active Transportation Plan Map

To view the map please click on the above link or contact the Planning Department at (509) 477-1500

Provide the location in the appendix as well as a hyper link if possible

Transportation Goals and Policies

The transportation goals and policies are intended to provide a variety of regional transportation choices to serve current and future residents of all ages and abilities. They encourage multi-modal and pedestrian-friendly facilities that support, encourage and are coordinated with a variety of land uses. The transportation goals also emphasize the movement of people and goods effectively and safely while maintaining or improving air quality and mitigating impacts to the natural and built environment.

Intergovernmental Coordination

The Growth Management Act requires that all elements of a comprehensive plan be consistent with each other. It is also important that comprehensive plans, and especially transportation plans, be coordinated between neighboring governmental jurisdictions. The following goals and policies are intended to address these important planning principles.

T.1 Develop transportation plans that complement, support and are consistent with land use and transportation plans from other jurisdictions and agencies.

T.1.1 Coordinate planning and operational aspects of the regional transportation system with cities within Spokane County, adjacent jurisdictions, Washington State Department of Transportation, Spokane Transit Authority, Spokane Regional Transportation Council and any other affected agencies.

T.1.2 The regional transportation plan shall be consistent with the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

T.1.3 Development of regional transportation plans shall be coordinated and consistent with adopted comprehensive land use plans.

Consistency and Concurrency

The Growth Management Act requires transportation facilities to be concurrent with development. This means that transportation facilities must be in place and in use within 6-years of the impact of development. The Transportation Improvement Program or TIP identifies specific projects that are needed to mitigate impacts to the transportation system due to existing system deficiencies and expected future growth.

T.2 Provide transportation system improvements concurrent with new development and consistent with adopted land use and transportation plans.

T.2.1 Maintain an inventory of transportation facilities and services to support management of the transportation system and to monitor system performance.

T.2.2 Transportation improvements needed to serve new development shall be in place at the time new development impacts occur. If this is not feasible, then a financial commitment, consistent with the capital facilities plan, shall be made to complete the improvement within six years.

T.2.3 Transportation improvements shall be consistent with land use plans, capital funding and other planning elements.

T.2.4 Implement concurrency review and management that evaluates impacts from new development and identifies funding sources for improvements. Evaluate the transportation system annually and compared to prior years.

T.2.5 Coordinate planning with appropriate jurisdictions and utility companies for utility corridors that may affect the transportation system.

T.2.6 Use a 10- and 20-year horizon when preparing transportation forecasts to provide information on the location, timing and capacity needs of future growth.

T.2.7 The transportation system shall support the Land Use Element of the Spokane County Comprehensive Plan as growth occurs.

T.2.8 Major shortfalls between transportation revenues and improvement costs should be addressed during the annual review of the 6-year transportation improvement program. Resolution of revenue shortfalls could include reassessment of land use, growth targets, level of service standards and revenue availability.

Alternative Modes of Travel

The Countywide Planning Policies require the regional transportation plan to include alternative modes of transportation to the automobile including public transportation, active transportation facilities, , air and rail facilities. However, for most of the Twentieth Century, and especially since World War II, transportation improvements have emphasized automobile mobility. Until recently, alternative modes such as transit, bicycling and walking have not been prioritized .

It is expected that the automobile will continue to be the dominant mode of transportation in the foreseeable future, both in the number of trips and the distance traveled. However, Alternative modes of transportation play an important and beneficial role in the transportation system. Encouraging active transportation can lessen congestion, reduce air pollution, reduce consumption of natural resources and reduce maintenance costs while providing health benefits to the residents of Spokane County. To encourage the use of active transportation, facilities must be provided that are connected, accessible, convenient, safe, and economical.

T.3a Provide a range of transportation choices within the Spokane Region.

T.3a.1 The transportation system shall provide a range of transportation modes, including active transportation and supports high performance transit.

Public Transportation

As Spokane County's population continues to grow, a strong and well-connected public transportation system will be necessary to help support Spokane County's future land use plan. Supporting well-funded public transportation options will help reduce traffic congestion and reduce vehicle miles traveled. Public Transportation also helps support mobility for all income brackets, especially for the county's most vulnerable population groups.

Transit in Spokane County is led by the Spokane Transit Authority. Spokane Transit provides public transportation services through fixed route (bus) service, Paratransit service, and Rideshare to the cites of Airway Heights, Cheney, Liberty Lake, Medical Lake, Millwood, Spokane, and Spokane Valley, and parts of the unincorporated County.

The county will continue to support investments in public transportation, and active transportation improvements alongside major arterials and their parallel streets and implement zoned densities that support public transportation to help leverage further investment in public transit and increase ridership.

T.3b Provide a safe, efficient and cost-effective public transportation system.

T.3b.1 Coordinate with Spokane Transit Authority and other governments and communities to create a regional network of safe, efficient and cost-effective public transportation services and facilities.

T.3b.2 Develop transit services and facilities that support land use plans and integrate regional and local transportation needs.

T.3b.3 Support development of secure, conveniently located park-and-ride lots to encourage the use of public transportation and reduction of VMT.

T.3b.4 Encourage the use of bus, ride-sharing and high-capacity transit services to make major segments of the transportation system more efficient.

T.3b.5 Provide intermodal connections to enhance the efficiency and convenience of public transportation

T.3b.6 (New Policy) Implement Spokane County's Division Street Transit Oriented Development Plan as guiding policy for land use decisions and active transportation infrastructure improvements along the division corridor and parallel arterials in Unincorporated Spokane County' (Change wording to reflect the County's portion of the project)

T.3b.7 (New Policy) Support Active Transportation improvements near stations supporting High Performance Transit Lines and stations.

T.3b.8 (New Policy) Spokane County should support mixed-use, Neighborhood Residential, and Neighborhood Commercial land uses adjacent to arterials and parallel arterials supported by transit.

T.3c Preserve existing right-of-way and designate new right-of-way which supports high-capacity transportation corridors.

T.3d Encourage land uses that will support a high-capacity transportation system.

T.3d.1 Support high-capacity transit facilities and services that are consistent with the actions and plans of Spokane Transit Authority, Spokane Regional Transportation Council and other jurisdictions.

T.3d.2 Support ~~Create and expand~~ transit-oriented activity centers that are supported by public transportation and include a mix of uses.

Active Transportation

Active Transportation is defined in RCW 47.04.015 including but not limited to, sidewalks, bicycle facilities, trails, and pathways. Spokane County strives to have an active transportation network that prioritizes safety, is well connected, can be used as a viable mode of transportation, supports public transportation, and can help foster economic growth and create a high-quality of life. Spokane County aims to achieve an active transportation network that is low-stress, ADA accessible and increases pedestrian mobility and connectivity. The comprehensive plan will support and be implemented by Spokane County's Active Transportation Plan resolution number 24-0696).

T.3e Promote active transportation countywide and increase access improve safety, mobility and convenience for all ages and abilities.

T.3e.1 The transportation network should provide safe and convenient active transportation access between housing, recreation, shopping, schools, community facilities and mass transit access points. Obstructions and conflicts with active transportation movement should be minimized.

T.3e.2 Active transportation facilities should be designed along arterial, parallel arterials, near pedestrian generating places And clearly marked.

T.3e.3 Maintain the Spokane County Active Transportation Master Plan. The Active Transportation Master Plan holds an inventory of facilities and deficiencies. Coordinate the Spokane County Active Transportation Master Plan with SRTC's regional active transportation plan.

T.3e.4 Promote hard surface walkway systems, including but not limited to, concrete, asphalt and brick as an alternative to sidewalks that are separate from roads if

they fit in with the characteristics of the neighborhood and private maintenance is assured.

T.3e.5 Convenient bicycle parking and designated areas where bicycles can be secured shall be required at major destinations and at transportation centers.

T.3e.6 Encourage preservation of abandoned rail rights-of-way for development of bike, pedestrian, equestrian routes or other forms of active transportation

T.3e.7 Allow hard-surfaced pathways, including but not limited to, concrete, asphalt and brick to substitute for sidewalks in commercial or industrial areas when pathways provide more direct and/or safer routes for pedestrians.

T.3e.8 Develop streets and active transportation standards that contribute to a system of fully connected routes.

T.3e.9 Adopt the Little Spokane River Valley Trails and Pathways System Plan and Southeast Spokane Trails Master Plan as a part of the Comprehensive Plan (see Appendix E and Appendix F). Has this been done already or does it still need to be done?

T.3e.10 (New Policy). The County shall prioritize active transportation improvement investments for locations that have the greatest potential for improving access to schools, parks/trails, public transit, public facilities, multi-family residences, commercial areas, and historically and currently marginalized communities.

T.3e.11 (New Policy). Encourage new multi-use interconnected trails and paths in new neighborhood residential development.

T.3e.12 (New Policy) Support and implement Spokane County's 2024 Active Transportation Plan.

T.3e.13 (New Policy) Support and implement Spokane County's ADA Transition Plan.

Rail

T.3f Support and encourage the continued viability of the passenger and freight rail system in the region.

T.3f.1 Participate with other jurisdictions to facilitate safe and efficient rail systems.

T.3f.2 Develop procedures, in cooperation with railroads and the public, to improve safety and facilitate a reduction in noise pollution from the rail system.

T.3f.3 Land use types and densities shall be established along rail corridors that support and are compatible with freight and passenger rail transportation.

T.3f.4 Encourage banking of rail right-of-way.

T.3f.5 Encourage the continuation of rail service that supports the viability of the local economy.

T.3f.6 Encourage consolidation of operating rail lines and corridors to facilitate safety, improve operating effectiveness and reduce impact on adjacent lands.

T.3f.7 (New Policy) Encourage and support the continued operations of existing mass-transit options between Spokane County, Central Washington and the Puget Sound region.

Air Transportation

T.3g Protect airports in Spokane County from encroachment by incompatible land uses.

T.3g.1 Prohibit uses in airport areas which attract birds, create visual hazards, discharge particulate matter into the air which could alter atmospheric conditions, emit transmissions which would interfere with aviation communications and instrument landing systems, otherwise obstruct or conflict with airport operations or aircraft traffic patterns or result in potential hazard for off-airport land use.

T.3g.2 Commercial and industrial uses that benefit from and do not conflict with aircraft operations should be encouraged.

T.3g.3 Decisions on zone reclassifications and land use development shall consider noise hazards of aircraft operations and accident potentials.

T.3g.4 Coordinate airport development on a regional basis.

T.3g.5 Discourage new residential development near airports where significant noise impacts and safety hazards exist or are likely in the future.

T.3g.6 Encourage noise abatement procedures per FAA regulations at airports in Spokane County.

T.3g.7 Encourage the protection of airports from adjacent incompatible land uses and/or activities that could adversely impact present and/or future use of the airport as an Essential Public Facility **(EPF).** Examples of incompatible land uses may include but not be limited to urban density residential, multi-family residential, uses that attract large concentrations of people, wildlife hazards, and special uses such as schools, hospitals and nursing homes, and explosive/hazardous materials.

T.3g.8 Promote the safe operation of airports by discouraging uses or activities that will impede safe flight operations or endanger the lives of people on the ground.

T.3g.9 Encourage open space/clear areas and utilize zoning and land subdivision criteria within key safety areas adjacent to the airport to facilitate protection of the airport as an essential public facility. When possible, promote contiguous open space parcels, especially in areas with smaller parcel size configurations.

T.3g.10 Evaluate all proposed amendments to the comprehensive plan, capital facilities plan and Urban Growth Area (UGA) that will increase incompatible land uses or potential of incompatible development adjacent to airports.

T.3g.11 Develop criteria, standards and land use designations that will protect the airport and aviation uses from incompatible development by adopting a combination of zoning techniques including but not limited to special airport overlay zoning, height restrictions, building restrictions in high noise areas and development siting criteria for evaluating uses or activities in key areas adjacent to the airport.

T.3g.12 Protect airspace by prohibiting structural penetration of Imaginary Surfaces adjacent to airports as described in 14 CFR (Federal Aviation Regulations) Part 77 for public airports and Department of Defense Air Installation Compatible Use Zone (AICUZ) criteria for areas around military airports.

T.3g.13 Within Airport Influence areas (properties near public airports which are subjected to aircraft noise of 65 decibels or higher day-night average sound level) a notice to title should be required for new or substantial redevelopment of lots, buildings, structures, and activities. The notice should specify that the property is near an airport and may experience low overhead flights, odor, vibrations, noise and other similar aviation impacts.

T.3g.14 Spokane International Airport, Felts Field and Deer Park Airport are recognized as Essential Public Facilities consistent with RCW 36.70A.200.

T.3h Maintain close-in airport facilities, which are easily accessible to the cities they serve and complement the economic health of Spokane County.

T.3h.1 Assure that the airports can maintain or expand their levels of operations to meet existing and future aviation demands consistent with airport master plans.

T.3h.2 Provide for adequate services and facilities in scale with the needs of individual airport operations.

T.3h.3 Ensure that airport planning is coordinated and consistent with the goals and policies of the Spokane County Comprehensive Plan.

T.3h.4 Encourage multi-modal access to airports.

T.3h.5 Encourage aviation related economic uses and opportunities adjacent to airports and promote the efficient mobility of goods and services by air consistent with the economic development element and the regional transportation strategy.

T.3i Recognize major airports and military facilities as key elements of a strong economic base and potential for Spokane County.

T.3i.1 Protect public and private investment in facilities for which there may be no feasible future replacement.

T.3i.2 Land use decisions on land in airport areas shall consider regional and national needs as well as localized concerns.

T.3i.3 Protect the viability of these airports as significant economic resources to the Spokane County community by encouraging compatible land uses, densities, and reducing hazards that may endanger the lives and property of the public and aviation users.

T.3i.4 Coordinate the protection of Spokane International, Felts Field and Deer Park Airports with the City of Spokane and the Towns of Airway Heights and Deer Park by developing consistent development regulations that utilize WSDOT Aviation Airport Land Use Compatibility guidelines and other best management practices for encouraging compatible land uses adjacent to these airports. Coordinate the protection of Fairchild Air Force Base by developing regulations that utilize Department of Defense AICUZ land use criteria for encouraging compatible land uses adjacent to military airports.

T.3i.5 Identify, preserve, and enhance, through interjurisdictional planning, goals, policies and development regulations that promote significant regional transportation linkages and multimodal connections to and from aviation facilities.

Protection of Fairchild Air Force Base

Fairchild Air Force Base (Fairchild AFB) is critical to the region's economy, generating thousands of jobs, millions of dollars in economic activity and substantial tax revenue. In the past, incompatible development has been a factor in the curtailment of training operations and restructuring of mission critical components to other U.S. military installations and, in some cases, the elimination of the installation. Fairchild AFB's military mission and the health of the local economy could be jeopardized by encroachment of incompatible land uses. Encroachment must be prevented through collaboration and joint planning among Fairchild AFB, City of Spokane, Spokane County, the City of Airway Heights, the City of Medical Lake, the Kalispel Tribe of Indians, the Spokane Tribe of Indians and the Spokane International Airport and through adoption of comprehensive plan goals and policies and implementing regulations.

The Washington State Legislature recognized the importance of military installations to Washington's economic health, that it is a priority of the state to protect the land surrounding military installations from incompatible development, and that priority is expressed by RCW 36.?0A.530 mandating that Comprehensive Plans and development regulations shall not allow incompatible development in the vicinity of military installations.

The region surrounding Fairchild AFB is expected to experience economic and population growth in the future and, as development moves closer to the base, a coordinated effort is needed to ensure that the growth which occurs in the surround areas allows the installation to maintain its essential role in the

nation's defense while concurrently remaining a vital member of the local community and a major contributor to the local economy.

Fairchild AFB is a modern, joint service, multi-mission base supporting air refueling and global mobility, survival training, munitions storage, and hosts four critical missions as follows:

> **92nd Air Refueling Wing** (Air Mobility Command USAF)- is one of the three largest air refueling wings in the nation providing a global air bridge for AMC and directly supporting the United States Strategic Command. The flying squadrons of the 92nd ARW execute global air refueling, airlift, and humanitarian missions for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Unified Commands, and Joint Task Forces. They directly support global engagement with contingency deployments and air refueling training.
>
> **141st Air Refueling Wing** (Washington Air National Guard) co-located on Fairchild, the 141st ARW are partners with the Air Force in worldwide missions. The 141st Air Refueling Wing has both a federal and state mission. Air National Guard refueling missions are flown under the direction of the Department of Defense Air Mobility Command. The federal mission is to train, equip and deploy quality mobility forces to forward operating locations in support of military and humanitarian missions.
>
> **336th Training Group** (Air Education & Training Command) - the Air Force's only survival training school with access to half a million acres of land for training purposes. The 336th Training Group and Joint Personnel Recovery Agency (JPRA) jointly focus on survival, escape, recovery and evacuation.
>
> **Joint Personnel Recovery Agency** (US Joint Forces Command) - The JPRA plans, prepares and executes personnel recovery activities. JPRA's emphasis is on personnel recovery. The Department of Defense and other federal government agencies use JPRA specialized training.

In addition to the above described missions Fairchild AFB also accommodates an Armed Forces Reserve Center which includes two Army Reserve units.

Additionally, the installation may be assigned additional military missions by the Pentagon at any time. When additional military missions are under consideration, the Pentagon considers many factors. One factor is the extent to which local communities are protecting Fairchild AFB from incompatible uses and densities.

From a historic economic development perspective, economic development on the West Plains, and particularly with respect to property around Fairchild AFB, was predominately natural resource oriented with agricultural, mining and forestry based industries, and compatibility issues had been practically nonexistent. These industries continue to be important elements in the local economy, but in recent years the local economy has diversified to encompass technology and service uses. Examples of these types of land uses on the West Plains are the Northern Quest Casino and the Airway Heights Correction Center, each with their own set of compatibility issues.

The goals and policies below lay the groundwork to eliminate or diminish compatibility issues and improve coordination between Fairchild AFB and the surrounding jurisdictional stakeholders of Airway Heights, Medical Lake, Spokane and Spokane County. These Goals and Policies are as follows:

T.3j Protect the long-term viability of Fairchild Air Force Base and assure flight safety in the vicinity of the Base while protecting the public's health and safety.

T.3j.1 **Military Influence Areas Established**

Military Influence Areas (MIAs) as illustrated on County Zoning maps, shall guide land use activities and construction in a manner compatible with long-term missions of Fairchild AFB to protect public health, safety and welfare and are generally described as follows, consistent with the recommendation of the Fairchild AFB Joint Land Use Study:

A. **Military Influence Area 1** (MIA 1) relates to regional and Non-Geographic activities that apply to Spokane County as a whole, reflect issues that can vary in geographic scope depending on the situation or procedures or processes that do not apply to a specific geographic area, such as the creation of a JLUS Coordinating Committee that will oversee implementation of JLUS, promoting intergovernmental and interagency coordination and collaboration regarding planning activities affecting Fairchild AFB, incorporating military housing needs in comprehensive plans and enacting regulations discouraging incompatible uses and activities near the base.

B. **Military Influence Area 2** (MIA 2) extends approximately 30,000 feet from the Fairchild AFB runway and defines an area where strategies are focused on notification efforts, avigation easements and interagency coordination pertaining to development that potentially affects Fairchild AFB operations and also includes, but are not limited to, controls of night lighting reducing the potential for bird strikes on aircraft and other wildlife affecting aircraft operation, Fairchild AFB review of project proposals to ensure that Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR) Part 77 imaginary surfaces are not penetrated with structures, electronic transmissions not in conflict with military communications, address Fairchild AFB impacts in SEPA documents and education of the public regarding Fairchild AFB military operations.

C. **Military Influence Area 3/4** (MIA 3/4) is based on military aircraft

overflight patterns and the 65 Ldn sound contour as illustrated in the Joint Land Use Study, including consideration of the future deployment of strategic offensive aircraft with more intensive sound impacts, identifies where strategies that restrict land uses and use densities apply, where there is a focus on noise reduction and a focus on enhanced level of notification of the noise and safety hazard issues due to Fairchild AFB aircraft operations.

T.3j.2 **Compatible Land Use and Densities Policies**
Encourage the protection of Fairchild AFB from land uses and/or activities that could adversely impact present and/or future base operations.

T.3j.3 **Compatibility with Fairchild AFB Missions**
Evaluate all proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, capital facilities plan, and Urban Growth Area (UGA) that will potentially encourage incompatible land uses or create the potential for incompatible development in the vicinity of Fairchild AFB.

T.3j.4 **Restrict Residential Uses**
Future Comprehensive Plan amendments and zone reclassifications within MIA 3/4 that would increase residential densities, geographically expand residential zones, establish a new residential designation, change an existing commercial or industrial designation to a residential designation or allow residential uses in commercial or industrial zones shall not be considered.

T.3j.5 **Existing Residential**
Encourage the use of special plans, planned unit developments or techniques within existing residential designations to help minimize conflicts and enhance compatibility between Fairchild AFB and new land uses.

T.3j.6 **Industrial Designations**
Existing Industrial designations in the MIA 3/4 are to be preserved and industrial uses that complement aviation facilities are to be encouraged.

T.3j.7 **Land Use Regulations**
Regulate land use within Military Influence Area 3/4 to protect public health and safety, ensure a compatible mix of land uses, and support ongoing Fairchild AFB operations, consistent with the Fairchild Joint Land Use Study recommendations.

T.3j.8 **Non-residential Density Limitations**
Sensitive uses that have a high concentration of people such as, but not limited to, schools, religious institutions, theaters, public assembly facilities and day care facilities are not allowed to locate near Fairchild AFB within MIA 3/4 and

non-residential uses with net densities exceeding 180 persons per acre are also not allowed.

T.3j.9 **Noise Abatement**
Require the application of noise abatement though acoustical analysis, structure design and construction techniques and materials in residential developments within MIA 3/4 per FM regulations (FAR Part 150) and the "Department of Navy Facilities Engineering Command 2005 Guidelines for Sound Insulation of Residences Exposed to Aircraft Operations" (prepared by Wyle Acoustics Group Consultants) as amended.

T.3j.10 **Protection Strategies**
Develop criteria, standards and land use designations that will protect Fairchild AFB from incompatible development by adopting a combination of zoning techniques, including but not limited to, special overlay zoning, height restrictions, building restrictions in high noise areas and development siting criteria in key areas adjacent to Fairchild AFB.

T.3j.11 **Operational Hazards**
Prohibit uses near Fairchild AFB which attract birds, create visual hazards, discharge particulate matter into the air which could adversely alter atmospheric conditions, emit transmissions which would interfere with military aviation communications and instrument landing systems, otherwise obstruct or conflict with airport operations or aircraft traffic patterns or result in potential hazard for off-Base land uses.

T.3j.12 **Protected Airspace**
Protect military airspace by preventing structural penetration of Imaginary Surfaces as described in UFC 3-260-01 and in the most recently published Fairchild AFB Air Installation Compatible Use Zone (AICUZ) Report.

Discussion: Telecommunications, broadcast towers, hobby communication towers shall be reviewed by Fairchild AFB officials. Developments within MIA 2 and MIA 3/4 which may affect UFC 3-260-01 imaginary surfaces shall obtain necessary approvals from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Operators of construction cranes within the AICUZ Accidental Potential Zones to coordinate with the Fairchild AFB and the Federal Aviation Administration prior to commencing operations.

T.3j.13 **Light and Glare**
Control light and glare in MIA 3/4 to protect the operational environment near Fairchild AFB.

T.3j.14 **Review**
Refer all applications for commercial development, subdivision review, variances, conditional uses, special exceptions and proposed amendments to Comprehensive Plans and development regulations proposed within MIA 2 and 3/4 to Fairchild AFB official(s) for review and comment in accordance with RCW 36.?0A.530.

T.3j.15 **Considerations**
Land use decisions regarding proposals located in the Fairchild AFB military influence areas shall consider regional and national needs as well as local concerns.

T.3j.16 **Consultation**
Invite Fairchild AFB representatives to advise the Planning Commission on community development issues which have the potential to impact base military operations.

T.3j.17 **Coordination**
Coordinate the protection of Fairchild AFB with the City of Spokane, Airway Heights and Medical Lake by developing planning policies and development regulations that are consistent with the Joint Land Use Study and Air Installation Compatible Use Zone (AICUZ) recommendations and other best management practices for encouraging compatible land uses in the general vicinity of Air Forces bases. It is important to initiate and maintain collaborative and cooperative relationships among Fairchild AFB vicinity municipalities and Fairchild AFB regarding all municipal activity potentially affecting Fairchild AFB's military mission and long term viability of the Base.

T.3j.18 **Contiguous Open Space**
Encourage open space/clear areas by utilizing zoning and land subdivision criteria within key safety areas in the vicinity of Fairchild AFB to facilitate protection of the Base. When possible, promote contiguous open space parcels via cluster development policies and regulations.

T.3j.19 **Rural Buffers**
Support efforts to purchase land, conservation easements or agriculture easements, and encourage the establishment of conservation easements as part of project development plans. Vacant land in close proximity to Fairchild AFB provides a land use buffer between the Base and urban and rural residential development.

T.3j.20 **Transfer of Development Rights**
Pursue implementing a Transfer of Development Rights (TOR) program with the parcels in close proximity to Fairchild AFB experiencing development

pressure as the sending area to other areas that would not threaten the operations of Fairchild AFB, consistent with these goals and policies.

T.3j.21 **Title Notice**
Require Title Notice for new development or substantial redevelopment of lots, buildings, and structures in MIA 2 and 3/4 that specifies the property is near Fairchild AFB and may experience low overhead flights, odor, vibrations, noise and other similar aviation impacts.

T.3j.22 **Public Information**
Encourage the dissemination of information to the public regarding Fairchild AFB mission activity and associated impacts through such means as website postings, distribution of brochures, distribution of information to the regional print and broadcast media, providing notices on new site plans, subdivisions and binding site plans.

T.3j.23 **Air Installation Compatible Use Zone Study (AICUZ)**
Review of Comprehensive Plan amendments for compatibility with the Fairchild AFB Air Installation Compatible Use Zone program and the Fairchild AFB Joint Land Use Study, additionally JLUS implementing regulations shall incorporate applicable Fairchild Air Installation Compatible Use Zone Study recommendations.

T.3j.24 **Accident Potential Zones**
Reduce and/or eliminate incompatible land uses and densities that exist within the Accident Potential Zones (APZ's) of Fairchild AFB, by identifying priority areas for acquisition programs, such as property purchase, alternative housing or relocating to resolve inconsistencies with the Department of Defense, Air Installation Compatible Use Zone (AICUZ) regulations.

Transportation System Design – Urban Road Functional Classifications

Principal Arterials: The principal arterial is a two (or more)-lane, moderately fast facility designed to permit relatively unimpeded traffic flow between major traffic generators such as the central business district, major shopping centers, major employment districts, etc. They are generally in the highest-volume corridors and serve the longest trip desires. These arterials are the framework road system for the urbanized portion of the County and should be located on community and neighborhood boundaries. Frequently, the principal arterial system carries important intra-urban and intercity bus routes. Principal arterials should not bisect homogeneous areas such as residential neighborhoods, shopping centers, parks, etc. Access to principal arterials should be managed.

Minor Arterials: Minor arterials interconnect and augment the principal arterial system. They are two (or more)-lane facilities, yet provide less mobility than principal arterials, with greater access to adjacent property frontage. Minor arterials may carry local bus routes and provide intra-community

continuity but should be located on community and neighborhood boundaries. They should not bisect residential neighborhoods.

Collector Arterials: Collector arterials provide both land access and traffic circulation within residential neighborhoods, commercial and industrial areas. They primarily serve individual neighborhoods, distributing traffic from such generators as elementary schools and neighborhood stores to minor and principal arterials. Collector arterials are relatively low-speed, two-lane facilities that often provide for on-street parking.

Local Access Roads: Local access roads provide access to adjacent property and generally do not support through traffic. They are located in the urban and rural areas. The alignment and traffic control measures on local access roads should encourage slow, safe speed.

Special Sections: The County Engineer may allow special arterial sections incorporating certain design elements (planting strips, median treatments, etc.) that enhance the roadway's geographic location, scenic vistas and/or recreational opportunities. The design should not degrade the functionality or safety of the roadway. Where a special section is desired and includes landscaping, a care and maintenance plan will also be required.

Design of Urban Roads

The design of streets can have a tremendous impact on the character of a community. Over the past 50 years, the emphasis in street design has been on increasing capacity for the automobile. The citizens of Spokane County have expressed a desire to consider the needs of all the potential street users when transportation facilities are designed. Designs should accommodate pedestrians, bicycles and transit as well as the automobile. The public has also identified a need to improve the appearance of transportation facilities by landscaping and controls on signs and other means. An emphasis has been placed on encouraging streets designed to form a network with multiple routes to any given point. Connected street design allows dispersal of traffic and provides easier access for emergency and service vehicles. Perhaps most important, street design must support adjacent land uses. These and other design issues are addressed in the following goals and policies.

T.4a Ensure that urban roadway systems are designed to preserve and be consistent with the scale of existing neighborhoods.

T.4a.1 Utilize best available engineering practices to ensure a safe and efficient roadway system.

T.4a.2 Optimize the capacity of existing roads to minimize the need for new or expanded roads through the use of improved signage, signalization, road maintenance and other means.

T.4a.3 To the greatest extent possible, provide coordinated and integrated traffic control systems.

T.4a.4 Discourage private roads as a principal means of access to developments. Allow private roads within developments as a principal means of circulation, provided adequate measures are in place to assure safe travel, emergency access and permanent private maintenance.

T.4a.5 Transportation facility design standards shall support the creation and preservation of communities and neighborhoods while simultaneously providing for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods.

T.4a.6 Develop an arterial road plan that emphasizes planned corridors for high-capacity roadways to keep high-speed traffic out of residential neighborhoods.

T.4a.7 Design of new transportation facilities or facility improvements should incorporate adequate consideration of the cultural, historical and aesthetic issues associated with a proposed transportation improvement.

T.4a.8 Encourage curbside landscaping consistent with safety requirements. Identify those species of landscaping that are most appropriate for curbside planting.

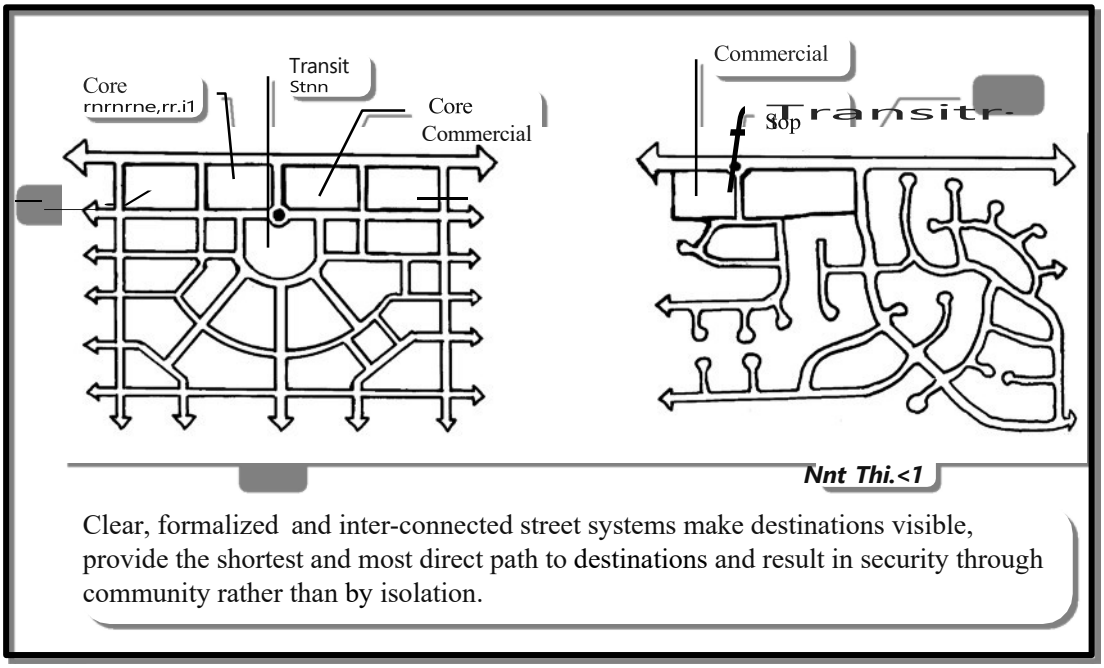
T.4a.9 Adequate access to and circulation within all developments shall be maintained for emergency service and public transportation vehicles.

T.4a.10 Consolidate access to commercial and industrial properties by encouraging the development of commercial and industrial centers rather than strip development to minimize traffic congestion on urban arterials.

T.4a.11 Encourage street designs, which reduce the number of access points on principal arterials and highways by combining driveways for adjacent properties and use of frontage roads.

T.4a.12 Encourage new developments, including multifamily projects, to be arranged in a pattern of connecting streets and blocks to allow people active transportation and public transportation. Cul-de-sacs or other closed street systems may be appropriate under certain circumstances including, but not limited to, topography and other physical limitations that make connecting systems impractical.

For Example: Connected as Compared to Closed Development Pattern



Clear, formalized and inter-connected street systems make destinations visible, provide the shortest and most direct path to destinations and result in security through community rather than by isolation.

T.4a.13 Encourage local access streets which are curvilinear, narrow or use other street designs consistent with safety requirements to discourage through traffic in neighborhoods where such design fits into the surrounding street systems and aids in implementing specific land use designs.

T.4a.14 Allow paved alleys that are privately owned and maintained.

T.4a.15 Develop roadway standards that reduce the opportunity and impact of spills of contaminants from reaching surface and groundwater.

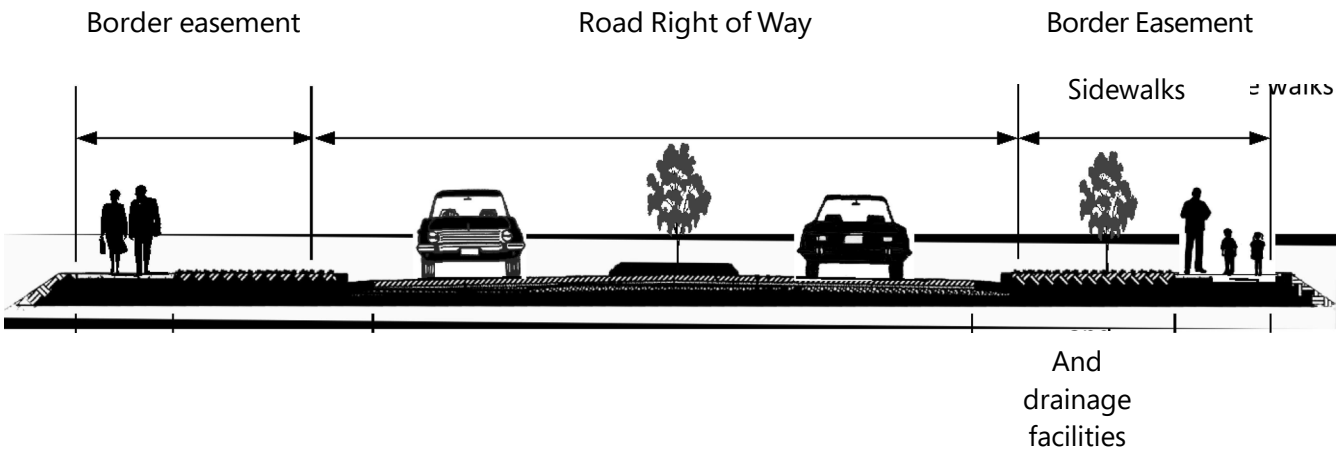
T.4a.16 Reduce right-of-way width dedications to the minimum necessary to provide for transportation needs.

a. Use border easements to accommodate drainage and pedestrian facilities.

b. Building set back requirements should be established from centerline of right-of-way and should be minimized to reduce impact on use of private property while maintaining public safety and design considerations.

URBAN

Minimize right-of-way width, border easement accommodates drainage facilities and sidewalks



Rural Road Functional Classifications

Major Collectors: Rural major collector roads serve larger towns not already served by higher- class roadways. This road classification may also serve to connect one portion of the urban area to another portion of the urban area. They are moderately fast facilities that are two or four lanes wide. Rural major collector roads are wider and carry more traffic than the rural minor collectors.

Minor Collectors: Rural minor collector roads are moderately fast facilities that are two lanes wide and provide a link between the major collector arterials and rural local access roads. They typically provide service to remaining smaller communities and link locally important traffic generators with their rural hinterland.

Local Access Roads: Local access roads provide access to adjacent property and generally do not support through traffic. They are located in the urban and rural areas. The alignment and traffic control measures on local access roads should encourage slow, safe speed.

Special Sections: The County Engineer may allow special arterial sections incorporating certain design elements (planting strips, median treatments, etc.) that enhance the roadway's geographic location, scenic vistas and/or recreational opportunities. The design should not degrade the functionality or safety of the roadway. Where a special section is desired and includes landscaping, a care and maintenance plan will also be required.

Design of Rural Roads

T.5a **Provide a safe and efficient system of rural roads.**

T.5b **To the maximum extent possible, Spokane County shall provide all-weather roads to serve the rural environment.**

T.5c **Provide major rural arterials that connect urban areas (urban connectors) while maintaining rural character and protecting the environment.**

Rural Collectors

T.5.1 Develop and maintain safe and efficient transportation connections between urban population centers.

T.5.2 Prohibit new commercial use along rural collectors and state highways, which are located outside the Urban Growth Area boundary except in designated rural activity centers and limited development areas.

T.5.3 Ensure the preservation of rural character and discourage urban sprawl by managing access to major rural collectors, which are located in rural areas.

T.5.4 Ensure that proposed rural collectors avoid significant natural areas or historic resources where possible and mitigate impacts where avoidance is not possible.

T.5.5 Ensure that the transportation system in the rural areas and resource lands are consistent with their rural/resource character. Improvements should emphasize operations, safety and maintenance.

Safety

The citizens of Spokane County place considerable importance on the safety of the transportation system. Traffic collisions are not only traumatic on a personal level, but are also costly for society. These costs are felt in the form of medical expenses, lost productivity and property losses. When new road or improvements to existing roads are planned, safety considerations should be a primary design consideration.

T.6 **Provide a safe and efficient transportation system, which responds to the needs of the community, with special consideration for the elderly, special-needs and low-income individuals.**

T.6.1 Adopt best practice design to slow vehicle traffic and reduce the volume of traffic in residential neighborhoods.

T.6.2 Advocate safe and effective traffic control or grade separation at railroad grade crossings.

T.6.3 (New Policy). Support Spokane County Public Works Road Safety Plan.

T.6.4 (New Policy). Advocate and implement standards for a safe and effective active transportation network. This would include but not limited to bike facilities, sidewalks, and multi-use trails as found in Spokane County's active transportation plan.

T.6.5 (New Policy) Support Traffic Calming measures on major arterials to promote pedestrian and automotive safety where appropriate.

T.6.6 (New Policy). Support Spokane Regional Transportation Council's Regional Safety Action Plan.

Mobility

Efficient movement of people and goods is very important to the citizens of Spokane County because it enhances the economic vitality and quality of life. The existing transportation system represents a considerable investment. To protect this investment, the capacity and condition of the system must be maintained. Travel on the transportation system increases every year. To maintain mobility, the transportation system must not only be maintained but improved. Road improvements will increase capacity but improved facilities for all forms of transportation must be considered to efficiently utilize scarce resources to maintain mobility.

Level of Service

Level of service (LOS) sets a quantitative standard for the operating characteristics of the transportation system. The Growth Management Act requires level of service standards for all arterials and transit routes and also requires that the standards be coordinated regionally. The level of service standards may be thought of as goals that the community wishes to maintain for the operation of the transportation system. Level of service for regional transportation is based on corridor travel time.

The Countywide Planning Policies require that level of service standards be adopted that are in accordance with the regional minimum level of service standards set by the Growth Management Steering Committee of Elected Officials. Spokane County is required to use its adopted level of service to evaluate long-term planning, development review and financing of improvements. The Steering Committee approved the use of corridor travel time for use in establishing a minimum level of service for the regional transportation system. The Spokane Regional Transportation Council is determining annual average corridor travel time for the established congestion management system corridors.

Spokane County Division of Engineering uses average time delay at intersections and expresses it as a range A through F. Level of Service A indicates little or no delay and level of service **F** indicates excessive delay. Average delays are typically measured during the AM and PM peak hours.

The Steering Committee also addressed level of service standards for public transit and street cleaning. Level of service for transit is to be adopted by the Spokane Transit Authority Board of Directors and Spokane County is required to have policies consistent with the adopted level of service within the Public Transit Benefit Area. For street cleaning, Spokane County is required to have a street-cleaning plan within the non-attainment area for air quality. The plan must be coordinated with the Air Pollution Control Authority.

T.8a Establish and maintain multi-modal level of service standards for roads and active transportation facilities. a

T.8a.1 Transportation system improvements shall be consistent with adopted levels of service.

T.8a.2 The following shall serve as Spokane County's level of service standard: Spokane County's level of service shall be based on the operational analysis at county arterial intersections and county arterial/state highway intersections conforming to the "Spokane County Standards for Road and Sewer Construction" as amended.

T.8a.3 The Spokane County Steering Committee of Elected Officials has accepted "corridor travel time" to be used to establish the minimum level of service for the regional transportation system. Spokane County shall participate in the development, evaluation, refinement as necessary and adoption of the "corridor travel time" standard for regional minimum level of service.

T.8a.4 **(New Policy)** Spokane County shall establish multi-modal level of service standards.

T.8b Support level of service standards for transit established in conjunction with the Spokane Transit Authority Board of Directors.

T.8b.1 Ensure that the transportation system improvements are made consistent with adopted transit levels of service.

T.8b.2 Spokane County's level of service standard for transit shall be consistent with level of service adopted in conjunction with the Spokane Transit Authority Board of Directors.

T.8c Incorporate standards for active transportation facilities into county road standards.

T.8d Clean streets as needed to meet air quality standards for particulate matter (PM).

T.8d.1 Update as necessary and use a street cleaning plan coordinated with the Spokane County Air Pollution Control Authority, consistent with the regional minimum level of service, to meet mandated particulate matter (PM) standards.

Public Participation

When transportation improvements are proposed, it is important to address the needs and desires of the general public, property owners and neighborhoods affected by the project.

Spokane County must work with local residents and property owners prior to the design phase to assure that all needs are considered. A citizen-based process can result in the most acceptable facilities to enhanced access and mobility for vehicles and non-motorized transportation modes.

T.9 Incorporate community participation in the transportation planning process and actively involve businesses advocacy groups and neighborhoods in transportation choices.

T.9.1 Encourage continuous public participation and facilitate meaningful public involvement throughout plan development and implementation, including at the project level.

Transportation Finance

The Growth Management Act requires that the Transportation Improvement Program be financially feasible. Sources of revenue must be identified that are available to implement the 6-year Transportation Improvement Plan and maintain the adopted level of service. The revenue sources available to fund transportation improvements are listed in the current Spokane County Transportation Improvement Plan.

T.10 Fund transportation improvements to meet existing and future needs based on level of service standards.

T.10.1 Provide for a long-range financial strategy to implement the 6-year transportation improvement program of the Capital Facilities Element.

T.10.2 Funding to protect and maintain existing transportation infrastructure shall receive priority over other costs or transportation improvement programs.

T.10.3 Develop methods for funding improvements in transportation subareas that provide a fair and equitable distribution of the transportation improvement costs.

T.10.4 Enhance funding methods by establishing or implementing bonds, impact fees, road improvement districts and other funding sources.

T.10.5 Impact mitigation fees and user-based fees shall be considered as a source for funding for all transportation improvements required because of new development.

T.10.6 Transportation impact fees shall be based on cumulative impacts from proposed land uses within a traffic basin, with a proportionate share allocated, based on a reasonable relationship between trips generated by any proposed land use and improvements required.

T.10.7 Transportation funding directed to projects in areas where annexation or incorporation is expected should require interlocal agreements with the affected cities to provide for joint funding of improvements and/or sharing of revenues.

Demand Management Strategies

Most solutions to traffic congestion involve increasing the system capacity. However, in some cases, reducing demand can relieve capacity shortfalls. Since capacity shortfalls generally occur only during the peak morning and evening commute hours, management strategies that focus on reducing trips during the peak periods are particularly effective. Strategies already in place include car/van pooling programs, variable work hours, telecommuting, incentives for transit use, bicycling and walking. If utilization of these and other transportation demand management strategies can be expanded, transportation system demand can be reduced. Effective demand management measures can reduce the need for transportation improvements and can have the added benefit of reducing air pollution.

T.11 Reduce the use of single occupancy vehicles and increase the use of alternate forms of transportation through transportation demand management strategies.

T.11.1 Promote programs aimed at reducing peak period traffic congestion.

T.11.2 Endorse programs that support alternatives to single occupancy vehicles.

T.11.3 Support the use of telecommunications technologies for telecommuting, tele-shopping and video conferencing as alternatives to vehicle travel.

T.11.4 Create and implement programs that promote telework to minimize commuter traffic. Support the Spokane County Commute Trip Reduction program that encourages and advocates for telework and compressed schedules.

T.11.5 Promote and facilitate ridesharing opportunities in cooperation with state and other transit agencies.

T.11.6 Encourage employers to offer commute trip reduction programs for employees.

T.11.7 (New Policy) Prioritize and promote public development that is near transit expansion.

T.11.8 (New Policy) Support development and implement development standards that reduce the distance of trips and reduce the need for vehicle trips.

T.11.9 (New Policy) Reduce parking requirements where there are multimodal options available.

T.11.10 (New Policy) Support zone changes that incentivize workforce housing.

T.11.11 (New Policy) Facilitate the siting of complimentary destinations such as commercial employment centers, schools or education centers, and residential developments.

Environment

The transportation system can have major negative effects on the environment. Air, water, and noise pollution are often associated with transportation systems. Air pollution can best be addressed by minimizing traffic congestion. There are many ways to reduce traffic congestion other than expanding roads. Transit use, transportation demand strategies and alternative transportation modes, and land can reduce air pollution. Stormwater runoff from paved surfaces can be a major contributor to water pollution. Treatment of stormwater in grassed percolation areas and other means can substantially reduce water pollution. Noise from traffic can have adverse impacts on adjacent land uses. Noise attenuation in the form of berms, landscaping or other noise barriers may be necessary to mitigate impacts.

T.12a Develop transportation systems that avoid environmental impacts where possible and mitigate impacts where avoidance is not possible.

T.12b Create transportation systems that work toward a sustainable community.

T.13b Encourage programs and standards that help reduce environmental emissions.

T.12.1 Design transportation improvements to minimize air, water and noise pollution.

T.12.2 Ensure that new transportation systems avoid or mitigate significant impacts to natural areas or historic resources.

T.12.3 Transportation facilities shall not be developed in areas where they will have a significant negative effect on the environment.

T.12.4 Protect and preserve environmentally sensitive areas to the greatest extent practical when developing new transportation facilities.

T.12.5 Implement existing design standards that are sensitive to community, cultural, aesthetic, historical and environmental needs.

T.12.6 The transportation system in Spokane County shall conform to the federal and state Clean Air Acts.

T.12.7 The transport of contaminants shall be minimized through residential areas and centers by restrictive routing and scheduling where practical.

T.12.8 Enforce federal and state regulations for transportation of contaminants.

T.12.9 (New Policy) Support projects, policies, programs, and street designs including reduction of general-purpose travel lanes, to reduce drive-alone vehicle trip and vehicle-miles traveled.

T.12.10 (New Policy) Implement programs that promote the use of, motor vehicles, and e-cargo bicycles and the expansion of electric vehicle charging stations for personal vehicle, private fleets, and transit.

T.12.11 (New Policy) Implement Spokane County's complete street policy in the roadway designs in new development

T.12.12 (New Policy) Design and manage streets to promote green infrastructure, new technologies, and active transportation modes while addressing safety, accessibility, and aesthetics.

Chapter 6

Climate Element

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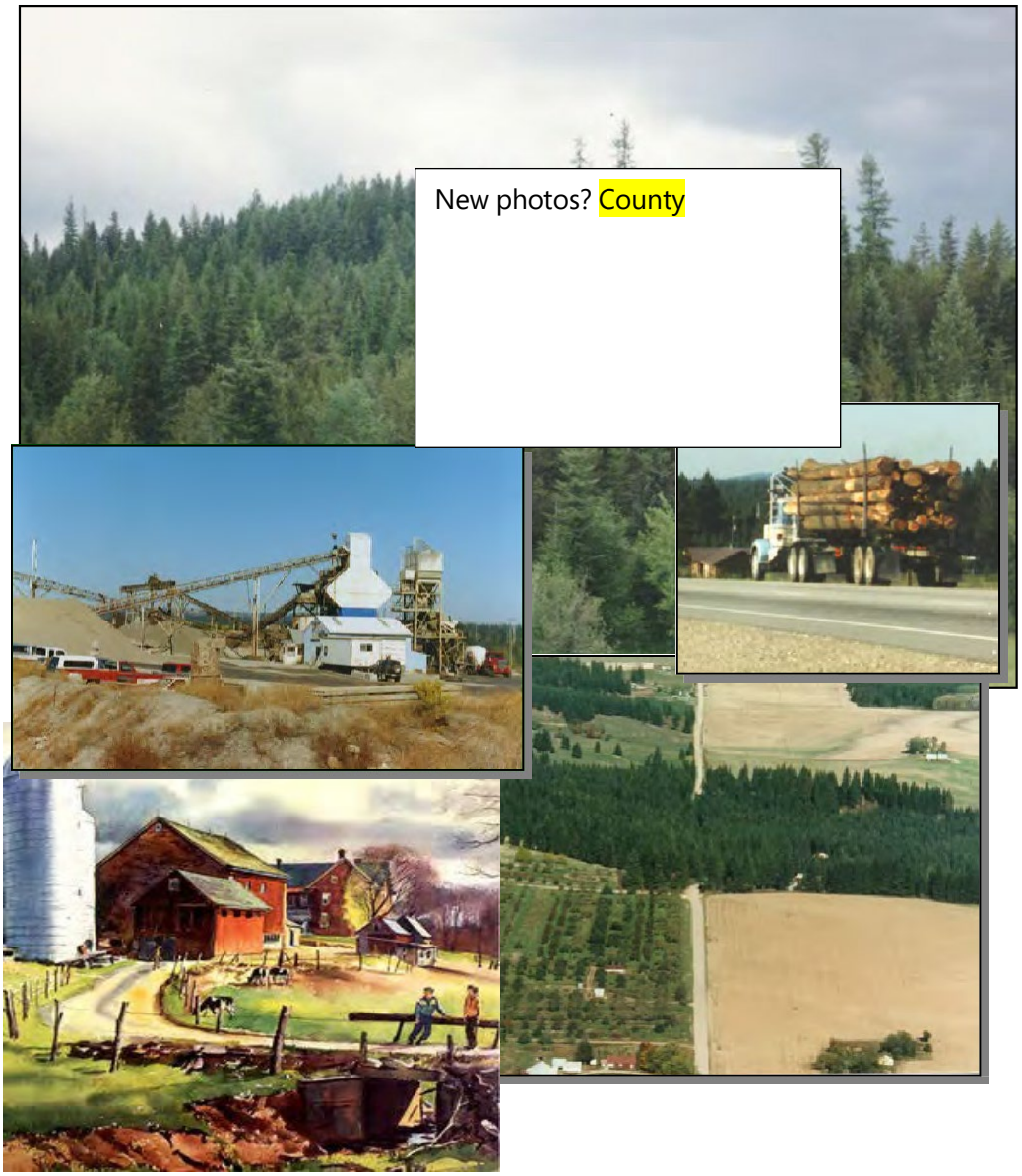
Chapter 7

Natural Resource Lands Element



New photos? County

Introduction

Natural Resource Lands encompass agricultural, forest, and mineral lands of long-term commercial significance. Spokane County is fortunate to have a plentiful supply of these natural resource lands. Natural resource industries are the center of the resource economy in Spokane County. The resource industries produce lumber, paper products, metal products, stone, sand and gravel, wheat, fruit, berries, vegetables, forage crops, meat, poultry, and dairy products, which are consumed by the community and exported worldwide. The natural resource industries remain vital to Spokane County's economy; the lands having special characteristics that make them productive, including unique soils, climate, and geology. Southeastern Spokane County also has Palouse soil which produces some of the most highly productive dryland farming in the world. As of 2022, Spokane County had a total of 2,386 farms that produce $205,001,00 in total value of products sold. the These unique soils cannot be re-created if they are lost to urban development or mismanaged and must be protected.

Natural resource lands contribute not only to the production of valuable commodities and economic security but also provide significant aesthetic and cultural value. For thousands of years, these landscapes have supported the food systems and cultural traditions of the Spokane Tribe of Indians, the Coeur d'Alene and Kalispell Tribes, as well as other Indigenous peoples who traveled, fished, gathered, hunted, and stewarded natural resources throughout the region. Traditional subsistence practices continue today and are inseparable from the health of native plants, forests, fish, soils, and wildlife. Additionally, the lands extend beyond mere resource extraction and production, contributing to Spokane County's climate goals as well-managed resource lands sequester carbon and provide resilience to climate impacts like flooding, extreme heat, and wildfire.

Local tribes, long-term residents, tourists, and an increasing number of people moving to Spokane County appreciate the area's agricultural character, including farming production processes and lifestyle, agritourism, natural beauty, and wildlife viewing. The residents and visitors of Spokane County recognize that the qualities of natural resource lands need to be supported and protected to avoid irrevocable loss of these resources and protect these communities for future generations. By preserving these lands, we safeguard these intrinsic values and support the overall health of Spokane County.

Resource Land Categories

The natural resource land categories are shown on the Natural Resource Land Map. The designations are described as follows:

Large Tract Agriculture

Large tract agricultural areas are primarily devoted to grain, legume, and grass seed production. Non-resource-related uses are generally prohibited. Residences are typically associated with farming operations.

Small Tract Agriculture

Small tract agricultural areas are primarily devoted to grain, fruit, berry, vegetable, dairies, Christmas tree, and forage crop production. Non-resource-related uses other than rural residences are generally prohibited. This type of agriculture is suitable for small-scale operations and may be conducted on relatively small parcels. Residences on large lots may or may not be associated with farming operations. Seasonal festivals and other activities related to the marketing of agricultural products will be common in these areas and enhance community cohesion.

Mineral Lands

Mineral land areas are primarily devoted to sand, gravel, rock, or clay production. Related products such as concrete, asphalt, and brick are also produced. Agriculture and forestry may be conducted on mineral resource lands, but residences are generally limited to caretaker residences associated with mining or related industry.

Forest Land

Forest Land areas are primarily devoted to wood production. Non-resource-related uses are generally prohibited. Residences are allowed but will be located on relatively large parcels to minimize conflicts with forestry operations. Many areas of Spokane County are zoned for small or large-track agriculture but are forested and are primarily used for timber production. In this Chapter, Forest Land does not refer to these parcels, but to parcels designated for forestry uses.

Designation of Natural Resource Lands

Spokane County is fortunate to possess productive resource lands that play a crucial role in the local economy. By protecting these lands from incompatible development, we can ensure that they continue to serve future generations. In the past, urban development, especially in the Spokane River Valley, has covered both high-quality agricultural land and large deposits of valuable sands and gravels. Without protection from urbanization, these resources are unlikely to be available to future generations. Designating and protecting the County's remaining resource lands helps ensure these areas are not lost to incompatible development. These actions are also mandated under state law (RCW 36.70a,170) and are guided by the RCW 36.70a.050 and Chapter 365-190 WAC.

The first step in protecting resource lands is to identify those lands that possess the characteristics to support long-term commercial resource production. For commercial agriculture and forestry, it is necessary to identify lands with productive soil and favorable climatic conditions. Mineral resources must meet the criteria of quality, quantity, and accessibility for commercial viability. The location of mineral resources is important because transporting them significantly increases costs.

Information on natural resource lands, particularly soil and geological data, is continually improving. It is important to review new information and update natural resource designations as information becomes available.

Goals and Policies

NR.1a Provide for necessary natural resources while preserving and protecting the natural environment, including all critical areas and private property rights through wise land use to accommodate growth in Spokane County.

NR.1b Ensure adequate supply, long-term conservation, and wise stewardship of natural resources, including all critical areas, within Spokane County for the benefit of current and future residents and the resilience of the County to climate impacts.

NR.1.1 Natural resource lands shall be designated on official maps, in accordance with NRCS soil surveys and adopted by the Board of County Commissioners through a comprehensive planning process.

NR.1.2 Environmentally sensitive areas, including all critical areas and areas of cultural significance, which may be degraded by intensive forestry, agriculture or mining uses, should not be classified as resource lands.

NR.1.3 Natural resource land designations should be reviewed every 5 years and, if necessary, amended to reflect updated information or changes in conditions, using Best Available Science, such as updated wildfire maps and drought conditions. For instance, many small parcels and steep, rocky, or forested areas in Spokane County are zoned for agriculture but may be better suited to rural residential uses, as they are not suitable for agriculture.

NR 1.4 Designations shall comply with RCW 36.70A.170.

Agricultural Land Designation Criteria

The Growth Management Act (GMA) mandates that all counties and cities must designate agricultural lands that are not already influenced by urban growth and have long-term commercial significance (RCW 36.70A.170(1)(a)). See also RCW 36.70a,050 and 365-190 WAC, especially 365-190-050 WAC.

In Spokane County, the designation of agricultural land will be established as follows:

NR.1.5 Long-term protection of large-tract agricultural lands, such as conservation easements and land trusts, supports climate resilience goals by preventing the conversion and development of working lands. Lands meeting the following criteria shall be designated as Spokane County Large Tract Agricultural Resource Lands :

a) Lands predominantly used for or capable of long-term commercial agricultural production.

b) Lands with large areas of contiguous ownership and parcel sizes predominantly 40 acres or larger.

c) Lands that produce or are capable of producing predominantly annual crop rotations, including small grains, non-forage legumes, and grass seed.

d) Land that has been designated as Large Tract Agriculture may only be redesignated or rezoned consistent with the agricultural zones reclassification criteria as specified in the Spokane County Zoning Code.

NR.1.6 Lands that do not meet all the criteria for the large tract agricultural designation but do meet the following criteria shall be designated as Spokane County Small Tract Agricultural Resource Lands.

a) Lands predominantly used for or capable of commercial agricultural production.

b) Lands which produce or are capable of producing crops of local significance, such as dairies, orchards, truck crops, vineyards, Christmas trees/wood lots, foraged crops, small grains, non-foraged legumes, and grass.

NR 1.7 Prime farmland shall be designated according to the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). Where Spokane County Code or this plan references prime farmland, this definition shall apply. Prime farmland shall be designated large tract or small tract agriculture as appropriate under BAS, defining best management practices for soil and watershed health, and favored for protection from urbanization.

NR 1.8 Soil classified as "Farmland of Statewide Importance" may not meet all criteria for prime farmland, but shall be managed properly and favored for protection from urbanization. This land is often steep yet still highly fertile and productive.

Forest Land Designation Criteria

NR.1.9 Lands meeting the following criteria shall be designated as Spokane County Forest Resource Lands per WAC 365-190-060. Forest land designation and retention support climate resilience priorities of forest stewardship and wildfire risk reduction, and support greenhouse gas emission reductions through carbon sequestration.

a) Property currently assessed for tax purposes as Forest Land or timberland pursuant to Chapter 84.28-84.34 RCW.

b) Private Forest Resource Land grades of the Department of Revenue (WAC 458-40-530). In Spokane County, land grades of 5 and 6 and operability classes of 1, 2, and 3 are considered for designation.

c) Forest Resource Land designations shall be located outside of the Urban Growth Area (UGA).

d) Designated areas shall consist of a minimum contiguous area of greater than 640 acres (not continuous ownership). This means that areas that meet the criteria will not be designated as Forest Resource Land unless the total area exceeds 640 acres.

e) Contiguous areas of land fewer than 640 acres that do not meet the designation criteria but are surrounded by designated Forest Land may be designated as forest land.

f) State and county parkland will not be designated as Forest land but will be used to meet the minimum contiguous area threshold of greater than 640 acres.

g) Department of Natural Resources (DNR) ownerships that are devoted to timber production and are located adjacent to designated forest lands.

h) Forest Land should not be designated within smoke-control zones, no-burn areas, particulate matter (PM) nonattainment areas or carbon monoxide (CO) nonattainment areas, as defined by the Spokane County Air Pollution Control Authority.

i) Areas considered for inclusion in the Forestry Designation shall have predominant existing parcels of 40 acres or larger.

Mineral Land Designation Criteria

NR.1.10 Mineral Resource Lands should be designated on official maps and adopted by the Board of County Commissioners through a comprehensive planning process. Mining shall be permitted on lands that do not meet the natural resource designation criteria if environmental protection and compatibility with adjacent land uses are assured.

NR.1.11 Mineral Resource Lands should meet all of the following criteria:

a) In Spokane County, the commercially important minerals are sand, gravel, rock or clay. Mineral Resource Land designations should be made where these minerals are known to exist. The Spokane County Mineral Resource Map should be used to identify additional sites to meet future demand.

b) Mineral Resource Land designations should be located in areas with compatible land uses, such as mining, industry, agriculture, forestry, vacant or large-lot residential (less than one dwelling unit per 5 acres). Mitigation of adverse impacts from mining on adjacent property shall be a prime designation criterion.

c) Mineral Resource Land designations should be 20 acres or more in size.

d) Mineral land designations should have a minimum deposit size of approximately 500,000 cubic yards for sand, gravel and rock, and approximately 200,000 cubic yards for blend sand.

e) Mineral Resource Land designations shall not occur on lands with critical areas unless impacts can be adequately mitigated to maintain value and function.

f) Mineral Resource Land designations shall have adequate access for trucks. Access shall not be through a residential neighborhood.

Amending NRL Designations

NR.1.12 Designation criteria and mapped boundaries for natural resource lands shall only be revised through a comprehensive plan amendment. Changes in designations will be based on one or more of the following criteria:

a) A change in circumstances pertaining to the Comprehensive Plan or public policy.

b) A change in circumstances beyond the control of the landowner pertaining to the subject property.

c) An error in designation.

d) New information on natural resource land or critical area status including Best Available Science pertaining to climate resilience such as updated wildfire or Wildland/Urban Interface Maps, drought projections, or flood risks.

e) Use of innovative land use management techniques.

f) Land subdivisions within natural resource lands that are created subsequent to the adoption of this Comprehensive Plan shall not be considered as a basis for amending NRL designations.

NR.1.13 De-designation of natural resource lands shall be consistent with limitations and conditions of a Settlement Agreement between Spokane County and certain appellants of a land use action as adopted under Board of County Commissioners Resolution #2016-0464 and attached as Appendix J.

Governmental Services in Natural Resource Lands

Governmental services in natural resource areas should include only those services necessary to support the production of food and fiber and the extraction of minerals. If higher levels of service are provided, residential uses will be encouraged to locate in resource areas.

Experience has shown that increasing residential development in resource areas will ultimately lead to a decline in resource activities.

The government services appropriate for resource land areas include volunteer fire departments, minimal police protection, and rural roads designed to transport commodities and equipment.

RCW 36.70A.172 requires counties to incorporate Best Available Science when regulating and designating lands. -WAC 365-190-130 mandates protection of habitats of Endangered, Threatened, Priority, and Species of Local importance, and their migration areas and corridors. The Washington Habitat Connectivity Action Plan (WAHCAP), is considered BAS and reinforces that habitat cores and movement corridors are essential to statewide wildlife viability and should guide land use decision-making. Designation revisions may be initiated when new species occurrences, migratory corridor data, or habitat mapping is confirmed through Tribal governments, Federal or State agencies, academic institutions, or peer-reviewed landscape connectivity science.

NR.2 Provide a level of governmental service consistent with long-term preservation and protection of natural resource lands.

NR.2.1 Designated agricultural and forest lands shall have low residential densities which can be sustained by minimal infrastructure improvements such as septic systems, individual wells, and rural roads without degrading the environment or creating the necessity for urban levels of service and ensure responsible use of available water resources to protect long-term availability and access to clean water for all County residents and maintain healthy ecosystems.

NR.2.2 Services in resource land areas will be limited. On-site septic systems, private wells, or small, self-contained water systems, volunteer fire departments, waste management services, and police protection will support residences at appropriate densities.

NR.2.3 Capital improvement plans should take into consideration the maintenance of public roads adequately to accommodate the transportation needs of forest and agriculture commodities and utilize best management practices to protect water resources and fish habitat.

NR 2.4 The County should require that all levels of government and their agencies consider the impact their programs and projects may have on agricultural and forestry activities, as well as value and function of critical areas, and seek to minimize any impacts that threaten the viability of agriculture and ecosystem health.

NR 2.5 Infrastructure, public projects, and programs within or adjacent to resource lands should avoid fragmentation of habitat areas and wildlife corridors, consistent with Best Available Science and regional connectivity priorities.

Land Use in Natural Resource Lands

To protect natural resource lands, it is important to foster land uses that support and complement resource activities. These lands also perform critical ecological functions, including maintaining wildlife habitat, migration corridors, and native vegetation communities, which contribute to the long-term resilience of resource systems, soil productivity, pollination services, and watershed health. Generally, the various resource activities, agriculture, forestry, and mining, do not conflict with one another. Industrial and commercial uses related to resource activities may support continued resource land use and should be encouraged, provided non-resource land sites and adequate infrastructure are available. Where they do not fragment habitat or impede wildlife movement essential for long-term resource productivity.

Non-resource-related uses, especially residential uses, often conflict with resource production or extraction. Rural residents frequently object to noise, dust, odors, and chemicals associated with resource areas. The impacts on residential development can be mitigated to some degree by buffering or maintaining low residential density. Uses that support resource activities include, but are not limited to, food processing, equipment repair, grain elevators, resource storage areas, crop-dusting aircraft landing fields, lumber mills, and chemical and supply distribution.

NR.3a: Land uses shall be consistent with the conservation of designated resource lands and shall not interfere with resource land management practices, which should support the protection and stewardship of ecosystems and habitats to reduce climate impacts of flooding, drought, and wildfire. NR.3b. Allow and encourage development of compatible businesses, or non-resource lands in agricultural areas to serve farmers as well as to diversify employment opportunities in the region.

NR.3.1 Viable agricultural, forestry, and mining activities shall be protected from conflicts through the use of zoning requirements, plat requirements, grandfather rights, and similar methods.

NR.3.2 Specialized agricultural uses such as feedlots, fur farms, poultry ranches, and similar uses shall be provided for and protected from incompatible land use encroachment, except for uses that protect critical area values and functions.

NR.3.3 Areas for agricultural endeavors, such as small berry, fruit, vegetable, and other specialty crops, will be encouraged on lands that are relatively close to urban areas to increase ecological function, food security and local food systems. Roadside sales of agricultural products produced on-site should be permitted.

NR.3.4 Uses permitted on or near resource lands must be compatible and not interfere with the economic benefit provided by that natural resource.

NR.3.5 The primary land use activities on natural resource lands are commercial forest management, agriculture, and mineral extraction, and those uses that maintain, enhance, or have insignificant impact on the long-term management of designated natural resource lands.

NR.3.6 Land use activities within or adjacent to natural resource land should be sited and designed to minimize conflicts with resource-related activities.

NR.3.7 Specific development and performance standards for access, lot size and configuration, fire protection, water supply, and dwelling unit location should be adopted for development within or adjacent to natural resource lands. These standards will establish buffer areas adjacent to designated natural resource lands to minimize conflicts with commercial natural resource activities.

NR.3.8 Develop comprehensive fire protection regulations consistent with recognized practice, Firewise principles, and Spokane County Wildfire Protection Plan and integrate them into Forestry zoning and other land use regulations as applicable; such regulations should include incentives to encourage development designed to mitigate wildfires, including design standards, green infrastructure, and water conservation strategies. Regulations should include financial and technical assistance to landowners who increase the wildfire resistance of their homes or land.

NR.3.9 Identify and protect agricultural and forested lands that provide climate-resilience benefits from conversion to more developed land uses.

Residential Development on Natural Resource Lands

NR.3.10 Residential use on natural resource lands shall be discouraged unless the residential use is related to resource land management or production, and does not impair critical area functions and values.

NR.3.11 Mineral lands are designated only for parcels with proven mineral reserves. Only residences that do not preclude mineral extraction activity should exist on mineral lands.

NR.3.12 Rural residential development adjacent to agricultural and forest production districts should be designed to minimize conflicts with resource uses and to incorporate energy and water conservation practices, such as appliances, insulation, and green infrastructure.

NR.3.13 Nonconforming lots, which were legally created, may still be developed provided adequate provisions for water and sewage disposal and other services can be met without the extension of urban governmental services outside the UGA, and provided they do not adversely affect ongoing resource use. Development of undeveloped or partially developed plats that are not consistent with resource use should be discouraged.

NR.3.14 Home professions, home industries, and accessory uses should be allowed within designated resource lands provided they do not adversely affect the rural character or conflict with resource-based economic uses.

NR.3.15 Development regulations for home professions, home industries, and accessory uses shall protect adjacent properties from negative impacts and shall be consistent with maintaining natural resource activities.

NR.3.16 Residential clustering shall be permitted and encouraged on designated natural resource lands, if developments utilize design standards that conserve water and energy and when developments preserves open space, protects critical areas such as streams, wetlands, and riparian corridors, reduces impacts to use of resource lands, reduces risk of wildfires by utilizing Firewise practices, and reduces the risk of floods, particularly in designated floodplains

NR.3.17 Identify and implement strategies for reducing residential development pressure in the wildland-urban interface.

Residential Density – Agricultural Resource Lands

NR.3.19 The maximum residential density for agricultural lands shall be as follows:

a) The maximum residential density for designated small tract agricultural lands will be 1 unit per 10 acres.

b) The maximum residential density for large tract agricultural lands is 1 unit per 40 acres, except that the maximum residential density may be increased to 1 unit per 10 acres, provided the zoning for the site is reclassified to the small tract agriculture zone consistent with agricultural zones reclassification criteria.

NR 3.20 Exemption approvals for subdivisions will be limited to those that do not increase density in a way that adversely affects agricultural land uses.

Residential Density – Forest Lands

NR.3.21 The maximum residential density within designated forest lands will be 1 unit per 20 acres for forest lands**.**

Commercial and Industrial Use on Natural Resource Lands

NR.3.22 Non-resource-related industrial developments such as major industrial developments, airports, and storage yards shall not be allowed on designated resource lands.

NR.3.23 Industries related to and dependent upon natural resources of agriculture, forestry, and mining shall be allowed on designated resource lands.

NR.3.24 Retail sales facilities and activities shall not be allowed on natural resource lands except as accessory to the sale of commodities produced on-site, the sale of sand and gravel associated with on-site mining activity, and home business or industries which do not conflict with natural resource activities.

NR..3.25 The County should encourage creative, compatible, and beneficial use of resource lands other than agriculture to supplement the income of farm families. Such uses may include: tourism, mining, quarrying, boating, hunting/fishing, recreation, nursery, and renewable energy development, which can support the diversification of the County's energy supply while reducing emissions.

Commercial Development for Small Tract Agriculture

Spokane County recognizes the importance of small tract agriculture to the local economy and as a defining feature of the local character and identity. Small-scale farming is commercially viable, especially when located near an urban area, because direct marketing opportunities enable small-scale producers to compete with large-scale producers. These small farms also play and are encouraged to continue to play an important ecological role by maintaining permeable soils, groundwater recharge, native vegetation edges, pollinator habitat, and wildlife movement corridors within urbanizing landscapes. The following policies are intended to provide a framework for recognizing the special needs of small-scale farming and for implementing protective, flexible regulations that will continue the tradition of small-tract agriculture in Spokane County. RCW 36.70A.177 (accessory uses) provides guidance & direction on this topic while also sustaining the ecological functions that support long-term agricultural viability, water quality and quantity, and habitat connectivity.

NR.3.26 Seasonal retail sales facilities and activities shall be allowed in small tract agricultural areas as accessory uses directly related to the sale of farm commodities produced on the site.

NR.3.27 Encourage local production using climate-smart agriculture practices to improve soil health and reduce water usage and consumption of food and farm products through public markets and festivals located on small tract agricultural lands, provided such activities do not conflict with agricultural

practices and provided that adequate provisions are made for traffic control, off-street parking, sanitation, noise control, and dust control.

NR.3.28 Allow direct farm-to-market agricultural distribution, including on-farm sale of agricultural products.

Natural Resource Lands Map

To view the map please click on the above link or contact the Planning Department at (509) 477-1500

Conservation and Protection of Natural Resource Lands

A variety of techniques are available to conserve and protect the long-term viability of natural resource lands. Spokane County requires that applicants for development permits be notified if they plan to develop near natural resource areas, so they are aware of potential impacts. When appropriate, a notice shall be placed on land titles to alert potential buyers to nearby natural resource activities.

Property tax policies to encourage continued resource activities are in place. Agriculture, timber, and forest tax classifications are available to reduce the tax burden on productive lands. Spokane County should continue to discourage special assessments in natural resource areas that do not benefit resource management.

Innovative approaches to natural resource land conservation should be explored, including options for the transfer of development rights and conservation easements. Collaboration between agencies and organizations, including timber, tribal, conservation and recreation organizations, can facilitate the adoption of effective and feasible policies to protect resources, including establishing tree canopy and native plant conservation. See also RCW 36.70A.177.

NR.4 Use best management practices and other innovative techniques in a sustainable and environmentally sensitive manner to protect natural resources from incompatible activities.

NR.4.1 Notification should be placed on all county land use permits or approvals on or within 1,000 feet of designated natural resource lands, that the adjacent land is in resource use and subject to a variety of activities that may not be compatible with residential development. The notice should state that forest or agricultural activities performed in accordance with local, state, and federal laws are not subject to legal action as public nuisances.

NR.4.2 The county shall work with the cities to develop interlocal agreements that apply standards, such as farm noticing and setback requirements, to urban developments within city boundaries that are adjacent to designated farmlands.

NR.4.3 Agricultural, forest, and mining operations shall be allowed on so-designated natural resource lands when carried on in compliance with applicable regulations, even though they may impact nearby residences.

NR.4.4 Natural resource lands shall be managed, conserved, and protected while used for natural resource production. They shall be restored to a natural state or developed in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan once resource use has ceased.

Tax Policies and Incentive Programs

NR.4.5 Owners of agricultural, timber, and other natural resource lands should be encouraged to participate in the current use taxing program.

NR.4.6 The establishment or expansion of special-purpose taxing districts and local improvement districts and the imposition of fees on land within the forest and agriculture land designations is discouraged unless those land uses create the need for additional public services.

NR.4.7 Encourage participation in Washington's small forest and other resource landowner assistance cost-share and stewardship programs.

NR.4.8 Designated resource land taxes should be based on current use for property committed to resource use rather than the highest use.

INNOVATIVE TECHNIQUES

NR.4.9 Work with other jurisdictions to develop and implement regionally consistent incentive-based programs such as Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) to promote good stewardship, conserve sensitive lands and protect natural resource lands that can improve ecosystem health and enhance carbon sequestration.

NR.4.10 Support the use of conservation easements, conservation futures, and other methods to conserve and protect working landscapes, open space, and environmentally sensitive areas.

NR.4.11 Encourage private forest landowners to increase the climate resilience of forests and streams on their lands.

NR.4.12 Promote environmentally sustainable water storage and farming practices that help agricultural producers adapt to changing conditions, reduce production losses, and balance ecosystem needs.

NR.4.13 Promote research and programmatic investments in agricultural viability, resilience, and market development.

NR.4.14 Encourage clustering in the large tract agricultural zone which allows new development on one portion of the land, leaving the remainder in agricultural or open space uses pursuant with RCW 36.70A.177(2)(B) to help encourage the preservation of farmland and increase agricultural viability.

FOREST LAND POLICIES

NR.4.16 Encourage the continuation of commercial forest management by:

a) Supporting land exchanges that will result in consolidated forest ownership.
b) Working with forest managers to identify and develop other incentives for continued forestry.

NR.4.17 The impact to the local economy, local revenue programs, and climate resiliency should be considered prior to the conversion of commercial Forest Resource Land to other uses.

NR.4.18 Reduce loss of private forestland through forest stewardship education and identify opportunities to expand incentives for forest landowners.

MINERAL LAND POLICIES

NR.4.19 Recognize that mineral resources are site-specific and not subject to relocation.

NR.4.20 Mining shall be allowed on designated rural lands as well as lands designated as mineral resource lands if environmental protection and compatibility with adjacent land uses are assured.

NR.4.21 Encourage local regulations to control environmental impacts of mining operations.

NR.4.22 Approval of proposed mining operations will include conditions that:

a) The extraction proposal meets all applicable zoning requirements;

b) The proposed extraction operation is buffered from existing or potential developments within the vicinity of the proposed operation;

c) A permit, which includes a reclamation plan and performance bond, is obtained through the DNR;

d) Provide for protection of groundwater and surface water, including wetlands, during and after operation to ensure long-term access to clean water for all residents;

e) Mining shall not be allowed to penetrate the elevation 10 feet above the highest known elevation of an aquifer;

f) The monitoring and clean-up of contaminants shall be ongoing;

g) Operations consider including green infrastructure to enhance contamination filtration and reduce impacts of flooding and drought to the water supply;

h) A permit, when applicable, from the Department of Ecology for coverage under the Sand and Gravel General Permit.

Agritourism (NEW SECTION)

Agritourism is a form of commercial enterprise that links agricultural production and/or processing with tourism to attract visitors onto a farm, ranch, or other agricultural business for the purposes of entertaining or educating the visitors while generating income for the farm, ranch, or business owner. These activities provide many benefits for farmers, visitors, and the community, including diverse income streams, keeping farmland in production and preserving rural landscapes, promoting local food systems, and creating authentic and memorable experiences. Supporting these uses ensures that Spokane County assists new markets and business opportunities for local farms, artisans and small businesses.

NR.5 (NEW) Support agritourism activities as a means of providing supplemental income to support the agricultural economy while protecting and adding value to traditional agricultural activities.

NR.5.1 (NEW) Spokane County shall promote the expansion of agricultural enterprises, such as agritourism, specialty and niche agriculture, on local commercial farmland and rural residential areas.

NR.5.2 (NEW) Agritourism must be aligned with the requirements of WAC 365-196-815 and RCW 36.70A.177.

NR.5.3 (NEW) Agritourism activities shall be conducted in ways that reduces potential impacts resulting from the activity. These impacts include but are not limited to traffic impacts, noise, emergency services, fire protection, and sanitation.

NR.5.4 (NEW) Agritourism uses shall ensure no net loss of agricultural productivity.

NR.5.5 (NEW) Agritourism uses shall not result in development that requires urban levels of service and infrastructure.

NR.5.6 (NEW) Agritourism activities shall remain accessory to the main agricultural use of the property, shall have a demonstrable connection to, and be appropriate in size, scale, and intensity consistent with the existing agricultural use.

Chapter 8

Natural Environment Element

Introduction

The Natural Environment Element integrates several environmentally related topics, including Critical Areas (wetlands, critical aquifer recharge areas, fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, frequently flooded areas, and geologically hazardous areas), as well as tree conservation, shorelines, surface water quality and quantity, and air quality. These natural features not only support ecological processes and public health but also sustain species and landscapes of cultural significance to Tribal Nations, whose stewardship of these lands long predates Spokane County's formation. The Natural Environment can be vulnerable to extreme weather events and a changing climate but can also play an important role in protecting against and reducing climate impacts including drought, extreme heat, flooding, and wildfire.

Spokane County's natural environment encompasses ecosystems ranging from subalpine forests to semi-desert scablands. This diversity supports a broad spectrum of wildlife, from the moose of Mt. Spokane to the Western Painted Turtles of Granite Lake. Numerous lakes, rivers, and wetland areas provide linkages and corridors for wildlife. Spokane County's natural environment also includes the Spokane Valley-Rathdrum aquifer, which is one of the most productive aquifers in the United States.

Spokane County has attracted desirable businesses in recent years, thanks to its natural environment, which contributes to a high quality of life. Protecting and enhancing this unique natural environment is the purpose of this Chapter. By ensuring clean air and water and preserving critical areas and natural features, we will continue to make Spokane County an inviting community. Through workgroup meetings and other public participation efforts, the following guiding principles were developed.

- Critical areas, including wetlands, fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, critical aquifer recharge areas, geologically hazardous areas, and floodplains, shall be preserved, protected, managed, and restored so that there is no net loss to the functions and values of these areas.

- Shoreline areas shall be protected from land uses that degrade water quality and wildlife habitat.

- Land uses shall be designed to ensure the continued protection of surface and groundwater and to maintain adequate quantities for human use, public health, and the ecological needs of native fish and wildlife. This includes sustaining instream flows and groundwater levels that support species central to Tribal cultural heritage and ecological function and quality.

- Air quality shall be maintained at levels that protect human health, prevent injury to plants and animals, and preserve clear visibility.

- Sensory impacts to the natural environment, such as light and noise pollution, shall be evaluated by the county to understand how these impacts can negatively impact human and wildlife health, so the county can begin to imbed protective stewardship and infrastructure practices.

- As the population of Spokane County continues to grow, development and land use policies will ensure a balance between growth and the protection of critical areas.
- Climate resiliency is related to critical areas in many ways. Policies for critical areas will consider climate resilience and the relationship between climate and natural resources to account for changes in stormwater, wildfires, floods, droughts, and food supply. Specific policies related to climate mitigation, adaptation, and resilience are outlined in the Climate Chapter.
- Participation by landowners in independent 3rd-party environmental certifications for agriculture and urban/suburban areas (such as LEED, Salmon-Safe, Farmed Smart, Audubon Conservation Ranching, Food Alliance, Regenerative Organic Certification, and other rigorously vetted programs) are highly encouraged in order to enhance land management practices to protect critical areas, water quality, water quantity, and wildlife habitat.
- Spokane County is diverse and contains many socio-economic groups and cultures. Environmental disparities exist because not all community members benefit equitably from past efforts to support a healthy environment. Care will be taken to ensure that community members are not disproportionately affected.

Critical Areas

Counties are required to protect critical areas by adopting policies and regulations. Critical areas include these areas and natural places: (a) wetlands; (b) critical aquifer recharge areas; (c) fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas;(including habitats that support the lifecycle needs of native fish and wildlife, including habitat cores, migratory pathways, dispersal corridors, riparian connectivity areas, and other landscape features essential for breeding, feeding, shelter, genetic exchange, and climate adaptation) (d) frequently flooded areas; (e) geologically hazardous areas.

Spokane County recognizes the importance of protecting the functions and increasing the climate resilience of critical areas. Preservation of these areas helps maintain the high quality of life enjoyed by Spokane County residents. These natural systems play valuable roles in stormwater disposal, flood prevention, water quality preservation, and providing recreational opportunities. Protecting critical areas makes economic sense, as the alternative is expensive engineered systems for flood protection and drinking water purification. They also sustain wildlife habitat, migratory corridors, native vegetation communities, and the ecological processes that maintain healthy watersheds.

The Critical Areas Goals and Policies, along with the Critical Areas Ordinance, apply to all unincorporated areas of Spokane County and establish allowable uses in critical areas and development standards to mitigate development impacts.The administration and enforcement of the Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO) will be an ongoing issue facing Spokane County. Effective protection requires an interdisciplinary approach to advancing the best available science. Involvement by scientists from the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), the Department of Ecology (Ecology), area universities, and others will remain essential to advancing critical area

protection.The Spokane Tribe of Indians, the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, and other Indigenous peoples have stewarded the lands and waters of this region since time immemorial. The County also recognizes that other Tribes and Native peoples historically inhabited, visited, traded, gathered, and fished throughout this area. The natural resources of Spokane County continue to hold cultural, spiritual, and subsistence importance to Tribal Nations, particularly river systems, fish populations, and culturally important plants and wildlife. Spokane County recognizes the significance of these resources to Tribal communities and will work collaboratively with Tribal governments to protect and manage critical areas.

Goals and Policies

Overall Critical Areas Goals and Policies

Several issues common to all critical areas have been identified. These issues are addressed in this section. The underlying approach to critical area stewardship involves private conservation organizations, businesses, local tribal governments, individual landowners, the general public, and the government. The following goals should be used alongside the specific goal sections for each critical area.

NE.1 Spokane County will encourage management of critical areas in such a way that includes education, rehabilitation, preservation, protection, enhancement, mitigation, and incentives for protecting clean water, healthy habitat, migratory corridors, and culturally important fish and wildlife species that result in no net loss of functions or values.

NE.2 Land use regulations and land use decisions in Spokane County shall protect critical areas. Regulatory mechanisms such as limitations on land use, development setbacks, riparian or buffering requirements, or programs such as the transfer and acquisition of development rights, should be used to retain critical areas whenever possible.

NE.3 Spokane County will review and update its Critical Areas goals, policies, and regulations every five years using Best Available Science, state and Tribal data, and regional habitat and aquifer mapping.

NE.4 Ongoing public participation is a vital element of critical area regulations and management programs. The County will actively seek Tribal governments, schools, community organizations, and conservation groups to assist in identifying and protecting critical areas.

NE.5 Spokane County will determine the *carrying capacity* (the level of population and activity that the natural resource base can healthfully support) and use that information in its land use decisions regarding critical areas. In some cases, critical areas are fragile, and public access should be controlled, particularly where groundwater recharge, cultural sites, or sensitive species may be harmed.

NE.6 Regulations developed by Spokane County will not result in or constitute a taking of private property and shall be evaluated as provided for in RCW 36.70A.370.

NE.7 Regulations to protect critical areas and the natural environment shall contain variance provisions and the criteria for granting variances and recognize nonconforming rights for existing land uses and activities.

NE.8 Encourage cooperative and coordinated protection programs for critical areas between Spokane County and other jurisdictions, including cities within the County.

NE.9 Consider the multiple uses of open space and wildlife corridors for other uses, as recommended by qualified wildlife managers, such as utility corridors, when conflicts do not exist or can be mitigated.

NE.10 Best available science (including state, federal, and Tribal data, regional aquifer studies, and habitat connectivity mapping) will be used in the designation and protection of critical areas.

NE.10.1 It will be the responsibility of the Division of Planning to coordinate the identification of Best Available Science and to provide a recommendation to decision-makers for use in designating and protecting critical areas and shorelines, pursuant to RCW 36.70A.172, WAC 365-195-900, RCW 90.58.100(1) and WAC 173-26-020.

NE.11 Incorporate the recovery of salmon species in watershed planning and land management strategies, understanding that what benefits salmon also benefits healthy, sustainable communities and Tribal rights.

NE.12 Collaborate across departments and with private developers to encourage low-impact development and green building methods that include using renewable or recycled materials and nature-based green infrastructure solutions to reduce stormwater pollution, including incentivizing these practices through voluntary independent certification programs.

NE.13 Prioritize geographic areas and equitable land management strategies that will provide the greatest environmental, social, economic, and cultural benefits. including groundwater-dependent ecosystems, critical areas, riparian corridors, and areas supporting culturally significant species.

NE.14 Ensure no net loss of ecosystem composition, structure, and functions, especially in Priority Habitats and Critical Areas, and strive for net ecological gain to enhance climate resilience.

Wetlands

Wetlands are areas inundated or saturated by surface water or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas. Wetlands do not include those artificial wetlands intentionally created from non-wetland sites, including, but not limited to, irrigation and drainage ditches, grass-lined swales, canals, detention and retention facilities, wastewater treatment facilities, farm ponds, and landscape amenities. However, wetlands may include artificial wetlands intentionally created from non-wetland areas to mitigate wetland conversion, if permitted by the County or a city.

Experience has shown that wetlands offer numerous benefits, including wildlife habitat, stormwater storage and treatment, groundwater recharge, and pollutant removal. The primary purpose of the wetland goals and policies is to preserve these important natural functions.

NE.15a Ensure "no net loss" of wetland functions, value, and quantity as a result of land use activities and establish a long-term goal of measurable gain of wetland functions and value.

NE.15b Ensure the protection and restoration of streams, riparian zones, estuaries, wetlands, and floodplains to achieve healthy watersheds that are resilient to climate change.

NE.15.1 Create new and use existing incentives to control wetlands access and use.

NE.15.2 Maintain a countywide wetlands inventory and monitor achievement of the "no net loss" goal.

NE.15.3 Strive to attain a measurable gain of wetland function and value.

NE.15.4 Wetland impacts shall be avoided if possible and minimized to the extent practicable. Spokane County shall require applicants to demonstrate that impacts are unavoidable and have been minimized when new development may impact wetlands. Only after avoidance and minimization are considered, impact mitigation may include enhancing or rehabilitating previously degraded wetlands and creating new wetlands.

NE.15.5 Expansion of nonconforming uses in wetlands and their buffer areas should be allowed only if significant impacts are mitigated, and no net loss is achieved.

NE.15.6 Land used for wetland mitigation, including constructed/artificial wetlands and wetlands that have been enhanced or rehabilitated, will be protected in perpetuity. Monitoring and stewardship of these sites should be implemented to ensure they continue to provide the desired functions and values. Spokane County shall require applicants/developers to finance maintenance and monitoring until the permit-approved mitigation plan conditions/criteria for the successful establishment of the wetland are met.

NE.15.7 Spokane County shall support goals and recommendations of adopted watershed plans regarding wetlands.

NE.15.8 Identify opportunities to restore corridors between wetlands to provide biological and hydrological connectivity that fosters resilience to climate impacts.

NE.16 Establish wetland management programs that include the identification of wetlands and a classification system in compliance with Ecology guidance that protect wetland functions related to groundwater recharge, flood protection, water quality, habitat connectivity, and culturally important fish and wildlife species.

NE.16.1 Establish appropriate wetlands classification, which should include buffer areas to maintain wetlands' natural functions and beneficial values. that maintain water quality, groundwater recharge, flood storage, habitat functions, wildlife movement corridors, and culturally important species.

NE.16.2 Land use decisions and land use activities shall be consistent with existing wetland regulations. New regulations should clarify which land-use activities are appropriate and which are not within a wetland and its buffer area, including activities that may impair groundwater recharge, riparian connectivity, or habitat for native or culturally important species.

NE.16.3 New regulations developed should recognize the potential impact to wetlands that arelocated within planned urban areas, including hydrologic alteration, impaired recharge, increased pollutant loading, and fragmentation of wildlife migratory corridors.

NE.16.4 Development or other activities shall not cause adverse impacts to a wetland or its buffer area; however, where no reasonable alternative is feasible, wetland degradation shall be mitigated. Mitigation sequencing shall ensure no net loss. no net loss of hydrologic function, habitat connectivity, or water quality.

NE.16.5 The strongest wetland protection shall be provided to wetlands of the greatest functions and values.

NE.16.6 Proposals for wetland restoration, creation, or enhancement shall include consultation with the appropriate agencies to ensure adequate design and consistency with other applicable regulations, tribal governments, watershed groups, and conservation organizations to ensure adequate design and consistency with applicable regulations.

NE.16.7 Wetland regulations and policies should consider individual property owner's rights and community values. If wetland regulations prohibit all economically viable or beneficial uses of property and variance or reasonable use exceptions are not applicable, the property owner will be liable for just compensation unless it can be demonstrated that laws of nuisance or other preexisting limitations on the use of property prohibit the proposed uses.

NE.16.8 In evaluating reasonable use exceptions or variances, the County should prioritize options that avoid impairment of groundwater recharge, flood storage, and habitat for culturally important or sensitive species.

NE.16.9 Land use regulations or decisions should consider density transfers, transfer of development rights, bonus density, natural wetland preserves, wetland banking, or other mechanisms to retain wetlands whenever possible.

NE.16.10 Encourage public and private groups to consider protection and/or acquisition of wetlands and their buffer areas especially those that support groundwater recharge, habitat connectivity, or culturally important species.

Wetlands Map

To view the map please click on the above link or contact the Planning Department at (509) 477-1500

NE.17 Protect and enhance wetlands so that they can perform their natural functions and maintain their beneficial value, support groundwater and water quality, and maintain their ecological, cultural, and beneficial values.

NE.17.1 Maintain and restore the natural ability of wetlands to store and gradually release drainage and stormwater, support groundwater and water quality, and maintain their ecological, cultural, and beneficial values.

NE.17.2 Discourage development and/or land use activities that will adversely impact wetlands' ability to store and discharge drainage and/or floodwater or impair hydrologic connectivity that supports fish, amphibians, and wetland-dependent wildlife.

NE.17.3 Retain, restore, and/or enhance native and/or appropriate vegetation to slow stormwater runoff and improve surface and groundwater quality.

NE.17.4 Protect wetlands from erosion and siltation.

NE.17.5 Restore and enhance native and/or appropriate vegetative types in wetlands and their buffer areas. that support wetland connectivity, riparian shading, and trophic cascadefunction.

NE.17.6 Incorporate climate resilience strategies to address potential water scarcity in the face of increasing wildfire risks and drought to protect water quality and quantity within wetlands by preventing overuse of surface and groundwater beyond recharge capacities and maintaining minimum flows needed for native and Tribal-important species such as Redband trout, Chinook Salmon, amphibians, and wetland-dependent wildlife.

NE.17.7 New development and/or land use activities shall provide adequate buffer areas ofpermanent native and/or appropriate vegetation adjacent to wetlands. These buffer areas shall be established based on the wetland's natural functions and beneficial values, as determined by established criteria. including groundwater recharge, habitat connectivity, and culturally important species.

NE.17.8 Existing surface water and groundwater quality and quantity should be protected where new development or land use activities would impact a wetland or its buffer area, including cumulative impacts that may reduce recharge, degrade riparian corridors, or limit species movement.

NE.17.9 New developments and/or land use activities should be designed to preclude the need for flood control structures or designs that alter wetlands and their shoreline characteristics or reduce their capacity for groundwater recharge, riparian shading, or habitat movement this can include enhancing natural drainage and using green infrastructure to mitigate flood impacts.

NE.17.10 New developments and/or land use activities should design circulation systems, roads, trails, and other such facilities to protect wetlands from erosion and reduce the amount of soil, silt, and pollutants entering wetland areas and from fragmentation of habitat corridors identified in Best Available Science.

NE.17.11 Avoid new development and/or land use activities that would significantly impact native and/or appropriate vegetation, cause substantial erosion or sedimentation, or adversely affect aquatic life or the biophysical capabilities within a wetland habitat including amphibian breeding, pollinator foraging, and fish and wildlife movement between wetland and riparian system.

NE.17.12 Wetlands shall be protected and should be improved for use as fish and wildlife habitat by providing buffers and protection of adjacent riparian environments, along with maintaining hydrologic connections that support life-cycle needs of aquatic and semiaquatic species.

NE.17.13 Recognize and protect wetlands that provide wildlife habitat for priority species and species of local significance, as defined under the Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Area goals and policies.

NE.17.14 Encourage the preservation of wetlands associated with wildlife habitat corridors.

NE.17.15 Existing vegetation providing wildlife habitat in habitat corridors should be maintained or improved to offset habitat loss by human activities/ development.

NE 17.16 Encourage landowners, developers, and public agencies to utilize voluntary stewardship certifications that promote low-impact land management, riparian protection, groundwater recharge, and habitat connectivity within wetland areas and their buffers.

NE.17.17 Existing vegetation providing wildlife habitat in habitat corridors should be maintained or improved to offset habitat loss by human activities/ development.

NE.18 For agricultural and forestry activities within a wetland or its buffer area, require the use of best management practices and adherence to federal and state laws.

NE.18.1 Support and develop agricultural and forestry management strategies to protect water quality through education and selective controls. including voluntary independent certification programs that promote reduced runoff, riparian buffers, native vegetation, and groundwater protection.

NE.18.2 Partner with conservation districts, Tribes, native-led organizations, land trusts and other organizations to advance agricultural and forestry Best Management Practices(such as conservation buffers, conservation tillage, crop nutrient management, regenerative/bio-farming, weed and pest management) aligned with best available science from WSU Extension and Department of Ecology.

Aquifer Recharge Areas and Groundwater

Underground aquifers are the primary source of drinking water for Spokane County. The following goals and policies are intended to ensure the long-term quantity and quality of groundwater as a drinking water source in Spokane County. The Spokane Valley Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer supplies most of the urban area's drinking water and is designated a sole-source aquifer under the federal Safe Drinking Water Act. However, most of the county is underlain by other aquifers that are used for drinking water. Contaminants deposited in recharge areas pose risks to aquifer water quality.

To ensure quality groundwater, Spokane County is required to designate and protect critical aquifer recharge areas. A critical aquifer recharge area is one that significantly recharges aquifers used for potable water. In addition to ensuring groundwater quality, it is equally important that aquifers are not depleted to a degree that affects stream baseflows or aquatic species. The goals and policies of this section guide the protection of our aquifers and critical aquifer recharge areas.

NE.19a Prevent degradation of groundwater quality in Spokane County and improve water quality of aquifers that do not meet state standards to protect drinking water, native fish and wildlife, and culturally important species dependent on groundwater-fed surface flows.

NE.19b Protect groundwater quality from development impacts.

NE.19.1 Provide clear and manageable measures to protect critical aquifer recharge areas that sustain drinking water supplies, instream flows, and groundwater-dependent ecosystems.

NE.19.2 Utilize regulations developed for the Spokane Valley Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer for other highly susceptible critical aquifer recharge areas as appropriate, and safeguard aquifer-dependent wetlands, springs, riparian systems, and instream flows.

NE.19.3 Re-evaluate aquifer protection measures at least every five years and amend as necessary based on Best Available Science, Tribal data, and regional groundwater studies. Integrate knowledge on changing climate conditions including summer drought.

NE.19.4 Evaluate proposed land use changes for both positive and negative impacts on groundwater quality, especially in moderate and highly susceptible critical aquifer recharge areas.

NE.19.5 Require development that would have a significant negative impact on the quality of an aquifer to provide measurable and attainable mitigation of the impact.

NE.19.6 Coordinate aquifer protection with Wellhead Protection programs by identifying wellhead protection areas, designated by a public water supplier, as highly susceptible critical aquifer recharge areas.

NE.19.7 Require wastewater management systems appropriate for the industry when critical materials are used by an industry. including measures that prevent infiltration into groundwater and pathways that may affect wetlands, springs, and fish habitat.

NE.19.8 Require appropriate stormwater runoff and spill control provisions for those who use and/or store critical materials within critical aquifer recharge areas.

NE.19.9 Support and develop wellhead protection measures with water purveyors countywide and coordinate with agencies across the Idaho state line to protect source waters and designated wellhead protection areas that are vulnerable to climate impacts including drought which can allow a buildup of pollutants, and extreme precipitation which can release those pollutants into the water source.

NE.19.10 Prohibit new industries that will store, handle, or use critical materials from locating within a wellhead protection area designated by a public water supplier. or areas that directly recharge surface waters supporting salmonids or culturally important species.

NE.19.11 New industries that will store, handle, or use critical materials shall be required to locate outside of highly susceptible critical aquifer recharge areas.

NE.19.12 New residential subdivisions within critical aquifer recharge areas must not exceed an overall density of one (1) dwelling unit per five (5) acres when located outside the Urban Growth Area (UGA). in order to protect recharge, reduce nitrate loading, and maintain instream flows supported by groundwater for ecologically and culturally significant fish and wildlife species.

NE.19.13 Solid waste disposal sites (landfills) shall be prohibited within critical aquifer recharge areas of medium and high susceptibility; except that inert and/or demolition solid waste disposal sites may be allowed within critical aquifer recharge areas of medium susceptibility, provided adequate safeguards are in place to protect surface and groundwater.

NE.19.14 Pits for the mining of gravel over an aquifer may be allowed if the groundwater is not exposed and measures are in place to prevent inappropriate land uses near the pit. Pits must maintain at least 10 feet of earth from groundwater.

NE.19.15 In situations of documented contamination of public water supplies in violation of Washington State water quality standards, development, which would either contribute to or be impacted by the pollution, shall be prohibited until all necessary utilities, facilities, and services (including water quality that meets state standards) can be provided in compliance with applicable standards.

NE.19.16 In highly susceptible aquifer recharge areas, encourage development activities that do not use critical materials.

NE.19.17 Sewer service, stormwater runoff, and spill-control provisions shall be provided when critical materials are used, handled, or stored by industries or other land uses when they are located within critical aquifer recharge areas.

NE.19.18 Best management practices should be utilized to treat stormwater runoff prior to injection into the ground, with priority for nature-based systems green stormwater infrastructure, and vegetated treatment using native species.

NE.19.19 Encourage the application of permeable and semi-permeable surfaces to parking areas and other innovative storm water control alternatives to facilitate storm water treatment and disposal. while reducing heat load, pollutant levels, and hydrologic alteration affecting aquifer-fed streams.

NE 19.20 Encourage the use of xeriscaping and native vegetation and climate adapted trees and landscaping to reduce irrigation and need for pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizer to sustain native pollinator and wildlife habitat connected to groundwater-dependent ecosystems.

NE 19.21 Encourage agricultural, industrial, commercial, and institutional landowners in critical aquifer recharge areas to use voluntary stewardship programs that promote reduced chemical use, low-impact stormwater design management, better soil health practices, riparian protection, and groundwater recharge.

NE.19.22 Coordinate with agencies across jurisdictional borders, including cities, counties and Idaho State, to protect source waters and designated wellhead protection areas from climate hazards including drought and extreme precipitation.

NE.19.23 Support goals and recommendations of adopted watershed plans regarding groundwater quality and quantity and their role in sustaining culturally important fish species such as Redband trout, Westslope cutthroat trout, and Chinook Salmon.

NE.20 Secure adequate water quantity for the residents of Spokane County and protect groundwater-fed surface water flows that sustain native fish, wildlife, and culturally important species.

NE.20.1 Manage surface water and groundwater throughout the county to stay within recharge capabilities and sustain groundwater-dependent ecosystems and instream flows.

NE.20.2 Define and map the limits of all aquifers in Spokane County, together with their primary source of recharge, and identify those aquifers where annual withdrawals exceed annual water recharge as soon as possible.

NE.20.3 Recognize that the County's basalt and bedrock aquifers are more susceptible to declining water levels due to low recharge capacity, implement density control limitations, groundwater withdrawal limits, shared or community water systems, rainwater capture, native vegetation practices, and other measures that prevent further depletion and avoid impacts to groundwater-fed streams, wetlands, and culturally important aquatic species. Water importation should only be considered when conservation, local water management, and recharge strategies cannot meet essential needs.

NE.20.4 Promote water conservation through education, incentives, programs and regulations, in cooperation with water purveyors and the public, public engagement, and through voluntary programs that support natural recharge, native vegetation, and riparian shading. Encourage the use of water conservation programs, actions, and technology (e.g., xeriscaping, water-conserving irrigation infrastructure, low flow toilets and shower heads) for all uses, including on County-owned properties and parks.

NE.20.5 It is recognized that aquifers in Spokane County used for drinking water may have all or part of their recharge areas located outside of the county. Accordingly, Spokane County should coordinate and collaborate with surrounding jurisdictions to protect groundwater and surface flows supported by groundwater recharge.

NE.20.6 Recognize that the Spokane Valley Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer and other groundwater sources as finite resources.

NE.20.7 Discourage new water wells or increases in the extraction of water from existing wells in aquifers where water withdrawals exceed aquifer recharge or impact surface water flows, especially in the Little Spokane River Basin, Hangman/ Latah Creek Drainage, in watersheds that have administrative closures, and where impaired conditions and ongoing Tribal restoration efforts rely on maintaining groundwater-supported instream flows. The provision of public water service to these areas shall be encouraged.

NE.20.8 In future updates of the Coordinated Water System Plan, work with water purveyors to standardize future water use projections based on population projections and groundwater–surface water interaction studies.

NE.20.9 Support efforts to limit water use allowed under the state domestic exemption rule to provide supplies for single-family residences and limit or reduce permit-exempt homes where groundwater withdrawals affect instream flows, groundwater-dependent ecosystems, or culturally important fish species.

NE.20.10 Water-conserving landscaping and other conservation practices should be encouraged.

NE.20.11 Special consideration should be given to proposed developments or activities that recycle or find use for wastewater.

NE.20.12 Ensure adequate water supply is considered during permit review for proposed development projects in rural areas, particularly those reliant on permit-exempt wells.

NE.20.13 Water-conserving landscaping and other conservation practices such as native and drought tolerant vegetation should be encouraged.

NE.20.14 Encourage those on domestic permit-exempt wells to voluntarily implement water-use metering to support conservation practices and to share metering data with Spokane County Water Resources to help understand rural water challenges.

NE.20.15 Encourage voluntary stewardship programs that promote water conservation, groundwater recharge, and riparian protection in agricultural, commercial, institutional, and residential land uses.

NE.21 Provide public information programs for land users to demonstrate how to protect critical aquifer recharge areas from degradation, and to conserve groundwater-dependent surface waters, wetlands, and culturally important species.

NE.21.1 Provide the public with information on practices that threaten water quantity and quality, and that can diminish instream flows, wetlands, and groundwater-dependent ecosystems.

NE.21.2 Encourage all land users to employ best management practices appropriate to their land use to discourage excessive water use and to protect public health and safety, while supporting native vegetation, infiltration, and low-impact landscaping.

NE.21.3 Provide convenient public access to county groundwater modeling documents and regulations to protect critical aquifer recharge areas.

NE.21.4 Make the public aware of the long-term expense and public health consequences of failure to protect critical aquifer recharge areas from degradation, including loss of baseflows that support fish, wildlife, recreation, and cultural resources.

NE.21.5 Encourage area schools, colleges, and universities to include education about groundwater pollution prevention and groundwater's role in supporting rivers, wetlands, and culturally important species.

NE.21.6 Encourage area civic groups to become involved with groundwater protection.

NE.21.7 Maintain Spokane County's Water Resources website to provide continuing education and information to citizens regarding groundwater quality.

NE.21.8 Create incentives to reduce the use of hazardous chemicals by households and businesses, and encourage nature-based alternatives and native vegetation that reduce the need for chemical inputs (such as the Water Wise Spokane program through Spokane Public Works, and similar).

NE.21.9 County staff should participate in the Spokane Aquifer Joint Board (SAJB), the Idaho-Washington Aquifer Collaborative (IWAC), and other region-wide aquifer protection and planning efforts.

NE.21.10 The Spokane County Water Resources Program should provide information for small-acreage owners describing methods of protecting groundwater and other best management practices.

NE.21.11 Increase aquatic habitat resilience to low summer flows by increasing water residence time, storing water on the landscape, conserving water, protecting groundwater, keeping waters cool, and protecting water quality.

NE.22 Consistently enforce regulations, effectively monitor compliance, and provide incentives to protect critical aquifer recharge areas and the groundwater-fed wetlands, rivers, and culturally important species that depend on them.

NE.22.1 In moderate and highly susceptible critical aquifer recharge areas, no variances, deviations, or exceptions to the groundwater protection regulations shall be allowedexcept with alternative mitigation measures that protect groundwater equal to or better than the stated regulations.

NE.22.2 Include clear, manageable compliance requirements to protect groundwater and prevent impacts on aquifer-dependent wetlands, riparian areas, and instream flows in the construction and occupancy permit system.

NE.22.3 Commit adequate resources to permit monitoring and enforcement, including qualified staff with necessary support and training in groundwater–surface water interactions and Best Available Science.

NE.22.4 Conduct a review of regulations at least every five (5) years to make sure they reflect:

1) changing conditions in the environment;

1) growing scientific knowledge of the quantity and quality of the existing groundwater resource; and

2) best management practices for that resource.

NE.22.5 Develop the groundwater resource. including voluntary stewardship certifications, green infrastructure adoption, native vegetation practices, and low-impact development. including protection of groundwater-dependent ecosystems and culturally important fish and wildlife species.

NE.22.6 Encourage voluntary land exchange for aquifer protection so that critical aquifer recharge areas that are highly susceptible to contamination have the protection of public ownership and protect groundwater-dependent wetlands, riparian areas, and instream flows.

NE.22.7 Enable transfer of development rights from critical aquifer recharge areas to other suitable sites if mitigation at the original site is not possible, and where the transfer avoids impacts to groundwater recharge, baseflows, and groundwater-dependent ecosystems.

NE 22.8 Spokane County shall aggressively identify causes of water quality problems and propose and implement solutions where feasible. Water quality problems include those that diminish aquifer recharge, reduce instream flows, increase pollutant loading, or impair wetlands or riparian systems fed by groundwater.

NE.22.9 Designate and maintain one office for coordinating groundwater quality issues in Spokane County. including education and data on groundwater–surface water interactions and culturally important species affected by groundwater depletion

NE.22.10 Create a source of information on best management practices for groundwater protection.

NE.23 Regularly update critical aquifer recharge area protection measures so they are effective, enforceable, and equitable and reflect Best Available Science on groundwater-dependent ecosystems, surface flows, and culturally important species.

NE.23.1 Update the aquifer susceptibility analysis when sufficient new information is available to justify an update including data on groundwater–surface water interactions, recharge rates, and climate impacts.

NE.23.2 Conduct additional studies to better define the extent of contamination, physical extent, water capacity, background water quality, and the rate of flow of water in Spokane County aquifers.

NE.23.3 Reconsider and revise the list of critical materials every five years to reflect emerging risks to groundwater quality, recharge capability, instream flows, and groundwater-dependent ecosystems.

NE.23.4 Regularly revise aquifer protection measures to reflect additional best available information.

Contamination Susceptibility of Aquifers Map

To view maps, please refer to Spokane County Planning Website using SCOUT http://maps.spokanecounty.org/?MapType=planning or contact the Planning Department at (509) 477-1500

Surface Water Quality and Quantity

Spokane County has a large number of surface water bodies that provide climate resilience and a variety of economic, ecological, recreational, and aesthetic benefits and uses. Almost all the perennial streams within the County are listed within the State's "303d" inventory as having impaired water quality. Many of these streams are also groundwater-dependent, and withdrawals from aquifers can reduce baseflows critical to water quality, salmonid life cycles, and cultural uses. For example, Hangman/Latah Creek, which is also impaired for water quality and subject to Tribal salmon restoration efforts, is negatively affected by withdrawals from aquifers in its watershed.

The most important water body listed as having impaired surface water is the Spokane River. The use of the Spokane River as a receiving water for sewage effluent discharges and storm runoff makes it an important resource for waste assimilation. This function must, however, be balanced with the river's economic, recreation, wildlife habitat, and aesthetic values. There is evidence that pumping from the Spokane Valley Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer reduces the flow in the river. Flows in the Little Spokane River are also adversely affected by withdrawals from the watershed's aquifers. While lakes within the county exhibit better water quality than streams, several lakes have shown or are showing signs of lower water quality. Lake restoration programs are in effect for three lakes (Medical, Liberty, and Newman), as well as the Long Lake Reservoir.

Stormwater

The increased impervious area resulting from development changes the amount and quality of stormwater runoff. If left unmanaged, stormwater can cause flooding and degrade water quality, especially in already impaired water bodies. Increased impervious areas may also adversely impact groundwater recharge and reduce baseflows that support wetlands, riparian systems, and groundwater-dependent streams.

The major stormwater problem areas are located in Glenrose/Central Park, Eaglewood, Five Mile Prairie, West Plains, and the Saltese area (including Ridgemont, Morningside, and Bella Vista). These areas are underlain by geology that does not readily absorb water; therefore, they tend to experience acute stormwater issues immediately after heavy rain or rapid snowmelt. Precipitation falls, and either runs off, pools in low spots, soaks into the ground or accumulates on the surface as wetlands, ponds, or lakes. Some runoff flows on the surface, and some flows beneath the surface. Flooded basements and other property damage are often the result. These problems may worsen as Spokane County anticipates more intense winter precipitation in the future.

Long-term solutions to stormwater problems will require creative, case-by-case problem-solving. In drainage basins where development has already occurred, much of the natural stormwater system may be altered, reducing its effectiveness. In areas where wetlands have been filled and natural drainageways altered, substantial investment in stormwater collection and disposal systems will be required. In newly developing areas where stormwater disposal has not yet become a problem, it is important to preserve the natural system of wetlands and drainageways to prevent issues from future development. Preservation and restoration of natural wetlands, riparian corridors, floodplains, and native vegetation using nature-based solutions and green infrastructure are cost-effective tools for

stormwater management that filter pollutants, enhance recharge capacity, reduce flooding, and support culturally and ecologically important species. These efforts are strongly encouraged.

NE.24a Assure continued provision of both adequate quantity and quality of surface water for the County of Spokane, including protection of groundwater-dependent baseflows that support native fish, wetlands, cultural resources, and wildlife habitat.

NE.24b Encourage and incentivize land uses that are consistent with long-term protection of surface water quality and quantity in Spokane County.

NE.24c Work regionally with the State of Idaho and its counties, the State of Washington and its counties, and Tribal governments to restore water quality in currently impaired surface waters, as well as protect surface waters of higher quality.

NE.24.1 The Spokane County Water Resources Plan and the Spokane County Wastewater Management Plan are adopted by reference as part of this Plan. However, future updates to these plans should integrate Best Available Science into water management plans and consider methods of stormwater and wastewater disposal and alternate uses that reduce impact on surface and groundwater, and freshwater consumption such as irrigation of golf courses, parks, landscaping and crops not intended for human consumption and nature-based treatment systems using native vegetation.

NE 24.2 Within the Peone/Deadman Creek, Newman Lake, Liberty Lake, Saltese, Chester Creek, Glenrose/Central Park, North Spokane and West Plains drainage areas or other areas with drainage problems, special studies and/or conditions of approval for development proposals may be required if necessary to mitigate storm water runoff and other pollution sources including cumulative impacts to groundwater recharge and baseflows.

NE.24.3 Impacts of a proposal upon surface water quantity and quality shall be considered before development is approved, including impacts to flow from groundwater withdrawals. Denying or conditioning proposals may be necessary to protect surface waters and groundwater-fed ecosystems.

NE.24.4 Develop and maintain an area-wide Water Quality Management Plan that is coordinated with the Spokane County Comprehensive Plan and the equivalent Plans for adjacent Washington and Idaho counties.as well as coordinated with Tribal watershed and salmon recovery initiatives where appropriate.

NE.24.5 The County shall develop an education program to inform its people of the sensitivity of the surface water to both excess use and contaminants. The purpose of the program would be to reduce contamination.

NE.24.6 Encourage the Department of Ecology to continue enforcing the minimum flow of 115 cubic feet per second in the Little Spokane River at Dartford.

NE.24.7 Encourage Ecology to continue enforcing the minimum flow standard for the Spokane River that is adequate to protect wildlife and maintain water quality.

NE.24.8 The more restrictive residential density requirements imposed either by the Critical Aquifer Recharge Area or surface water quality and quantity goals in adopted watershed plans, and policies or by each land use category's goals and policies shall apply.

NE.24.9 Trucks and trains carrying critical materials should be encouraged to use preferred critical material routes where emergency spill response plans exist.

NE.24.10 Treated sanitary wastewater shall meet or exceed the Department of Ecology standards prior to discharge to surface waters.

NE.24.11 Where increased stormwater runoff potential exists due to a proposed development, runoff management procedures shall be required. including green infrastructure and native vegetation practices that reduce pollutants and increase infiltration.

NE.24.12 Establish enforcement procedures for the safeguarding of surface waters in Spokane County, including protection of groundwater-dependent flows and riparian habitat.

NE.24.13 Time extensions for approved preliminary plats, short plats, and binding site plans shall be subject to current applicable local, state, and federal regulations regarding water quality protection.

NE.24.14 Work with agricultural agencies to limit the use of excessive fertilizer, pesticide and herbicide application and work toward finding other, less damaging soil fertilizers To support voluntary stewardship programs that reduce chemical use and protect riparian buffers.

NE.24.15 Encourage biological water treatment using native plants. and nature-based stormwater infrastructure

NE.24.16 Continue the ban on phosphorus in detergents.

NE.24.17 Implement standards that adequately control erosion from development sites. Special emphasis should be placed on erosion and stormwater control along private roads, as these can affect surface waters. including standards that prevent sedimentation impacts to critical areas.

First and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas

Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas include:

- Areas with which primarily endangered, threatened, and candidate species have a primary association and;
- Habitats and species of local importance;
- Naturally occurring ponds under twenty acres and their submerged aquatic beds provide fish or wildlife habitat;
- Waters of the state;
- Lakes, ponds, streams, and rivers planted with game fish by a governmental or tribal entity; or
- State natural area preserves and conservation areas;
- Wildlife corridors and landscape linkages;
- Candidate and monitored species;
- Priority habitats and areas in which priority species have a primary association as identified by the Department of Wildlife (WDFW) in the priority habitat and species lists; priority habitats as identified by WDFW, are areas with one or more of the following attributes: comparatively high wildlife density, high wildlife species richness, significant wildlife seasonal ranges, wildlife travel corridors, limited availability and/or highly vulnerable habitat. Priority habitats in Spokane County include wetlands, riparian areas, urban natural open space, shrub steppe, moose habitat, elk habitat, white tail deer winter range, cavity-nesting duck habitat, waterfowl habitat, cliff/bluff, old-growth and mature forest, and aspen stands.
- Fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas do not include such artificial features or constructs as irrigation delivery systems, irrigation infrastructure, irrigation canals, or drainage ditches that lie within the boundaries of and are maintained by a port district, an irrigation district, or a company.

Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation means land management to maintain species in suitable habitats within their natural geographic distribution, preventing the creation of isolated subpopulations. Maintaining landscape connectivity and limiting habitat fragmentation are key strategies for avoiding isolated wildlife populations and sustaining ecological processes.

This does not mean always maintaining all individuals of all species, but it does mean that cooperative, coordinated land-use planning is critically vital among counties and cities in a region. Protecting habitat also supports Tribal treaty rights, traditional foods, and culturally important species.

Fish and wildlife are part of our heritage. Fishing, hunting, and simply watching wildlife are valued recreational activities that contribute to the local economy and quality of life. Preservation of fish and wildlife habitat is key to the continued existence of these species. The following goals and policies articulate the high value Spokane County residents place on conserving local fish and wildlife.

NE.25a Identify fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas and their ecosystems. Recognize the multiple values of fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, including cultural and tribal importance, climate resilience, and ecosystem services and educate people as to these values.

NE.25b Protect, maintain, and improve critical fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas and habitats of local importance through a variety of methods, including public ownership of the most critical areas and incentives for privately owned land as well as incentives for privately owned land, collaborative watershed programs, and voluntary stewardship certifications.

NE.25.1 Guide development by environmental concerns, including natural limitations of habitat. Incentives and mitigation measures can guide development while avoiding corridor fragmentation and the degradation of groundwater-dependent habitats.

NE.25.2 Land use regulations and decisions shall consider clustering, density transfers, bonus density, nature area preservation, or other innovative mechanisms to retain fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas whenever possible, including conservation of landscape linkages identified in Best Available Science.

NE.25.3 Development proposals and their design shall consider the retention and maintenance of critical fish and wildlife habitat areas and shall provide buffers to protect corridors and water habitats. including riparian shading, groundwater-fed wetlands, and climatesensitive spawning or rearing habitat.

NE.25.4 Spokane County will seek individuals and/or groups to assist in identifying and protecting local species and habitats of importance, including Tribal governments, local conservation organizations and recreation groups, and other stewardship programs applicable at the national, state, or local level. Establish and maintain government-to government relations through regular meetings and dialogue with the Spokane Tribe of Indians and other local Tribes and collaborate with native-led organizations to pursue co-management opportunities for County natural areas that enhance climate resilience where requested by Tribes.

NE.25.5 Support goals and recommendations of adopted watershed plans regarding fish and wildlife habitat and prioritize actions that restore connectivity, riparian forests, and instream flows and enhance resilience to drought, flooding, and extreme heat.

NE.25.6 Recognize the cultural importance of certain species (e.g., Redband trout, Chinook Salmon) to the Spokane and Coeur d'Alene Tribes and the need to support these restoration efforts through habitat protection, reconnection of migratory corridors, and conservation of groundwater-dependent flows.

NE 25.7 As required by WAC 365-196-335 (or subsequent regulations), conserve, restore or establish open space corridors within and between urban growth areas.

NE 25.8 Collaborate with citizens, organizations, agencies and jurisdictions to preserve and/or restore habitats and corridors across jurisdictional boundaries.

NE 25.9 Collaborate with WSDOT and other agencies to eliminate barriers in habitats and corridors caused by roads and other infrastructure, thereby increasing habitat connectivity and traffic safety from wildlife collisions. As one example, Incorporate hydrologic climate impacts into the design of water-crossing structures (e.g., climate-smart culverts and bridges) for fish passage and habitat quality.

NE.26a Spokane County shall strive to minimize fragmentation of habitat by 1) protecting important fish and wildlife areas and open space; and by 2) interconnecting corridors to form a continuous network of fish and wildlife habitat and ecosystems that maintain ecological function, climate resilience, and species movement within and across watersheds.

NE.26b Spokane County shall strive to ensure that priority fish and wildlife species, as identified by the WDFW and Tribal governments where appropriate and species of local importance, including culturally important species identified by Tribal governments, do not become imperiled due to land use changes, habitat alteration and other human activities.

NE.26.1 Recognize that the WDFW manages fish and wildlife resources and that Spokane County should coordinate with WDFW in land use planning and management of fish and wildlife resources.

NE.26.2 Spokane County shall strive to implement measures that contribute to the recovery and/or management of priority species by protecting migratory pathways, groundwater-dependent habitats, riparian corridors, and sensitive native habitat types.

NE.26.3 Encourage and incentivize restoration of lost and damaged habitat, including removal of invasive species, reestablishment of native vegetation, and reconnection of fragmented corridors.

NE.26.4 Activities allowed within designated fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas should not compromise the areas' habitat quality or function. Compatible uses may include rangeland, forest production, open space, and passive recreation that do not degrade connectivity, riparian buffers, groundwater-dependent flows, or breeding/rearing areas of priority or sensitive species.

NE.26.5 Identify, classify, and map FWHCAs, including PHS and wildlife corridors. Utilize information during project approval and planning efforts to ensure no net loss of habitat function, quality, or connectivity.

NE.26.6 Identify and prioritize upland wildlife corridors alongside riparian and wetland wildlife habitats in future land use and development. Incentivize restoration of fragmented wildlife corridors using voluntary stewardship programs, conservation easements, clustering tools, and restoration partnerships with willing landowners.

Tree Conservation

Much of Spokane County's landscape is dominated by evergreen forests. The area's aesthetic appeal is closely linked to its native vegetation, particularly the trees. The conifers that cover the hills and mountains are important to the area's economy as a renewable natural resource and for increasing tourism. In recent years, there has also been an increase in both private and commercial foraging of forest species such as mushrooms, herbs, and berries. Equally important, these forests provide critical wildlife habitat and migratory pathways that sustain hunting, fishing, wildlife habitat, and outdoor recreation, all of which contribute significantly to Spokane County's economy and quality of life. In addition, trees provide important climate resilience and greenhouse gas reduction benefits including shade, erosion control, and climate resilience through carbon sequestration and serve as keystone species in ecosystems.

Although forestry has declined in importance in Spokane County in recent years, the aesthetic value, stormwater benefits, and wildlife associated with the forested landscape continue to draw people and jobs to the area. To maximize its economic development potential and climate resilience, Spokane County must preserve its identity as a scenic natural area. To this end, conserving native trees and protecting mature tree stands that provide wildlife habitat, stormwater infiltration, carbon storage, and shade must be considered as part of the development process.

NE.27a Preserve the unique natural beauty of Spokane County by conservation of the native trees through public education, conservation incentives, and special consideration in the development process.

NE.27b Increase tree canopy to help boost carbon sequestration, reduce heat islands, and improve air quality, prioritizing overburdened communities.

NE.27.1 Encourage public awareness of the increased property values and reduced stormwater impacts, urban heat, and wildfire risk associated with tree conservation.

NE.27.2 Encourage programs that assist the public in caring for and nurturing trees, including training in climate-smart native forest stewardship and wildfire-resilient thinning, rather than clearcutting.

NE.27.3 Encourage tree-planting programs that emphasize native drought and fire-resistant species and encourage species diversity. Ensure that tree species selection and planting guidance are updated to be resilient to climate change.

NE.27.4 Adopt tree conservation development regulations that discourage the removal of mature trees and intact stands on private lands, require appropriate tree replanting when removal is necessary to accommodate development, and provide incentives to conserve trees, including clustering, density bonuses, reduced clearing limits, and transfer of development rights.

NE 27.5 Ensure that tree removal complies with the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and Migratory Bird Treaty Act to protect these species and their nests and require site-specific review and seasonal timing restrictions to avoid disturbance to active nests, roosting sites, and breeding habitat for priority birds, raptors, owls, songbirds, and cavity nesters. Tree removal and land clearing shall avoid peak nesting periods and shall not occur without appropriate surveys by qualified biologists when suitable or historic nesting habitat is present. Require retention of nesting snags, large-diameter habitat trees, and roost trees whenever feasible, and require replacement with native trees when removal is unavoidable.

NE.27.6 Strategize forest management to provide increased resilience to potential climate change, such as drought, wildfires or changes in air quality through selective thinning, protection of large-diameter trees, preservation of riparian shade, and management that avoids habitat fragmentation.

NE.27.7 Strategize forest management to provide increased resilience to potential climate change, such as drought, wildfires or changes in air quality through selective thinning, protection of large-diameter trees, preservation of riparian shade, and management that avoids habitat fragmentation.

NE.27.8 Require development proposals to preserve trees that provide significant stormwater, habitat, slope stability, or shading functions unless no feasible alternative exists, and require mitigation planting when removal is unavoidable.

NE 27.9 Develop tree canopy targets for rural and urban areas that consider the unique maintenance needs and planting goals of those environments. Monitor tree canopy to ensure consistency with goal of increasing canopy.

Fish and Wildlife Habitat Map

To view the map please click on the above link or contact the Planning Department at (509) 477-1500

Frequently Flooded Areas

Frequently flooded areas are lands in the floodplain subject to a 1-percent or greater chance of flooding in any given year. These areas include, but are not limited to, streams, rivers, lakes, sink areas, major natural drainageways and wetlands.as well as groundwater recharge, water quality protection, preservation of riparian habitat, and support for culturally and ecologically important fish and wildlife species.

Frequently flooded areas are natural physical features of a watershed that play an important role in stormwater storage and disposal. The purpose of these goals is to maintain the natural function of these frequently flooded areas in order to protect private and public property increase resilience to flooding and drought and reduce the need to construct flood control facilities as well as protect the environment. while supporting floodplain ecosystems, sustaining instream flows, maintaining salmonid and redband trout habitat, and preserving riparian areas that are critical for Tribal cultural resources.

NE.28 Recognize the multiple values of frequently flooded areas and educate people as to those values.

NE.28.1 Recognize that frequently flooded areas are a natural physical feature of a watershed. The function of a frequently flooded area is to convey and store runoff during periods of heavy rainfall and snowmelt when overtopping of the normal river, stream or drainage channel occurs and adjacent low-lying areas are flooded.

NE.29 Identify frequently flooded areas and drainage ways, sink areas, runoff areas, floodways, and meander belts that contribute to frequently flooded areas using Best Available Science.

NE.29.1 Hydrologic and hydraulic study methods that employ best available science shall be used to identify frequently flooded areas.

NE.30 Protect and improve the natural dynamics of frequently flooded areas.

NE.30.1 Frequently flooded areas, marshes, floodplains, and floodways should be used as rangeland, forest, wildlife habitat, open space, recreation, and other appropriate uses that do not impair natural flood storage, riparian vegetation, or groundwater recharge.

NE.30.2 Minimize impacts of new development on existing floodplains and frequently floodedareas through design that accommodates flood events without property damage.

NE.30.3 Maintain, protect, or restore natural drainage systems and associated wetlands, side channels, riparian forests, and floodplain wetlands to protect water and environmental quality and improve natural flood storage.

NE.30.4 The natural drainage network should be preserved and utilized for flood control and to maintain environmental quality by prioritizing nature-based practices, protection of riparian vegetation, and avoidance of channel hardening whenever feasible.

NE.30.5 New developments and land use activities should be designed to:

a) Preserve and incorporate natural features such as streams, ponds, significant drainage ways, and wetlands in a manner that preserves their natural functions. Drainageways, riparian areas, wetlands, and floodplain wetlands in ways that maintain flood storage, water quality, and ecological function.

b) Consider the site's topography in relation to frequently flooded areas when designing and siting physical improvements, such as roads and structures.

c) Retain native vegetation buffers: natural vegetation strips adjacent to the ordinary high water mark of a perennial or intermittent stream, or other frequently flooded area, protect riparian shading, filtration (including emerging pollutants such as 6PPD-q), and wildlife habitat.

d) Retain trees, and where feasible, restore trees and native vegetation to stabilize soils, reduce erosion, and support floodplain habitat and groundwater recharge.

NE.31 Manage frequently flooded areas to enhance environmental quality and to minimize the risks to life and property.

NE.31.1 Minimize impacts from flooding problems such as erosion, property damage, potential property devaluation, and impaired ground and surface water quality. including loss of riparian vegetation, floodplain connectivity, or habitat used by priority fish and wildlife.

NE.31.2 Use bioengineering techniques, where possible, rather than hard engineering structures to stabilize the floodway if risk to life or property is threatened, prioritizing nature-based flood solutions that preserve vegetation, floodplain soils, and riverbank stability. prioritizing nature-based flood solutions that preserve vegetation, floodplain soils, and riverbank stability.

NE.31.3 Guide development away from identified 100-year floodplains (one percent or greater chance of flooding in any given year) and county-designated flood areas to avoid loss of flood storage, riparian habitat, and surface–groundwater interactions.

NE.31.4 Permit and encourage land uses compatible with the preservation of natural vegetation and floodplain wetlands within frequently flooded areas.

NE.31.5 The Hangman (Latah) Creek Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan is adopted by reference as a part of the Spokane County Comprehensive Plan.

NE.31.6 Development should be avoided in the 500-year flood plain and should not occur on lands identified as being within a 100-year floodplain (1-percent or greater chance of flooding in any given year) or as having a history of flooding, unless the developer provides mitigation measures acceptable to the appropriate regulatory agency, recognizing that a changing climate may increase the severity and frequency of flood events.

Flood Hazard Map

To view the map please click on the above link or contact the Planning Department at (509) 477-1500

Geologically Hazardous Areas

Geologically hazardous areas are those that, due to their susceptibility to erosion, landslides, earthquakes, wildfire or other geological events, are not suitable for siting commercial, residential, or industrial development that is consistent with public health or safety concerns.

The purpose of these goals and policies is to ensure that areas subject to geological hazards are identified and that hazard mitigation is incorporated into designs. Public safety must be protected by prohibiting development in geologically hazardous areas unless hazard mitigation is assured and does not increase risk to adjacent properties, surface or groundwater quality, or ecological functions such as riparian stability, vegetation cover, or wildlife habitat connectivity.

NE.32 Development should be discouraged in geologically hazardous areas unless it can be demonstrated that a hazard area can be developed consistent with public health and safety, and maintenance of ecological functions such as slope vegetation, stormwater filtration, and groundwater recharge. Development permits may be conditioned to mitigate specific hazards.

NE.32.1 Any new subdivision or short subdivision that is determined to be in a geologically hazardous area where significant risk has been identified shall have specific language placed on the face of the plat (dedication) and title stating that the hazard is present. And that vegetation removal, clearing, and grading may increase hazard severity.

NE.32.2 Residential, commercial, and industrial development in geologically hazardous areas should minimize disruption of existing topography and vegetation, and shall incorporate opportunities for phased clearing and grading to preserve deep-rooted native vegetation that stabilizes slopes and filters stormwater.

NE.32.3 Construction should minimize risk to the natural environment and/or structures. Construction shall not increase the risk to the site and/or potentially affected adjacent properties or increase wildfire risk or sediment delivery to wetlands, streams, or fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas.

NE.32.4 Clearing and grading activities in geologically hazardous areas shall consider limitations based upon seasonal weather conditions to reduce erosion, landslide risk, and downstream sedimentation.

NE.32.5 Within geologically hazardous areas, site alteration, grading, and filling shall be the minimum necessary to accomplish approved designs/plans, and shall prioritize nature-based slope stabilization over structural slope hardening where feasible.

NE.32.6 Proposals should describe the hazards present, such as erosion, landslides, etc., and provide mitigation measures acceptable to the appropriate regulatory agency that do not increase slope instability, runoff volume, or sediment transport into adjacent drainage networks or riparian habitats.

NE.32.7 Construction and development on geologically hazardous areas should have negligible effects on the quality and quantity of potentially affected surface and groundwater Mitigation measures acceptable to the appropriate regulatory agency should be provided, prioritizing infiltration, native vegetation retention, and avoiding impermeable surfaces that alter groundwater movement.

NE.32.8 Development in geologically hazardous areas should not be allowed without appropriate mitigation that provides no net increase in slope hazard, runoff intensity, sedimentation, or loss of stabilizing vegetation.

NE.32.9 Development proposals within geologically hazardous areas should submit an erosion control plan prior to receiving approval.

NE.32.10 Land use regulations and decisions should consider density transfers, bonus density, TDR programs, conservation easements, DNR's Trust Land Transfer, nature belt preservation, or other innovative mechanisms to retain geologically hazardous areas whenever possible and to facilitate implementation of the goals and policies for geologically hazardous areas.

NE.33 Geologically hazardous areas may be used as open space for recreation, rangeland, forest, wildlife habitat, and other uses as appropriate that retain natural vegetation and slope stability and avoid significant soil disturbance.

NE.33.1 Geologically hazardous areas demonstrated to be highly sensitive to modification bydevelopment activities shall be preserved in a natural condition for uses other than development. that maintain vegetation cover, reduce erosion risk, and support wildlife movement and riparian continuity.

NE.33.2 These highly sensitive areas should be inventoried and reviewed for consideration of the most appropriate non-development-related use, including passive recreation, habitat conservation, conservation easements, and voluntary incentive programs, such as best management practice programs on agricultural lands overlapping high-risk slopes.

Shorelines

Shorelines are among the most valuable and fragile of environments. The purpose of these goals and policies is to manage shoreline use to protect, preserve, and restore the shoreline. The intent is to foster reasonable and appropriate use of the shorelines while protecting their natural character, preserving ecological functions, increasing resilience to drought, flooding, and extreme heat, and supporting culturally important species and Tribal treaty rights. This includes maintaining natural hydrologic processes, protecting native riparian vegetation, conserving native fish and wildlife habitat, and promoting nature-based shoreline stabilization practices, while also increasing public access to publicly owned shorelines and expanding recreational opportunities for the public, provided such access does not compromise ecological functions or culturally significant resources.

Bodies of water with a mean annual flow of greater than 20 cubic feet per second (in the case of flowing water) and an area greater than 20 acres (in the case of standing water) are considered Shorelines of the State and are subject to the Shoreline Management Act (SMA). The SMA area of jurisdiction is the body of water together with an adjacent strip of land generally 200 feet wide, measured landward from the ordinary high watermark.

In compliance with the SMA, Spokane County adopted a Shoreline Management Program in 1975. The Shoreline Management Program established goals, policies, and regulations to protect shoreline areas, including water quality, riparian vegetation, habitat connectivity, and natural flood processes. Developments after 1975 have been conditioned to comply with the Shoreline Master Program.

RCW 36.70A.480 requires that the Shoreline Master Program goals and policies be considered as part of the Comprehensive Plan. However, ongoing changes in state law concerning the development of local shoreline programs make an update to the 1975 SMA Program untimely. A major update to the Shoreline Management Program shall occur following adoption of the revisions to state requirements for local shoreline management programs and shall incorporate best available science on riparian buffers, native aquatic species recovery, climate resilience, and nature-based shoreline protection, as well as consultation with Tribal governments.

NE.34 Protect shorelines in Spokane County designated under the state Shoreline Management Act with the Spokane County Shoreline Master Program until it is replaced or amended under pending state law and administrative regulations, and ensure that shoreline management maintains ecological function, enhances climate resilience, supports culturally significant species, and protects Tribal rights and cultural resources.

NE.34.1 The Spokane County Shoreline Program shall be updated once legislative changes are enacted to ensure consistency between the Shoreline Management Program and the Critical Areas Program and shall reflect current science on riparian buffers, nearshore habitat, groundwater–surface water interactions, and climate-resilient shoreline restoration.

NE.34.2 The 1975 Spokane County Shoreline Program, as adopted and amended, is included by reference as part of this plan, replaced with an updated program that incorporates Tribal consultation, habitat restoration priorities, and best available science.

NE.34.3 The Spokane County Shoreline Program shall be reviewed and updated periodically as required by law and shall integrate voluntary incentive programs for agricultural and urban land uses within shoreline buffers and riparian areas.

Geological Hazard Map

To view the map please click on the above link or contact the Planning Department at (509) 477-1500.

Air Quality

Several conditions contribute to air pollution in Spokane County. Human activities, including automobile use, wood stove use, and industrial and agricultural operations, generate airborne substances that can affect air quality. In addition, Spokane has been affected substantially by windblown dust from the entire central portion of the State. The Spokane Valley is also a natural basin where air pollution is concentrated by occasional temperature inversions (a situation in which lighter, warmer air overlies heavier, cooler air). or the health of natural systems that depend on clean air, including sensitive vegetation, pollinators, and wildlife. Air quality improvements can also be supported through land management practices such as reduced-tillage agriculture, native-vegetation restoration, and climate-smart agricultural programs that reduce windblown dust, wildfire risk, and diesel use. A variety of air pollution control strategies have been employed in Spokane County. The strategies include auto emission inspections, restrictions on open burning, wood stove certification, restrictions on wood stove use when pollution levels are high, oxygenated fuels for cars, road paving, use of chemical deicers as an alternative to road sanding, and others. These measures, combined with cleaner-burning cars, have significantly improved air quality. However, traffic volumes continue to rise, which could lead to air quality degradation in the future.

Air quality is intricately related to land use and transportation. The challenge for the region is to balance land use, transportation, and air quality so the community can continue to grow and prosper without compromising quality of life.

NE.35a Maintain air quality in Spokane County that protects human health, prevents injury to plant and animal life, and preserves clear visibility.

NE.35b Promote the physical, economic and social development of Spokane County that is consistent with a good air quality and visibility.

NE.35c Comply with federal and state air quality standards.

NE.35.1 Establish a variety of transportation systems as alternatives to the single occupancy vehicle, such as dispersed employment opportunities, flexible working hours, telework, light rail, monorail, other transit, carpooling, bicycling, and walking paths to reduce vehicle emissions and improve climate resilience.

NE.35.2 Establish multiple high-density travel corridors while preserving the unity of established neighborhoods. and minimizing air pollution exposure for vulnerable populations and schools.

NE.35.3 Encourage and incentivize the development and expansion of high-density urban centers that facilitate alternative transportation modes to reduce traffic congestion and reduce per-capita emissions in line with regional climate action goals.

NE.35.4 Support regional efforts to improve air quality enhances climate resilience.

NE.35.5 Promote public education to increase the level of responsibility for air quality.

NE.35.6 Encourage and support voluntary climate-smart agricultural practices through state programs such as the Washington State Conservation Commission's Sustainable Farms & Fields Program to reduce windblown dust, diesel use, wildfire fuel loads, and air pollution from agricultural activities.

Noise and Light Pollution (Sensory Habitat Disturbance)

Noise and light pollution are increasingly recognized as environmental stressors that affect both human health and the health and behavior of fish, wildlife and insects, though the pathways of impact differ. For human communities, persistent low-frequency road noise from vehicles, tires, and braking systems, as well as air traffic and industrial noise is associated with elevated stress, sleep disruption, reduced cognitive performance, and increased cardiovascular risk. These impacts can be amplified in residential areas experiencing excessive vehicle speeds, frequent acceleration and braking, and illegally modified exhaust systems, which increase both peak noise levels and the duration of disturbance.

For wildlife, these same noise sources interfere with essential biological functions such as communication between mates or offspring, detection of predators, successful foraging, seasonal migration timing, and embryonic development during the nesting period—ultimately reducing reproductive success and habitat suitability. Elevated traffic speeds and air traffic can increase both the intensity and spatial reach of noise along transportation corridors, riparian edges, and wildlife movement pathways, reinforcing the importance of context-sensitive roadway design, traffic calming strategies, and coordinated land-use planning in areas adjacent to habitat and flight paths. Excessive sensory disturbance can function as a form of habitat fragmentation, even where physical habitat remains intact.

Artificial light at night presents a distinct but compounding ecological stressor. Excessive, poorly directed, or high-intensity nighttime lighting disrupts natural circadian rhythms and interferes with navigation cues used by nocturnal and migratory wildlife species. Migratory birds are particularly vulnerable during peak spring and fall migration periods along the Pacific Flyway, where illuminated buildings, bridges, and infrastructure can disorient birds, attract them into urban areas, and increase mortality through exhaustion or collisions.

Incorporating bird-friendly building and infrastructure design (such as reducing unnecessary nighttime illumination, using shielded and warm-spectrum lighting, and integrating bird-safe glass treatments) can substantially reduce collision risk and disorientation during key migration periods while maintaining public safety and economic activity. These strategies are consistent with regional "Lights Out" efforts from national organizations such as the Audubon Society, which promote practical, science-based approaches to reducing wildlife mortality within growing urban environments.

Reducing noise and unnecessary artificial light using best available science and recognized strategies such as quiet-design transportation practices, vegetated buffers, traffic calming, bird-safe lighting, and habitat-sensitive planning can improve public health, enhance wildlife health and abundance, support Tribal cultural resources connected to natural soundscapes and night skies, and increase recreational

and scenic values. Targeted reduction of excessive or inefficient nighttime lighting can also lower municipal energy demand, reduce operational costs, extend fixture lifespan, and support broader climate and sustainability goals. Protecting natural areas from excessive sensory disturbance aligns with the habitat, shoreline, climate resilience, and open-space objectives of this chapter.

NE.36 Mitigate the impacts of sensory disturbance—including noise and artificial light for the health of human and wildlife communities, habitat conservation, and the preservation of ecological, cultural, scenic, and recreational values.

NE.36.1 Consider noise and light pollution as environmental impacts in land-use decisions, especially when proposed activities are near wildlife corridors, riparian areas, wetlands, migration routes, shoreline environments, Tribal resource areas, and designated critical habitats.

NE.36.2 Encourage and incentivize development, design, and transportation planning practices that reduce sensory disturbance, including vegetated buffers, noise-reducing pavement, wildlife-compatible bridge design, tree and canopy preservation, speed management, shielded lighting, and context-sensitive roadway design.

NE.36.3 Promote noise and light-sensitive riparian and shoreline buffers to protect spawning, rearing, nesting, roosting, and migration behaviors of sensitive species, including Redband trout, Chinook Salmon (as restored), amphibians, bats, migratory birds, and imperiled insect migratory species such as the Monarch Butterfly and others.

NE.36.4 In collaboration with city government, neighborhood councils, Tribes, WSDOT, WDFW, utilities, and other partners, identify wildlife areas, migration routes, and scenic or cultural landscapes where quiet or dark-sky corridor planning could protect resources of ecological or cultural importance.

NE.36.5 Encourage and incentivize voluntary sensory-impact reduction strategies in industrial and agricultural operations, including quieter equipment, directional lighting, low-noise backup alarms, hedgerows, and scheduling that avoids peak wildlife periods such as dawn, dusk, and migration seasons.

NE.36.6 Promote bird-safe and wildlife-compatible lighting strategies consistent with regional "Lights Out" initiatives, including seasonal reduction or dimming of non-essential lighting during peak migration periods.

NE.36.7 Encourage incorporation of bird-friendly building and infrastructure design practices in new development and major redevelopment, including bird-safe glass treatments, reduced nighttime illumination, shielded fixtures, and design

strategies that minimize collision risk for migratory birds along known flyways and urban river corridors.

NE.36.8 Encourage transportation planning and roadway design that reduces traffic speeds and associated noise impacts in areas adjacent to residential neighborhoods, riparian corridors, wildlife movement pathways, parks and other sensitive habitat areas, including the use of context sensitive design, traffic calming, and speed management strategies.

Chapter 9
Parks and Open Space

Introduction

The development of Spokane County's park system began shortly after passage of the 1949 enabling legislation (Park and Recreation Services Act, RCW 36.68), which permitted counties to establish parks and conduct programs for public recreation. A group of citizens organized to help formulate a direction with support from the Board of County Commissioners. A citizens' park board was created, and a statement of purpose and action was developed. A broad variety of resources were tapped for support and assistance, from the National Recreation and Parks Association to local civic and school groups. The Department of Parks and Recreation (Parks Department) was officially established as a county Department with a salaried director in the spring of 1951.

Balfour Park became the County's first park, under the sponsorship of the Opportunity Recreational Council. Originally donated to the Valley Fire District for fire station purposes, it then was given to the County in 1951. An official dedication took place in 1953 after initial improvements were made. By 1965 funding at the federal level increased through the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund. The Fund was intended to help local governments in purchasing natural resource areas for recreational use and offered a 50-percent match for parkland acquisition and development. In Washington State, under a comprehensive parks program administered by a new state agency, the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation, additional funding of 25 percent was made available to local governments. Through the program, Spokane County purchased its first waterfront property, Fish Lake.

In 1978, a steady decline in Spokane County's available general fund dollars began reducing the annual Parks Department budget allocations. Compelled to reduce staff and operating expenses, the Parks Department cut both programs and parks. By 1984, the fully maintained parks numbered only 13. Two swimming pools were closed and only those programs that were largely self-supporting remained. A handful of parks were maintained with assistance from community groups. Others were sold or returned to their owners. Facilities in non-maintained parks were left to deteriorate.

In 1987 a $2.2 million bond issue was passed to improve county parks. Following this, the Spokane Board of County Commissioners passed a resolution creating a nine-member Parks Advisory Committee. In passing the resolution, the Commissioners recognized the positive role that citizens play in support of county parks and open space programs. The resolution established an ongoing means of linking park policy with the broader interests of county residents. The members are appointed by the Board of County Commissioners for three-year terms.

With its unique range of outdoor recreational opportunities, Spokane County has much to offer outdoor enthusiasts. The four distinct seasons and holdings of public lands have made this area an increasingly popular place in which to recreate. Fishing and hunting, skiing, equestrian activities, snowmobiling, hiking and biking are some of the more popular types of outings. However, with funds limited, Spokane County's ability to establish and maintain parks and open spaces has traditionally taken a back seat to more pressing needs. Homes, businesses and roads are replacing large sections of open space. This growth brings a very real need for more park and recreation services.

Purpose

The Parks and Open Space Element serves two complementary purposes. First, it identifies the types and levels of park and recreational services desired by Spokane County residents. Second, it provides decision-makers with information and guidance on park issues, helping to identify future needs and ensure that available resources are efficiently allocated. This element integrates parks, recreation, and open space corridors throughout the County, creating a comprehensive framework for planning and stewardship.

While the Parks and Open Space Element is a key component of the County's Comprehensive Plan, the Spokane County Park, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan builds upon its goals and policies. Updated every five years, the PROS Plan functions as an implementation guide, identifying projects, opportunities, and the allocation of resources and staff time. Together, the Comprehensive Plan and PROS Plan work in tandem: the Comprehensive Plan sets high-level goals and policies, while the PROS Plan provides the actionable roadmap to achieve them.

Level-of-service (LOS) standards are established and updated within the PROS Plan, guiding park development in accordance with Growth Management Act (GMA) requirements. These standards—often based on local metrics such as acreage per person or facility access and informed by guidance from the Recreation & Conservation Office (RCO) or the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA)—ensure equitable access, support community health, and enhance overall quality of life.

Vision and Overall Goal

The following vision and overall goal for Parks and Open Space was developed through the citizen participation process.

Vision

> To preserve and create viable natural habitat and trail corridors integrated with and whenever possible, connected to, a well-distributed system of neighborhood, community and regional parks designed to enhance the quality of life by providing recreational opportunity, preserving open space and protecting important elements of Spokane's great natural heritage for future generations.

Overall Goal

To enhance the quality of life for the residents of Spokane County by providing the highest quality parks and open spaces.

Parks Goals and Policies

General Parks and Open Space Goals

Spokane County citizens value the long-term benefits of parks and recreation. Parks can provide important ecosystem and wildlife benefits, reduce climate impacts, and ensure equitable access to the outdoors. It is important to retain the connection with the outdoors and the wildlife it hosts as well as provide for passive and active recreational activities for the citizens. This will be done by acquiring, maintaining and/or preserving a network of parks that provide diverse recreational opportunities for all residents. It is also important that the County strengthens strategic partnerships and leverages resources across the region.

PO.1 Provide a diverse, accessible, and equitable system of parks and recreation facilities that serves all Spokane County residents and visitors—meeting community needs, supporting all ages and abilities, and ensuring safe, high-quality experiences.

PO.1.1 Adopt by reference and regularly maintain the Spokane County Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan. Update the plan at least every five years—or sooner as needed—to remain consistent with the County's Capital Facilities Plan and the requirements of RCW 36.70A.070. Ensure that all new park, recreation land, and facility development align with the goals and objectives of both the Spokane County Comprehensive Plan and the PROS Plan. At a minimum, the PROS Plan shall:

- Identify existing parks and recreation facilities;
- Assess future park and recreation needs and potential locations including consideration for park access by vulnerable and over-burdened communities;
- Identify and prioritize strategies to meet the Comprehensive Plan's level-of-service standards;
- Identify funding sources needed to achieve and maintain level of service standards and sustain park facilities and recreation services;
- Consider including wildlife and ecosystem benefits such as habitat conservation and flood mitigation;
- Evaluate tree canopy coverage within UGAs (RCW 36.70A.070(8)) to support stormwater management and reduce surface temperatures; and
- Assess the economic feasibility of all proposed new parks.

PO.1.2 Development of new parks and recreation facilities shall be consistent with the Spokane County Comprehensive Plan and the Spokane County Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan.

PO.1.3 Develop, renovate, and maintain park and recreation facilities to meet the broadest range of community needs, ensuring full accessibility and equitable service for people with disabilities as well as low-income, vulnerable, and disadvantaged populations. Additionally, identify and pursue land acquisitions that protect sensitive habitats and important natural features.

PO.1.4 Locate parks to support a variety of outdoor activities while preserving and protecting important habitat areas, natural corridors and linkages, wetlands and shorelines, unique landscape features such as cliffs and bluffs, and other significant natural amenities. When siting new parks and facilities, consider long-term operational needs and climate resilience opportunities. Identify and fill gaps in service by:

- Analyzing urban growth areas for level-of-service (LOS) deficiencies;
- Acquiring and developing land and facilities in underserved areas;
- Integrating multi-modal transportation into park designs to improve park access and facilitate use of low-carbon transportation options;
- Updating LOS standards as necessary to reflect changing conditions, community needs, and regulatory requirements; and
- Considering how facilities provided by adjacent jurisdictions may contribute toward meeting County LOS standards.

PO.1.5 Allocate parks and recreation facilities throughout the county in a manner that provides an equitable distribution based on population density considering geographic limitations, as well as prioritize park locations that have potential to provide a variety of activity in alignment with environmental justice requirements of HB 1181. .

PO.1.6 Respond to the diversity of public needs by offering a range of recreational experiences from passive to active, to unstructured activity to organized recreation.

PO.1.7 Involve the public and other agencies with expertise, in the decision-making process regarding parks, recreation facilities and programs.

PO.1.8 Target waterfront areas (lakes, streams and rivers) to provide public access within the carrying-capacity limits of the water resources and adjacent natural systems.

PO 1.9 (NEW) Improve access for all visitors to County land, parks and facilities by identifying and replacing aging park infrastructure as prioritized within the County budget PROS plan and CIP.

PO 1.10 (NEW) Collaborate with community partners to reduce and eliminate financial barriers to participating in recreational programs and use of the park facilities.

Acquisition and Development

PO.2 Acquire and develop parks and recreation facilities to meet the needs of the public within available resources.

PO.2.1 Coordinate and cooperate with both public and private sector interests to further park and recreation opportunities.

PO.2.2 Coordinate park planning and land acquisition across jurisdictional boundaries, taking into account existing and planned infrastructure, population served, habitat and wildlife environmental constraints, and available resources to develop complimentary mixed land uses that utilize green infrastructure and natural spaces to promote ecosystem and habitat benefits that also support community wellbeing . Use existing agency plans and data sets to identify and prioritize areas for future park and open space acquisition .

PO.2.3 Stewardship of the taxpayer's dollar by reducing costs for acquisition and facility development through partnerships with non-profits or for-profits to enhance current and future facilities. Reduce cost of County land acquisitions and park and facility development by leveraging partnerships and funding.

PO.2.4 Prioritize the acquisition and development of waterfront properties for parks and pursue opportunities to establish regional parks in rural areas as they arise. Steward parks and open space through best management practices that balance recreation with the preservation of wildlife habitat and natural resources as well as climate resilience. Provide recreational experiences that respond to community needs, reflect current trends including changing climate conditions, and offer a well-rounded mix of recreational uses.

PO.2.5 Acquire and develop parkland for community parks in urban reserve areas to support community wellbeing and ecosystem co-benefits such as flood mitigation and habitat restoration.

PO.2.6 Offer neighborhoods and communities within the unincorporated county the ability to increase park and recreation opportunities through the formation of self-taxing park service areas. Neighborhoods may include this option within their individual neighborhood plans.

PO.2.7 New development shall mitigate a portion of its direct impacts on the availability of parks, open spaces and recreation facilities. Methods may include, but are not limited to, dedication of land, stormwater management, tree planting and maintenance, use of native and climate-resilient vegetation, donated labor, flexible facility and park programming for new developments, equipment and materials and/or an agreement with Spokane County to provide for the payment of a fee.

PO.2.8 County recreation facilities (e.g., water parks, golf courses, sports complexes, ice arenas) should be designed and operated to conserve water and energy and to recover costs when practical, or possible, through user fees, and a submitted staffing review and maintenance budgets with each new land acquisition.

PO.2.9 Encourage innovative strategies and incentives (e.g., adopt-a-park, adopt-a-trail, adopt- a-space) to enhance existing programs for park maintenance, safety and accessibility.

PO. 2.10 (NEW) Identify land acquisition for park and facility development to support an equitable distribution of accessible opportunities throughout Spokane County.

Park Maintenance and Design

It is important that the County maintain existing parks and open space to ensure safety, security and cleanliness. Well-designed parks will contribute to the aesthetic qualities of the County as well as the welfare, safety and security of its citizens.

PO.3 Continue to provide a parks system that is well maintained and effectively managed to meet both current and future needs while supporting investment in park facilities that correspond with documented County conservation and planning efforts including no net loss of habitat and tree cover targets in the Climate Element.

PO.3.1 Prioritize the maintenance of existing park and recreation facilities while strategically acquiring and developing land that supports adopted park master plan recommendations.

PO.3.2 Establish Park design standards that ensure safety, security, cleanliness, accessibility, and cost efficiency and ease of maintenance, reduced use of energy, fuel and water and other resources, and maximum habitat and

ecological stewardship and continue to pursue the development and implementation of park master plans.

PO.3.3 Best management practices for ecological stewardship and climate resilience should be utilized in the design of county parks and recreation facilities.

PO.3.4 Parks should be designed and located in complimentary, mixed-use areas to provide ease of access for pedestrians, handicapped persons, bicycles, autos and public transit, to access business districts, schools, and neighborhoods as identified in park master plan recommendations.

PO.3.5 To the greatest extent possible, retain the natural features of proposed parks and recreation areas. If appropriate, designs should incorporate the use of native vegetation which help reduce flooding by absorbing water, slowing runoff, and preventing erosion. Native plants are also drought- and heat-resistant, making them more resilient to climate impacts while requiring less water.

Open Space Goals and Policies

The farms, forests, parks and natural areas of Spokane County provide abundant open space for recreation, wildlife habitat and the production of food and other commodities. Spokane County open space is also valued simply for its scenic beauty. Open space contributes directly and indirectly to the economic value of property nearby and to the economic value of the community by enhancing its attractiveness to existing and prospective residents. Over time, this abundant open space is slowly being displaced by development to . Maintaining and protecting open spaces has ecosystem and climate resilience benefits including habitat protection and carbon sequestration. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a policy framework to preserve the open space areas that function as a system of corridors so that opportunities for recreation, trails, wildlife habitat and connection of critical areas are maintained.

Open Space Corridors Map

HOLD

PO.4a Preserve and protect sensitive open space and corridors (through natural area and conservation area designations?) Preserve and protect existing and designated open space areas and corridors throughout Spokane County—including lands that support recreation, wildlife habitat, trails, and connections between critical areas—by safeguarding sensitive areas through appropriate natural area or conservation designations.

PO.4b Establish natural areas to maintain a physical and functional system of open space corridors which protect environmental resources, provide circulation linkages and ensure adequate separation and buffers between various land uses.

Open Space Planning Program

PO.4.1 Spokane County will promote interlocal agreements with other jurisdictions in the County to designate a regional system of open space lands within and between Urban Growth Areas, guided by community needs, values, and population growth. Coordination will include local tribal governments, with Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) used as appropriate to support collaboration and participation, and the establishment of a regional open space planning committee to guide planning efforts.

PO.4.2 Monitor changes in open space quantity and quality to evaluate the cumulative impacts on the County's open space system and take the necessary steps to ensure its protection and no net loss of habitat and trees . Utilize existing agency plans and data sets to guide monitoring, assessment, and management of open space resources.

PO.4.3 Encourage public awareness and utilization of the current-use or preferential tax assessment (RCW 84.34) for open space lands. Provide educational material to the public to encourage participation in the open space program.

PO.4.4 Support land trusts and other private efforts to acquire property and/or secure easements or development rights for open space, wildlife habitat, carbon sequestration, ecosystem protection, and recreation.

PO.4.5 Develop and continue additional revenue sources for the funding of open space. Funding sources may include, but are not limited to, bond issues, additional levies, conservation futures program, land dedication and the use of impact fees.

PO.4.6 Where appropriate, conserve existing public lands in a natural state that maximizes climate benefits including carbon sequestration and ecological function through careful planning and cooperative agreements between government agencies and public and private groups.

PO.4.7 Through subarea planning, open space corridors shall be established as appropriate to serve as greenbelt buffers, trails, wildlife habitat and recreation areas between and among developments.

Open Space Designation

PO.4.8 Identify and designate open space areas and corridors throughout Spokane County. These open spaces shall include lands useful for recreation, wildlife habitat, trails and connection of critical areas.

PO.4.9 The open space designations must be based on community needs and values over time, as population increases.

PO.4.10 The designation of the open space category shall be based on the following criteria.

- Wildlife Corridors and Landscape Linkages as defined by the University of Washington (and refined by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife) study, Wildlife Corridors and Landscape Linkages, An Approach to Biodiversity Planning for Spokane County, Washington
- Lands classified as Forestry Zone
- Wetlands and riparian areas and their associated buffers
- County, state and federal parks, conservation lands, natural areas and wildlife refuges
- Lands permanently protected as open space through conservation easements
- Active and proposed trail systems

Open Space Acquisitions and Dedications

PO.4.11 Public Open Space designations should be accompanied with funding, planning and acquisition techniques, leveraging appropriate local state, federal, local, and private programs as shown below, that ensure the land will be available for use as open space.

- Conservation Futures Tax
- Conservation Easements
- Land Trust

- Transfer of Development Rights
- Public Acquisition of property
- Private acquisition
- Donation
- Planned Development/Clustering and bonus densities
- Dedication
- Impact Fees
- Grants
- REET
- CF

PO.4.12 Within the Spokane County Parks and Recreation Plan, establish a public process for prioritizing future park and open space land acquisitions. The acquisition policy should be flexible enough to permit the capture of an unanticipated opportunity.

PO.4.13 Solicit involvement by the general public, agencies and individuals with expertise in open space land acquisition decisions through the Spokane County Parks Advisory Committee and through the comprehensive planning process.

PO.4.14 The provision of public access to the county's lakes, rivers and major streams shall be a high priority, provided adequate safeguards are in place to protect drainage ways and sensitive riparian areas from flooding and drought impacts such as using native vegetation and green infrastructure to provide stormwater management and aquifer recharge co-benefits..

PO.4.15 Encourage the preservation of open space by nonprofit organizations and private individuals. Mechanisms available to these groups include:

- Dedication
- Conservation easements
- Land trust
- Transfer of development rights

- Planned unit development/clustering and bonus densities.
- Donation

PO.4.16 Encourage the retention of all publicly owned open space areas.

Open Space Implementation Regulations

PO.4.17 Respect private property rights and allow for continued agriculture, ranching and forestry while preserving open space corridors through regulatory means.

PO.4.18 Implement the open space designation (which includes wildlife habitat) through zoning, other regulatory techniques, and incentives, to provide an open space system and to preserve and protect environmentally sensitive areas. Zoning and other regulatory techniques might include residential clustering, low residential density requirements, and the result of establishing critical area buffers and wildlife management plans. Incentives might include property tax incentives, transfer of development rights, bonus densities and other land-use tools.

PO.4.19 Promote the inclusion of functional open space that utilizes native and drought resistant vegetation and trees within planned unit developments for residential, commercial and industrial development to support stormwater management, ecosystem benefits, and can provide cooling benefits.

PO.5 Encourage the multiple uses of open spaces and wildlife corridors.

PO.5.1 Ensure that recreational uses are consistent with the protection and preservation of environmentally sensitive open spaces and wildlife corridors including rivers, wetlands, floodplains, and other critical habitats to ensure no net loss of ecosystem function

PO.5.2 Review development proposals to evaluate opportunities for multiple use of proposed open space.

PO.5.3 Encourage multiple use of open space for passive recreation, wildlife habitat, natural resource uses and rural residential development consistent with maintaining other open space uses.

Trails Goals and Policies

Spokane County's trail system is widely used throughout the county. It is a source of recreation and active transportation for pedestrians, bicyclists and other non-motorized vehicle users. The trail system is an ongoing process of linkages that began in 1989 and continues to this day. It is a goal of the County

to have a trail system that will link population centers, community facilities, workplaces, neighborhoods, schools, recreation areas, open space and cultural/historical areas. A well-connected trail system supports community wellbeing and reduces greenhouse gas emissions by providing residents with alternative transportation options than driving. The County adopted and maintains a County Trail Plan, which is updated every 6 years. The Trail plan is consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan working in tandem through goals, policies and actions. The following policies contribute to the vision of recreational route corridors providing bicycle/walking facilities to link residents of various geographical areas.

PO.6 Create a countywide system of multipurpose non-motorized trails that meet present and projected needs and provide residents with opportunities for carbon-free transportation and reduced vehicle miles traveled.

PO.6.1 Provide trails for pedestrians (including handicapped and wheelchair users), bicyclists, equestrians, skiers and other non-motorized vehicle users,

PO.6.2 The County Division of Engineering and the Division of Planning shall coordinate with the County Parks, Recreation, and Golf Department to maintain the County Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan, ensuring it links population centers, community facilities, workplaces, neighborhoods, schools, recreation areas, open space, and cultural or historical sites. Coordination with other agencies will ensure a comprehensive approach to trail planning.

- Design and build versatile trail systems that accommodate a balance of uses.
- Utilize pathways and trails to provide logical, connected routes throughout Spokane County.

PO.6.3 Design recreational trails and urban pathways to be separated from motorized vehicle traffic to enhance safety and user experience.

PO.6.4 Inventory and examine existing rights-of-way (including abandoned rail and utility easements) for potential use as multipurpose, non-motorized trails, and work to preserve these corridors for trail development.. Work to preserve existing rights of way for use as trails.

PO.6.5 New policy: Plant and maintain tee canopy along trails, to both provide habitat and to provide shade and cooling for trail users.

Water Trails

Water trails provide public access to connect scenic and historic sites along a riverway or lakeshore for the recreational and educational benefit of paddlers, non-motorized boaters and other water users. Spokane County's rivers have become an attraction for both residents and visitors looking to enjoy the varied and unique characteristics of our community's waterways.

The Spokane River Water Trail has 16 non-motorized access points in Spokane County from State Line to Nine Mile Dam. From 2010 to 2017, nine of these access points were developed or restored.

PO.7 Connect water trails to land trails, parks, neighborhoods and open space and develop facilities that support paddling, rafting and angling and other non-motorized watercraft on our lakes and rivers.

PO.7.1. Develop a Spokane River Water Trail based on the principles of low impact development and restoration, environmental stewardship, education, connecting communities and open space, partnerships, meeting regulatory requirements, and ecosystem and climate resilience benefits such as including the use of trees along the waterway to reduce temperatures and erosion.. Utilize the stakeholder generated inventory of existing facilities, proposed development and potential development and support development of other potential water trail improvements which may not be illustrated on the current inventory map.

PO.7.2 Development of equitable water access points may include, but is not limited to, public access, connectivity to the trails system and open space, interpretive signage, educational outreach and riparian restoration.

PO.7.3 Encourage multi-jurisdictional and stakeholder efforts to develop and restore Spokane River access.

PO.7.4 Encourage multi-use trailhead access, e.g.—access points that leverage parking and restroom amenities to support biking, walking and water access.

PO.7.5 Support Inland Northwest Trail Coalition led stakeholder activity to expand county water trail activity to Hangman Creek and the Little Spokane.

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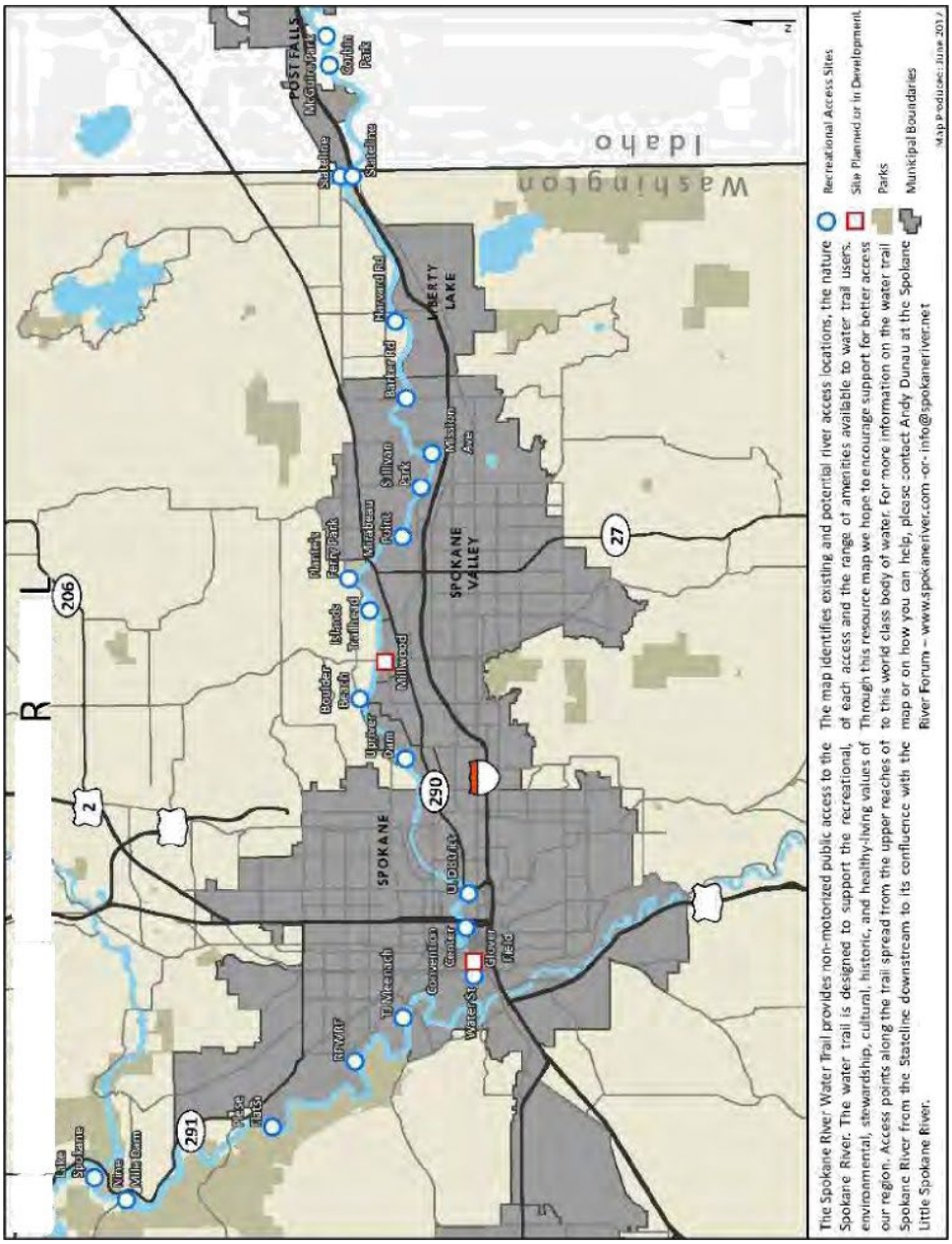

Chapter 10
Capital Facilities and Utilities Element

Introduction

Public infrastructure is the backbone of the community. Citizens rely upon public facilities and services daily for their personal and business transportation needs; to provide safe drinking water; to dispose of sewer and garbage; to provide educational institutions, recreational facilities, and public buildings. The condition of these facilities is directly related to our County's economic vitality.

County residents rely on facilities and services that help to define their quality of life and maintain their health and well-being. They expect their tax dollars to be used efficiently and want measurable and obvious returns on their contributions. They want their quality of life to be maintained and improved through the services and facilities that their government provides. Public facilities and services are often taken for granted. Yet, without coordination and conscientious planning for future growth, facilities, and services may be interrupted or inadequate.

One fundamental tenet of the Growth Management Act (GMA) is for local governments to ensure that both existing and future development are adequately served by public facilities and services. Existing facilities and services must be able to support new development or provisions for improvements must be made where deficiencies exist. If the level of service of an existing road decreases to an unacceptable standard due to the impacts of a development, then the road must be improved to a standard that is acceptable. The concept is simple. The planning process is not. A host of county, state, and federal agencies, as well as regional service providers, are important players in the process.

Capital Facilities is one of the elements the Growth Management Act *requires* to be included in Spokane County's Comprehensive Plan. The separate elements of the Comprehensive Plan work together. The growth scenario envisioned in the land use element will not become a reality unless it can be shown through the Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) that there will be adequate facilities and services in place to support future development. It must also be shown that those improvements owned by the County can be afforded, with funding sources identified. Some of the most important goals of the Growth Management Act are realized through the Capital Facilities element of the Comprehensive Plan.

Another element required to be included in Spokane County's Comprehensive Plan is the Utility Element. The Utilities element is addressed in RCW 36.70A.070(4) of the Growth Management Act.

Background

Capital Facilities are characterized by their long, useful life and require significant expenditures to construct. They include facilities such as roads, water and sewer systems, parks, jails, and solid waste. Capital Facilities are provided by both public and private entities. Services such as police and fire protection are also included within the Capital Facilities element.

Capital facilities appear in other elements of the Comprehensive Plan. For example, transportation facilities such as roads and transit appear in the Transportation element and the Land Use element. Parks and other recreational facilities are also addressed in the Parks and Open Spaces Element.

Capital Facilities Plan

The Capital Facilities Plan is a 6-year plan for capital improvements that support Spokane County's current and future population and economy, within the context of long-range forecasts of capital needs over a 20-year period. One of the principal criteria for identifying needed capital improvements is standards for levels of service (LOS). The CFP contains LOS standards for public facilities and services and requires new development be served by adequate facilities. The CFP also relies on this element's broad goals and specific policies to guide and implement the provision for adequate public facilities, services, and concurrency requirements.

The purpose of the Capital Facilities Plan is to provide adequate public facilities consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and concurrent with, or prior to, the impacts of development. The CFP will allow Spokane County to achieve and maintain adopted standards for levels of service and to exceed the adopted standards when possible.

Capital Facilities Plans are required in the Comprehensive Plan in order to accomplish the following:

1. Provide capital facilities for land development that is envisioned or authorized by the Land Use element of the Comprehensive Plan.
2. Maintain the quality of life for existing and future development by establishing and maintaining standards for the level of service of capital facilities.
3. Coordinate and provide consistency among the many plans for capital improvements, including:

a. Other elements of the Comprehensive Plan;
b. Master plans and other studies of the local government;
c. Plans for capital facilities of state and/or regional significance;
d. Plans of other adjacent local governments; and
e. Plans of special purpose districts.

4. Ensure the timely provision of adequate and concurrent facilities as required in the GMA.
5. Document all County owned capital projects and their financing.

The CFP is an integral part of the Comprehensive Plan. It establishes levels of service standards, the basis for providing capital facilities concurrent with growth and contributing to the community's quality of life. The requirement to fully finance the CFP (or revise the land use plan) provides a reality check on the vision set forth in the Comprehensive Plan. The capacity of capital facilities that are provided in the CFP affects the size and configuration of the Urban Growth Area.

Planning for major capital facilities and their costs enables Spokane County to:

1. Demonstrate the need for facilities and the need for revenues to pay for them.
2. Estimate future operation/maintenance costs of new facilities that will impact the annual budget.
3. Take advantage of sources of revenue (i.e., grants, impact fees, real estate excise taxes) that require a CFP in order to qualify for the revenue.
4. Get better ratings on bond issues when the County borrows money for capital facilities (thus reducing interest rates and the cost of borrowing money).

Growth Assumptions

The County's adopted growth assumptions are the basis for the Land Use element of the Comprehensive Plan which determines, among other things, the size of the Urban Growth Area. The same growth assumptions are used to evaluate the adequacy of public infrastructure within the CFP. The County periodically adopts population projections to serve as a basis for long-range planning purposes.

Relationship to the Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan contains goals and policies related to capital facilities. It also contains guidance for what and where future land uses will be within its Land Use element. It guides where and how the County will grow by applying land use classifications within the Urban Growth Area. The Capital Facilities Plan provides an inventory and analysis of the County's capital facilities, applying LOS standards as benchmarks from which to provide analysis as to the adequacy of the public facilities for the current population and for projected future growth. The capacity of public facilities and services noted in the Capital Facilities Plan affects the size and configuration of the County's Urban Growth Area.

The Capital Facilities Plan is a separate document that is adopted as a part of the Comprehensive Plan.

Service Agreements

Several public facilities and services are provided on a regional basis in Spokane County through interlocal service agreements. For example, the County's sewage is treated at the Regional Advanced Wastewater Treatment Facility. Utilizing regional service delivery is often more efficient and cost-effective for the County and its residents. Spokane County, its cities, and districts need to continually explore opportunities for regional facilities and services.

Another important issue is that Spokane County must work diligently with individual cities to establish interlocal agreements for service provisions within the Joint Planning Areas. The agreements are necessary to establish guidelines for public facility design standards, transfer of facilities upon annexation, and consistency in service delivery.

Focused Public Investment

Focused public investment targets capital improvement expenditures in public investment areas to produce *fully served land* for development. Focused public investment maximizes the use of limited public funds by coordinating government expenditures and focusing development, first in some areas, then in others. The targeted public investment is an incentive for development to occur where the public's capital investment is focused. For public investment to be focused to produce fully served land, the County and other service providers will need to resolve the following issues. (1) What criteria should be used to prioritize public investments? (2) How should areas be selected for targeted investment?

Siting of Essential Public Facilities

Local governments are required by GMA to include a process for identifying and siting essential public facilities that are difficult to locate, such as jails, education facilities, landfills, and sewage treatment plants. Jurisdictions in Spokane County addressed this requirement through the Countywide Planning Policies, which provided the initial framework for the siting of essential public facilities.

In 1995 the Essential Public Facilities Technical Committee was appointed by the Steering Committee of Elected Officials to develop a model for the siting of Essential Public Facilities, consistent with the Countywide Planning Policies and the GMA. On May 3, 1996, the Steering Committee of Elected Officials approved the *Growth Management Essential Public Facilities Technical Committee Report*, which includes a Model Siting Process, an Interjurisdictional Consistency Review Process, and an inventory of existing essential facilities.

Levels of Service (LOS)

Levels of service standards are quantifiable measures of the amount of public facilities or services that are provided to the community. Typically, measures of levels of service are expressed as ratios of facility or service capacity to demand (i.e., actual or potential users). For example, the level of service for parks may be expressed as acres of parks for every 1,000 people.

LOS Standards for County-Owned Facilities

Service	Urban Standard	Rural Standard (as applicable)
Wastewater Treatment / Sanitary Sewer	Infrastructure: Public sewer required where densities exceed 2 equivalent residential units per acre. System Capacity: 200 gallons per day (GPD) per Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU)	N/A - Sanitary sewer is only an urban service.[1]
Stormwater	New development shall not increase runoff volume off-site. Prevent flooding of property during a 25-year storm. Prevent damage to buildings from a 100-year storm. Stormwater discharge to any surface or ground waters will be allowed unless the discharge will degrade water quality below standards.	N/A - Stormwater facilities are provided only in urban areas.[2]
Transportation	LOS for operational analysis shall be as contained in the Spokane County Standards for Road and Sewer Construction. Maintain travel corridor time as established by Spokane Regional Transportation Council. Public Transit as adopted by Spokane Transit Authority Board of Directors.	
Law Enforcement	The County must provide 1.01 law enforcement officers (LEO) per 1,000 residents	The County must provide 0.8 law enforcement officers (LEO) per 1,000 residents
	The county must assist in and ensure the county wide provision of at least 9-10 pre-booking detention diversion service beds per 100,000 county population.[3]	

Service	Urban Standard	Rural Standard (as applicable)
Parks and Recreation	The County must provide 1.4 acres of Community Parkland per 1,000 residents within the unincorporated Urban Growth Area (UGA) where a concentration of 7,000 or more residents are not located within three miles (using existing road/street system) of an existing improved or unimproved County, municipal or other public park that provides or is planned to provide amenities similar to a Community Park.	The county must ensure at least 160 acres of rural park space outside of the UGA per 1,000 rural residents (residents outside of incorporated cities and UGAs). This rural park space may be a combination of any/all publicly owned open space or parkland provided, or held in trust, by a public entity.
Emergency Communications	.02 square feet of emergency communications space per capita	
Solid Waste	The County must be able to process a minimum of .75 tons of municipal solid waste per person per year for unincorporated Spokane County.	
General County Facilities	1,700 sq ft of general facilities per 1,000 population.	

LOS Standards for Special Districts

Service	Urban Standard	Rural Standard (as applicable)
Public Schools	Schools shall provide at least the minimum square feet of instructional space per student as follows: For grades K – 6: 75 square feet of instructional space per student For grades 7 – 8: 100 square feet of instructional space per student For grades 9 – 12: 110 square feet of instructional space per student Individual districts set class size targets, staff-to-student ratios, maximum school enrollments by school type, and minimum school site size guidance in accordance with their individual contexts. The County verifies schools' ability to serve through direct concurrency.	
Fire	Urban areas served by Fire District shall have at least a Class 6 Insurance Rating.	Rural areas served by fire district must have an insurance rating of at least 9 or better Rural areas not served by fire district have no LOS standard.

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Service	Urban Standard	Rural Standard (as applicable)
Domestic Water	350 gallons per residential equivalent per day and a minimum water pressure of 30 pounds per square inch	
Public Health	The County shall contribute at least $2 per Spokane County Resident.	
Libraries	.41 square feet per capita or availability of a digital option for the public at large.	

[1]Sanitary Sewer is an Urban Service which is prohibited from being expanded to Rural Areas. RCW 36.70A.030(25); RCW 36.70A.110(4). Therefore, no LOS for the Rural Area is identified.

[2]Stormwater is an Urban Service which is prohibited from being expanded to Rural areas. RCW 36.70A.030(25); RCW 36.70A.110(4). Therefore, no LOS for the Rural Area is identified.

[3] Spokane County Resolution 22-0026.

Concurrency

One of the requirements of the GMA is for public facilities and services to be provided concurrent with development. *Concurrency* means that adequate public facilities will be in place to support new development when the impacts of that development take place or within a specified time thereafter For transportation facilities, the specified time is 6 years from the time of development. The impacts of development are usually equated with occupancy and use of the development . Concurrency requires that facilities have sufficient capacity to serve development without decreasing levels of service below minimum standards adopted in the CFP.

The GMA *require*s a concurrency mechanism only for transportation facilities (WAC 365-196-415[6][i])However, other facilities deemed necessary for development may be required as a condition of project approval, such as stormwater or wastewater management facilities (WAC 365-415[6][b]). Concurrency management procedures should be developed to ensure that sufficient public facility capacity is available for each proposed development.

Concurrency management procedures should be developed to ensure that sufficient public facility capacity is available for each proposed development.

Utilities

Utilities are one element required by the GMA to be included in Spokane County's Comprehensive Plan. For the purposes of the Growth Management Act, utilities are identified as electrical, telecommunication, and natural gas systems.

Water and sewer facilities are considered capital facilities and are not duplicated within the Utilities element.

In December 1995, a Regional Utility Corridor Plan (RUCP) was developed to fulfill the requirements of the Countywide Planning Policies. This plan includes an inventory and analysis of existing and proposed electric, gas, telephone/fiber optic, water, and sewer "corridors." Through the inventory and mapping of existing and proposed utility corridors, it was determined that opportunities to share corridors may be limited. A Utility Corridor map within the RUCP identifies electric, gas, and telephone/fiber optic corridors from various utility providers. The RUCP provides policies and action statements that are used to guide the goals and policies of this plan.

Vision, Goals, and Policies

While the comprehensive plan does not assert a vision, per se, a sense of a vision permeates every element in the plan. For instance, the chapters on urban and rural land uses include goals and policies that echo prominent community values, projecting them onto the County's regional landscape. The implied vision is generally aspirational, interpreting the community's hopes for its future onto a pattern of development and stewardship that will assure the community the future it wants.

In the scheme of capital facilities, several vision-related themes stand out:

- Essential services provided by capital facilities are crucial to the health, safety, and welfare of community residents.
- The character and scale of development must be consistent and concurrent with public facilities' capacities and future community vision.
- The pace of growth and development should be consistent and concurrent with the vision set forth in the Comprehensive Plan.
- Provision of services should be affordable, both for those customers paying for them through rates and taxes and for the providers, public and private, who must balance investment in facilities with the revenues available to support them.

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

Capital Facilities' Relationship to Land Use

CF.1 Provide adequate public facilities to support rural or urban levels of development, as appropriate, integrating capital facilities planning and the siting of essential public facilities with land use policy.

CF.1.1 Establish and maintain levels of service for facilities deemed necessary for growth and development.

CF.1.2 Ensure that the estimated cost of all capital improvements does not exceed the estimate of available revenues.

CF.1.3 Finance capital improvements and manage debt consistent with the Capital Facilities Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

CF.1.4 Approve comprehensive plan land-use and UGA amendments only if doing so will not decrease levels of service below adopted standards by the time development is available for occupancy and use.

CF.1.5 Ensure capital facilities meet adopted level of service standards through enforceable ordinances requiring concurrency.

CF.1.6 Determine the quantity of capital improvements that are needed to eliminate existing deficiencies and to maintain the Level of Services standards for public facilities and services provided by Spokane County.

CF.1.7 Establish priorities among capital improvements projects through amendments to the Capital Facilities Element and the County's Six-Year Capital Improvement Programs, the Sewer Construction Capital Improvement Program, and Transportation Improvement Program.

CF.1.8 Assess the Comprehensive Plan and, as appropriate, increase funding for new or improved facilities or reassess the Land Use element if the adopted Level of Service standards are not achieved.

CF.1.9 Implement a Concurrency Management System to ensure that adequate public facilities and services needed to support development are available concurrent with the impacts of such development.

CF.1.10 Ensure that that Land Use, Transportation, and Capital Facilities Elements are coordinated and consistent and that established Level of Service standards for public facilities and services are achieved.

Fiscal Sustainability

CF.2 Create a fiscally sustainable capital facilities environment, ensuring adequate public facilities are provided.

CF.2.1 Establish interlocal/joint planning agreements with municipalities and other providers of public facilities to coordinate planning for, and development of, Urban Growth Areas.

CF.2.2 Use annexation agreements to ensure fiscal balance and equity as portions of the UGA annex into incorporated jurisdictions.

Domestic Water

CF.3 Promote efficient domestic water service, protect the natural resource, and ensure the orderly physical development of Spokane County consistent with adopted plans and policies.

CF.3.1 The Spokane County Coordinated Water System Plan (CWSP)/Water General Plan is a part of the Comprehensive Plan.

CF.3.2 Ensure water system plans are consistent with anticipated population growth, the Comprehensive Plan, Coordinated Water System Plan (CWSP),[1] and future subarea plans.

CF.3.3 Ensure water systems for urban development include adequate water rights, supply, and distribution systems for domestic use and fire protection per local, state, and federal plans, policies, and regulations by the time development occurs.

CF.3.4 Encourage public and private water purveyors to implement measurable water conservation practices.

CF.3.5 Encourage the continued cooperation, coordination, and consolidation of water purveyors to achieve greater efficiency in the delivery of water services.

CF.3.6 Prohibit the extension of water service to new development that will decrease the level of service of the existing water system below the adopted minimum level of service standards.

CF.3.7 Ensure water system planning is regional in design, utilizing efficiencies of scale and geographic continuity.

CF.3.8 The provision of water service and construction of water service lines or other water system facilities shall be allowed outside the Urban Growth Area boundaries (UGAs). Any such extensions shall not be an inducement to growth.

[1] Spokane County Coordinated Water System Plan is available at https://www.spokanecounty.org/DocumentCenter/View/29361/CWSP.

Sanitary Sewer Systems

CF.4 Promote efficient sanitary sewer service, protect natural resources, and ensure orderly physical development.

CF.4.1 The Spokane County Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan (CWMP) is a part of the Comprehensive Plan.

CF.4.2 Prohibit the extension of any sewer system that will degrade the existing system below the adopted level of service.

Figure 1 County Water Resource Center

CF.4.3 Planning for County sewer systems should be done on a regional basis, utilizing efficiencies of scale and geographic continuity.

CF.4.4 Sewer planning must be consistent with anticipated population growth and developed in coordination with land use policies.

CF.4.5 The location and capacity of existing and planned sewer facilities shall be important factors when determining the intensity and/or density of land use designations and in the subarea planning process.

CF.4.6 Encourage a coordinated, regional wastewater service organization to provide sewer services to all urban areas of the County inside the Urban Growth Area.

CF.4.7 Public sewer service shall not be provided outside the Urban Growth Area boundary, except where allowed by RCW 36.70A.110 and other applicable laws.

Stormwater

CF.5 Ensure stormwater facilities and related management programs to protect surface and groundwater quality and habitat, prevent chronic flooding from stormwater, maintain natural stream hydrology, and protect aquatic resources.

CF.5.1 The Spokane County Comprehensive Stormwater Plan (CSMP) is a part of the Comprehensive Plan.

CF.5.2 Best management practices should be utilized to treat stormwater runoff prior to injection of runoff into the ground.

CF.5.3 Development shall be designed to protect natural drainage functions including flood plains, drainageways, sink areas, and other natural and existing drainage facilities.

CF.5.4 Development shall be designed to prevent onsite and off-site damage from stormwater runoff that results from site development or new land use activity.

CF.5.5 Development shall consider the multiple uses of facilities, such as the integration of stormwater facilities with recreation/open space areas.

CF.5.6 Conduct stormwater management planning by drainage basin, treating basins as complete drainage systems, to assure that the most economical and beneficial stormwater controls are provided.

CF.5.7 Encourage the use of alternatives to impervious surfaces through rewards and credits.

CF.5.8 Provide alternatives to on-site disposal of stormwater in areas of steep slopes, high groundwater, shallow soils, poorly draining soils, and other physical conditions that make on-site stormwater disposal difficult.

CF.5.9 New and expanded development within the UGA shall require stormwater management systems.

CF.5.10 Encourage a coordinated, regional stormwater service organization to provide stormwater services to all urban areas of the County inside the Urban Growth Area boundary.

Law Enforcement

CF.6 Provide Law Enforcement services efficiently and cost effectively to Spokane County residents.

CF.6.1 Encourage inter-jurisdictional cooperation among law enforcement and corrections agencies to further develop, where practical, shared service and facility use.

CF.6.2 Ensure adequate staffing to meet established Law Enforcement Levels of Service.

Detention, Correction, Rehabilitation Facilities

CF.7 Support the following alternatives as strategies, programs, technologies, and facilities:

CF.7.1 Pre-Trial Services—Pre-trial services that enhance the screening of defendants to better determine eligibility for programs, diversion, and alternatives to incarceration to minimize detention rates.

CF.7.2 Electronic Home Monitoring—Ankle Bracelet and similar monitoring/tracking technology. Provides the court with a sentencing alternative and decreases detention rates, increasing capacity in the County Jail.

CF.7.3 Alternative Courts and Diversion programs (e.g., Drug Court, Mental Health Court, Veteran's Court, DWLS 3 Diversion Program)—Provides the Court and Prosecutors alternative options for intense monitoring and rehabilitation of offenders to reduce recidivism thereby decreasing detention rates.

CF.7.4 Electronic Court Date Reminders—Utilizes technology to remind defendants of upcoming court dates to reduce the issuance of warrants for arrest for "failure to appear," thereby reducing arrests and detention rates.

CF.7.5 Consider other evidence-based practices which reduce recidivism by providing programs and re-entry support to offenders.

CF.7.6 Create, support, and administer regional programs and facilities that utilize inpatient beds, withdrawal management and detox, and mental health crisis and stabilization components. These programs and facilities should include diversion options for individuals in contact with first responders, allow for referral to appropriate care, reduce emergency and jail referrals, and offer voluntary admittance for pre-booked individuals escorted by law enforcement. A model facility should be in operation on a 24-hour basis, professionally staffed, and support an appropriate number of beds based on the county's population.

Solid Waste Disposal

CF.8 Provide solid waste disposal service to reduce public nuisance, health hazards, and pollution to Spokane County's environment.

CF.8.1 The Spokane County Solid Waste Management Plan is a part of the Comprehensive Plan.

CF.8.2 Encourage recycling to conserve resources and energy.

Libraries

CF.9 Support the provision of Library services to Spokane County residents.

CF.9.1 Encourage inter-jurisdictional cooperation, sharing of equipment and facilities.

CF.9.2 Ensure that the expansion of library capacity considers physical as well as digital expansion and service capabilities.

CF.9.3 Ensure that land use regulations allow siting of library facilities in locations convenient to residential areas.

Fire Protection

CF.10 Ensure Fire Protection services are provided efficiently and cost effectively to Spokane County residents.

CF.10.1 Encourage new urban development in areas served by a fire protection district or within the corporate limits of a city providing its own fire department.

CF.10.2 Road access and water supply shall be adequate for fire safety and suppression in commercial and urban-level density residential developments.

CF.10.3 Encourage continued inter-jurisdictional cooperation among fire districts, including the sharing of equipment and facilities to reduce demand for new facilities and equipment.

CF.10.4 Fire districts should develop capital facility plans addressing population growth and future capital needs for their district.

CF.10.5 Encourage fire districts to develop capital improvement plans which identify future fire district sites and/or expansion.

Public Schools

CF.11 Ensure school sites and facilities meet the needs of Spokane County residents.

CF.11.1 Encourage school districts serving predominantly rural area populations to locate schools within designated Rural Activity Centers or Limited Development Areas.

CF.11.2 Encourage school districts to develop capital facilities plans that identify future school sites and include early acquisition of sites in their long-range strategy.

CF.11.3 Develop land use designation and policies that protect and allow for the establishment of new schools in urban areas and designated Rural Activity Centers. The extension or provision of public facilities and utilities to serve a school sited in a rural area that serves students from a rural area and an urban area may be allowed consistent with GMA Guidelines.

CF.11.4 Encourage school districts to allow for shared access of facilities for recreational or other public purposes.

CF.11.5 Encourage the expansion of school facility capacity to proceed at a comparable rate with that of private residential development and demographic trends.

CF.11.6 Consider the capacity of school facilities when considering UGA and Comprehensive Plan Amendments.

CF.11.7 School districts should develop capital facility plans addressing population growth and future capital needs for schools.

Growth and Costs

CF.12 Create a fiscally sustainable capital facilities environment, ensuring adequate public facilities are provided.

CF.12.1 Distribute and assess proportionate costs to new growth and development.

CF.12.2 Consider instituting impact fees:

- Only for system improvements that are reasonably related to the impacts caused by the new development;
- Not to exceed a proportionate share of the costs of system improvements that are reasonably related to the new development, and;
- Only for system improvements that will reasonably benefit the new development.

CF.12.3 Exempt new housing units meeting the standard federal and state definition of "affordable housing" from development impact fees or proportionate cost payments.

CF.12.4 Discount or waive development impact fees or proportionate cost payments for new housing units serving populations with special needs, such as persons with disabilities.

CF.12.5 Utilize SEPA substantive authority where necessary and appropriate to impose mitigation on a project or non-project proponent to mitigate impacts to existing facilities that would otherwise drop below established Levels of Service.

CF.12.6 Establish interlocal/joint planning agreements with municipalities and other providers of public facilities to coordinate planning for, and development of, Urban Growth Areas.

CF.12.7 Use annexation agreements to ensure fiscal balance and equity as portions of the UGA annex into incorporate jurisdictions.

Siting Essential Public Facilities

CF.13 Facilitate the siting of public and private essential public facilities when the unincorporated area is the appropriate location.

CF.13.1 Follow the process for siting essential public facilities as set forth in the Spokane County Regional Siting Process for Essential Public Facilities. (See Appendix D)

Utilities (electric, natural gas, telecommunications, and cable)

CF.14 Provide utilities that are consistent and available to support land use policies.

CF.14.1 Coordinate with utility providers to ensure that sizing, locating, and phasing of utility systems are consistent with the Comprehensive Plans and meet anticipated population needs in a timely manner.

CF.14.2 New development shall be consistent with established utility plans and procedures.

CF.14.3 Promote conservation measures to reduce the need for additional utility distribution facilities/services in the future.

CF.14.4 Ensure that utility facilities are designed to minimize adverse aesthetic impacts on surrounding land uses.

Natural Gas Policies

CF.14.5 Encourage availability and efficient use of natural gas.

CF.14.6 Encourage coordination with utility providers in the provision of natural gas.

Telecommunications Policies

CF.14.7 Encourage coordination with utility providers in the provision of telecommunication services.

CF.14.8 Promote long-term planning for telecommunications systems.

CF.14.9 Require the placement of cellular communication facilities in a manner that minimizes adverse impacts on adjacent land uses and utilizes existing structures where feasible.

CF.14.10 Encourage telecommunication services as a means to mitigate the transportation impact of development and growth.

Electricity Policies

CF.14.11 Encourage coordination with utility providers in the provision of electrical services.

CF.14.12 Protect existing utility corridors to permit maintenance access and future expansion.

CF.14.13 Provide efficient, cost-effective, and reliable utility service by ensuring land is available for the location of utility lines, including their location within transportation corridors, and by creating guidelines and permit processes that are conducive to utility operations.

Utility Corridors Policies

CF.14.14 Coordinate dimensional guidelines for regional corridors with affected utility providers and jurisdictions.

CF.14.15 Promote the co-location of new utility transmission distribution and communication facilities when doing so is consistent with the utility industry practices, DOT requirements, and national electrical and other codes. (Examples of facilities that may be shared are trenches, rights-of-way, towers, poles, and antennas)

CF.14.16 Provide timely notice to affected private utilities of all major utility projects, including the maintenance and repair of existing roads, in order to promote the joint planning and coordination of public and private utility activities.

CF.14.17 Where consistent with multiple uses, promote joint use of utility corridors with recreational and green space applications. (An example is the co- location of AT&T's fiber link and Spokane's Centennial Trail)

CF.14.18 Adopt the Regional Utility Corridor Plan through the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan.

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Economic Development Element

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Placeholder for Scott

Chapter 12

Cultural Resources Element

The Importance of Protecting Cultural Resources

Spokane County has a rich history and holds important cultural resources that provide an insight into the region's unique history. Historic structures. Landscapes and archeological sites create a unique identity in Spokane County and deserve protection. Some . Cultural resources, including ancestral remains, scared sites, and archaeological deposits, hold unique legal status under federal and state law. Unlike natural resources that may regenerate, cultural resources, including historic and archaeological property once destroyed, are lost forever and cannot be replaced or mitigated.

Cultural resources such as historic buildings, monuments of historic events and archaeological sites are statements of Spokane County's identity and cannot be replaced. The Spokane Tribe of Indians are the original inhabitants of this region. With cultural connections to these lands dating back thousands of years. The tribe maintains inherent rights to protect their ancestral heritage and sacred sites within their traditional territory.

Our community values and respects Spokane County's history and its authentic cultural resources, which helps sets us apart from other counties.

This element of the Spokane County Comprehensive Plan sets forth policies and a course of action for the preservation and treatment of these historic and archaeological resources. The Plan reflects local attitudes toward historic preservation, establishes preservation as public policy, and puts these values into writing.

Purpose of Plan for Cultural Resources

The purpose of this plan is to protect and preserve our Cultural Resources, both identified and potential, by establishing public policy that ensures:

- Management decisions will incorporate both scientific archaeological research and traditional tribal knowledge, including oral histories, ethnographic data, and ongoing cultural practices, in accordance with tribal consolation protocols;
- County planners, Preservation Office staff, tribes, developers, property owners and citizens have ready access to the information they need to make informed decisions about actions that could affect Spokane County's cultural heritage;
- All available information on cultural resources is fully integrated into planning tools for local and tribal decisions about land use. Decisions concerning land use will include active participation by the wide variety of people whose heritage and traditions are at stake; Spokane County will consult with Tribes on land use decisions affecting cultural resources;

- Both financial and technical assistance are available to individual organizations, communities and tribes. Technical and financial assistance programs are administered by the Washington State Historic Preservation Office and the Spokane City/County Historic Preservation Office;
- Cultural resources owned by Spokane County are in good condition; and
- County support for cultural and historic preservation programs becomes increasingly stable and reliable as evidenced by achievement of the goals and policies contained in this chapter.

Definition of Cultural Resources

A large part of Spokane County's special identity and civic pride is derived from its heritage. From the Native Americans who first established trading centers to the continuing waves of newcomers from around the world, all have left their mark. Cultural Resources include lands, sites, structures or objects that have historical or archaeological significance, as well as traditional cultural properties. A "traditional cultural property" is a property which has traditional cultural significance. It is associated with the cultural practices or beliefs of a living community that are rooted in that community's history and are important in maintaining the continuing cultural identity of the community.

Historic Properties

Cultural Resources include historic structures and landscapes engineered and built by man.

a) Historic buildings - houses, barns, commercial buildings, churches, schools.

b) Historic structures - bridges, dams, stone fences.

c) Indigenous cultural features: Including pit houses, tipi rings, rock alignments, fish weirs, earth ovens, sweat lodges, and other traditional structures or landscape modifications.

d) Historic districts - a grouping of buildings with related historic character.

e) Historic objects - statues, monuments, sculpture.

f) Landscapes - gardens, parks, urban and rural, including traditional gathering areas, rooting digging grounds, hunting territories, vision quest sites, and other places that hold ongoing cultural significance to Indigenous peoples.

Traditional Cultural Properties

Traditional Cultural Resources include properties that are held or were held in spiritual or ceremonial honor or by a cultural group or tribe. Cultural Resources include properties, which may no longer show evidence of man- made structures, but retain an historical association with an event or period.

According to WAC 365-196-450 A "traditional cultural property" is a property which has traditional cultural significance. It is associated with the cultural practices or beliefs of a living community that are

rooted in that community's history and are important in maintaining the continuing cultural identity of the community.

Cultural properties are usually attributed to landscapes that are large-scale properties often comprised of multiple, linked features that form a cohesive area or place. They have cultural and historical meanings attached to them by the peoples who have traveled, used, and interwoven these places into generations of practice. In addition to the physical, on the ground components, visual and audio aspects of place are often important to how they are defined. For example, an indigenous landscape used for ceremonial practices could be affected by the presence of structures that impede a viewshed or by noise interrupting an otherwise quiet area.

Archaeological Sites

Spokane County has a rich archaeological heritage that spans over tens of thousands of years. Typical pre-historic archaeological sites in Washington include shell middens, open sites or campsites, pictographs and petroglyphs, caves or rockshelters, wet sites, lithic sites, quarries, culturally modified trees, and burial sites or cemeteries. While many people relate archaeology to ancient peoples and sites, more recent peoples also have left traces of their lives on the landscape. These sites can range in scope from fur trade sites and early missions to military areas and homestead sites, as well as logging, mining and railroad features.

Spokane County recognizes that archaeological sites are a non-renewable resource that contributes to our sense of history and place. Stewardship of these sites is all our responsibility.

*Note: The specific location of these sites is often very sensitive in nature. Gathering information concerning these properties should be undertaken with careful consideration and involvement of the cultural group involved. All information regarding the location of Traditional Cultural Properties and archaeological sites will be held confidential and exempt from disclosure under state and federal law per RCW 42.56.300 and 36 CFR 800.11(c).

Goals and Policies

Identification and Protection of Resources

The purpose of this goal is to ensure the identification and protection of important cultural resources (historic and archaeological sites, buildings, structures and traditional cultural properties). Spokane County recognizes that these cultural resources are finite, irreplaceable and nonrenewable resources. There are inventories of archaeological and historic sites. Not only do the lists need to be checked to confirm that evidence of the site/building remains, but also a better means to identify and preserve evidence of significant archaeological and historic sites is needed.

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CR.1 Identify, maintain, update and protect archaeological and historic sites and structures to guide decision-making in resource planning, environmental review and resource management.

CR 1.1 Identify, evaluate, avoid or mitigate impacts to archaeological sites, historic sites, cultural resources. and traditional cultural property to determine which should be preserved. Identification and evaluation are a constant, ongoing process.

CR 1.2 Identify those lands which are most likely to contain archeological or historic sites. Identification of these lands should utilize predictive modeling based on archaeological data from DAHP, WISAARD, ethnographic documentation, and consolation with the local tribes regarding areas of known traditional use. High probability areas will be flagged for required cultural resource surveys prior to land-distrusting activities.

CR.1.3 Nominate cultural resources to registers as appropriate, with the understanding that Traditional Cultural Properties and archaeological sites will only be nominated with the free, prior, and informed consent of local tribes and the appropriate protection in place. County departments and divisions should collaborate with the Historic Preservation Office to nominate eligible properties to landmark designation.

CR.1.4 Maintain the Spokane County Register of Historic Places to provide a means to recognize and preserve cultural resources of local which should be used as a reference in the identification of significant structures and places eligible for nomination. significance. The Register will include Traditional Cultural Properties and significant archaeological sites identified through consolation with tribal nations. Entries for tribally significant sites will be maintained with confidential locational information, accessible only to authorized County and tribal cultural resources staff. The state's historic preservation database and county's historic preservation office records.

CR1.5. Review of land use actions should be sensitive and give consideration to protection of cultural resources.

CR 1.6 (New Policy) If archaeological resources or human remains are encountered during any land-disturbing activity, work shall stop immediately in the area of discovery. The County, State Archaeologists, Spokane Tribe's THPO and other tribal agencies shall be notified as soon as possible. Work shall not resume until the discovery has been assessed, and protection/recovery measures are implemented in consultation with the Tribe.

CR 1.7 (New Policy) All Native American human remains and associated funerary objected discovered in Spokane County are subject to NAGPRA and state law. Local Tribes shall be notified immediately of any such discoveries Human remains shall not be disturbed except under protocols established in consultation with the Tribe and in accordance with applicable law. In situ preservation is the preferred treatment.

CR 1.8 (New Policy) Utilize existing programs and agencies to identify cultural resources, including the Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation, the national register of Historic Places, The Washington Heritage Register, local registers and tribal nations.

CR-1.9 (New Policy) Identify historic resources at risk from climate impacts, like flooding, sea level rise, and wildfires. Develop strategies to preserve them amid these increased risks.

Stewardship

The purpose of this goal is to provide guidance for the treatment of cultural resources owned by Spokane County. Spokane County is a major owner and manager of cultural resources, some of which are identified and some of which are not. Many of these resources are public buildings or elements of the public infrastructure, such as bridges, roads or park landscapes.

CR.2 Provide stewardship of County-owned cultural resources.

CR.2.1 Maintain County-owned cultural resources in an appropriate manner by following the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, including the development of a consultation process between the Historic Preservation Office and county départements to ensure county-owned historic resources are maintained properly.

CR2.2 Spokane County will identify, regularly, County-owned properties that may be historically significant. Listing in the Spokane Register of Historic Places should be considered for county properties when appropriate. Spokane County should review if a property should be listed on the Spokane Register of Historic Places after time of purchase.

CR 2.3 When economically feasible, the County should give preference to historic structures when they wish to purchase, rent or lease property that serves a particular County purpose.

CR 2.4 Support land uses and developments that keep or improve cultural resources. Discourage their destruction or incompatible alterations.

Incentives to Encourage Historic Preservation

Effective historic preservation comes through the use of appropriate tools. This goal describes policies that relate to planning for preservation and provides incentives and administrative procedures that encourage preservation.

CR.3 Devise and implement strategies and incentives that encourage historic preservation.

CR 3.1 Spokane County shall continue to fund and should increase funding for the joint City/County Historic Preservation Office to provide a county program to direct historic preservation activities. Ensure Historic Preservation Office staff receive training in tribal consultation protocols, cultural resources, and archaeological resources.

CR 3.2 Continue to utilize the City/County Landmarks Commission as the authority and advisor to the County Planning Commission, County Commissioners and other county agencies in matters of historic preservation. Encourage joint meetings/briefings between the City/County landmarks committee and the Spokane County planning commission.

CR 3.3 Implement a variety of incentives available to property owners to encourage historic preservation in Spokane County, such as a façade improvement grant and adaptive reuse projects and encourage the special property tax evaluation. Although many cultural resources are in private ownership, public agencies can offer incentives for their preservation and maintenance.

CR 3.4 New Policy: Develop and promote incentives for private landowners who protect significant cultural resources on their lands, which may include property tax relief, technical assistance, conservation easements or recognition programs.

CR 3.5 Highlight the value of historic preservation incentives for retaining, rehabilitating, and increasing affordable housing.

CR.3.6 Leverage Spokane County's cultural and historic resources for local economic development. economics These include strategies, such as rehabilitation of commercial buildings, neighborhood revitalization, and tourism, and agritourism.

Promotion of Cultural Resources

Public understanding and support of the diversity of Spokane County's heritage is essential to cultural resources management. This goal requires education about the importance of historic preservation and a wide variety of involvement in preservation issues.

CR. 4 Promote the appreciation of Spokane's diverse heritage, as expressed by its cultural resources.

CR.4.1 Provide a program of public education concerning the need to preserve cultural resources public education programs concerning cultural and Spokane tribal heritage should be developed in consultation with the Spokane Tribe. and keep the public informed of actions to carry out preservation plans. This would also include coordination for educational opportunities with the Kalispel and Coe d'Alene Tribes.

CR.4.2 Promote a wide variety of community involvement in preservation issues. Community involvement should include diverse stakeholders such as historical societies, neighborhood associations, cultural organizations, tribal organizations such as the Spokane Tribe, and youth education programs. Support intergenerational knowledge transfer through youth education about cultural resources, including partnership with the tribes for programs about tribal heritage. by linking the public with preservation groups and resources.

CR.4.3 Establish and maintain government-to-government relations with Native American tribes for the preservation of archaeological sites and traditional cultural properties.

CR.4.4 Spokane County shall pursue its cultural resource goals through collaboration with residents, property owners, cultural organizations, public agencies, tribes, school districts, library districts and others.

CR.4.5 Develop and promote a program which encourages property owners to donate cultural resources to agencies or organizations that will preserve them in perpetuity.

CR.4.6 (New Policy) Spokane County should continue to pursue interlocal agreements with small cities under (under 5,000 people) to provide historic preservation services through the office Spokane City/County Historic Preservation Office

Appendix

The following appendices are available at the City of Spokane/Spokane County Historic Preservation Office. https://www.historicspokane.org/

a) Assessment of Current Historic Preservation Policy

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b) Existing Data on Historic Preservation

c) Public and Private Historic Preservation Organizations

d) History of Spokane County

e) Maps of Spokane County Cultural Resources

f) National, State and Local Registers of Historic Places

g) Incentives for Historic Preservation