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THRIVE SPOKANE COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

PUBLIC COMMENT DRAFT

Greater Spokane Inc.

Acknowledgments

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TIP STRATEGIES

TIP STRATEGIES, INC., is a privately held economic development consulting firm with offices in Austin and Seattle. TIP is committed to providing quality solutions for public sector and private sector clients. Established in 1995, the firm's primary focus is economic development strategic planning.

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Overview

Introduction

THRIVE Spokane, a comprehensive economic development strategy (CEDS), represents a collective vision for equitable and sustainable economic prosperity across Spokane County. Developed in accordance with the Economic Development Administration's (EDA) CEDS requirements, the purpose of *THRIVE Spokane* is to align economic development efforts and guide practitioners and partners in the implementation of programs that support business and economic growth over the next five years. This planning objective was accomplished by bringing together public and private partners through an inclusive and collaborative process.

Greater Spokane has grown into the second largest metro area in the state of Washington and a significant economic driver for the Inland Northwest. The region is home to vibrant and dynamic industries ranging from aerospace and life sciences to advanced manufacturing and agriculture. Communities in Spokane County are brimming with potential, and residents are optimistic about the future. The region is supported by a full spectrum of outstanding higher education institutions that support the broad workforce development needs of new and established businesses and help diverse student populations access meaningful career pathways. In addition to the City of Spokane, the county seat, there are dozens of smaller cities, towns, and unincorporated communities throughout Spokane County that contribute to the region's high quality of life and provide amenities to residents and visitors. A unique blend of outdoor recreational opportunities abounds across all four seasons, from fishing and rafting to hiking and skiing. Collectively, the region's philanthropic and non-profit organizations are working toward a resilient future by addressing the community's mental health needs, educational opportunities, and more.

Despite the sense of optimism about the future of the Spokane region, it is clear there are major hurdles to economic growth. Lasting impacts of historical inequities still linger in the region today. In the 1950s, the predominantly Black East Central neighborhood was torn apart for the construction of I-90, which was deemed necessary to advance economic growth.¹ Businesses along the corridor were forced to close, hundreds of homes were destroyed, and green space was nearly eliminated with the dramatic reduction of Liberty Park. Neighborhoods impacted by the creation of I-90 include some of the most underserved communities in Spokane today. Pervasive redlining practices kept Native families from purchasing homes on the land of their ancestors,² which was brutally taken from the Tribes in the previous century, excluding them and many other Black and Brown families from the generational wealth building homeownership brings. Expo '74 is lauded as a landmark event in Spokane's history, but it too came at a cost. The historic Trent Alley district, predominantly occupied by Chinese and Japanese American businesses, was razed for the Expo in the name of urban renewal.³ Access to affordable housing, high quality education, and reliable broadband are just a few examples of current inequities, each of which is being dramatically accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, leaving some residents and communities with the sense they are being left behind. Addressing these issues will prepare the region to be more resilient in the face of future economic disruptions and help to promote equitable opportunities for all residents.

With these considerations in mind, Greater Spokane Incorporated (GSI) led the preparation of an updated CEDS for Spokane County. In its simplest form, economic development is the creation of wealth through business development. In today's competitive environment, the practice has expanded to address broader, community-based issues that directly impact a region's ability to attract and grow businesses. Likewise, this planning process took a broad view of economic development. Funded in part through a grant from the US EDA, the CEDS documents the community's vision for regional economic prosperity through sustainable and equitable growth. The action-oriented plan will shape economic development efforts by leveraging the region's assets and

¹ Spokane Regional Health District's Neighborhoods Matter Project & Oesterheld, F. Neighborhoods Matter: The Impact of the I-90 Freeway on the East Central Neighborhood, spokanehistorical.org/items/show/468.

² Hill, M. No Honor in Genocide, *Journal of Hate Studies*, 05 October 2021, jhs.press.gonzaga.edu/articles/10.33972/jhs.200.

³ Kershner, J. Demolition fades memories further. *The Spokesman-Review*, 9 May 2009. www.spokesman.com/stories/2009/may/09/demolition-fades-memories-further

opportunities, while mitigating its weaknesses. Although the plan focuses on strategies for the next five years, the impacts will extend well beyond that timeframe.

No strategic plan can solve every community challenge. However, by engaging the community in brave spaces where people feel comfortable learning, growing, and sharing their thoughts on Greater Spokane's future, the CEDS process and the resulting *THRIVE Spokane* action plan will move the region toward greater alignment, improved communication, and enhanced cooperation among public and private leadership.

Project Approach

With the assistance of TIP Strategies (TIP), GSI launched the project in June 2021. In the initial discovery phase, the engagement focused on data collection and analysis, drawing on a variety of resources. The second phase of the project included individual and group conversations, surveys, and roundtables to better understand the region's opportunities. Community visioning was a critical component of this phase, providing the project team a forum to bring together a diverse group of voices, partners, and organizations to define what economic prosperity means for the region's future. During the third and final phase, both quantitative data and qualitative insights, combined with TIP's extensive experience and understanding of best practices from other regions, helped shape the strategies in the plan.

As a CEDS, *THRIVE Spokane* must adhere to the EDA's criteria and format for an economic development plan. This body of work includes all the requisite components to qualify as a CEDS, upon final EDA approval. Sections such as the SWOT Analysis, which was informed by both qualitative and quantitative analysis, directly link to the strategies outlined in the Action Plan section. Other required elements, such as the vision statement, were formed based on broad public input, which highlighted some of the area's most complex problems, established regional priorities, and set the framework for action.

Inclusive Process

Inclusive community engagement was a top consideration throughout the formulation of *THRIVE Spokane*. Unfortunately, that mindset has not always been the case. Planning efforts have not always included non-traditional economic development organizations or many community-based organizations, an omission that has had lasting impacts on the region. Although leadership has made a concerted effort to ensure broad participation, they also acknowledge there is a long road ahead to build trust and partnership within the community in order to move the CEDS forward.

The *THRIVE Spokane* Steering Committee, comprised of nearly 40 community leaders, oversaw the planning process, including the coordination of community engagement events. Steering committee members represented a wide variety of organizations encompassing municipal government; private sector businesses; Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) and community-based organizations; and more. These members played a vital role in the plan's development, providing countless hours of in-kind support. Working through multiple iterations of draft strategies and action items, the steering committee vetted the plan ensuring it aligned around a unifying vision of regional prosperity. Committee members are dedicated to implementing the CEDS, which directs strategic initiatives around Spokane's numerous assets and expands economic opportunity for all residents.

Along with the steering committee, a group of thought leaders, comprised of public, private, and philanthropic leaders throughout the region, provided feedback and insights on the plan. These advisors added value to *THRIVE Spokane* with additional expertise and lived experience reflected in the plan. Members of this group have also been invited to support the plan's implementation. In addition, over 1,000 people provided input via multiple project-related surveys and more than 175 individuals representing 100 organizations were thoughtfully engaged through a vigorous outreach process to co-create *THRIVE Spokane*.

Planning Framework

Like communities around the world, the Spokane region continues to deal with the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic, placing economic recovery foremost on the minds of many residents. Other concerns the region continues to grapple with include the threat of climate change and the need to build resilient systems. Not only to achieve climate resilience, but also to create economic resilience and build equitable opportunities for residents. The pandemic accelerated many threats that were already forming, including housing deficits, lack of childcare, and economic inequality. Although progress is occurring throughout the region, there is a sense that improved communication channels and coordination across partners could do even more to solve these and other pressing concerns. Regional leaders also recognize that Spokane must remain competitive to attract and retain diverse talent and to help ensure long-term prosperity. These themes formed the foundation of the CEDS planning framework and ultimately the vision, guiding principles, and action plan for *THRIVE Spokane*.

Vision

Public participation is an essential aspect of any community visioning process. A community vision survey provided a flexible and accessible mechanism for public engagement in the CEDS process. Survey responses helped identify where community members want the regional economy to be in 10 to 20 years. This information was used to articulate a broad regional vision statement for the CEDS. Responses were also disaggregated by geographic and demographic characteristics to measure how effectively community members were engaged across neighborhoods, generations, gender, and racial/ethnic backgrounds and to illustrate different viewpoints among these groups. Ultimately, the visioning process generated nearly 1,000 responses, capturing input from diverse voices in the community to craft the following vision statement.

The Greater Spokane community is creative by nature and embraces its regional connectivity and competitive advantages to ensure resilient growth and economic opportunity for all.

Guiding Principles

Four guiding principles were developed as a direct response to some of the region's most complex challenges and compelling opportunities. These guiding principles embody the goals and objectives identified throughout the planning process. The strategies and actions within this plan are organized around these ideas.

- **Recovery and Resilience:** Target efforts that prepare the region to **avoid, withstand, and recover** from economic shocks and natural disasters.
- **Competitiveness:** Position the Greater Spokane region as a **strong competitor** to attract talent, capital, and resources for strategic economic development.
- **Equitable Growth:** Seek to understand, address, and dismantle outcome disparity through **intentional initiatives** that include all Spokane residents in the benefits of economic growth and prosperity.
- **Connectivity:** Promote the **interconnectedness** of Greater Spokane and drive **cross-sector partnerships** to align efforts that advance economic opportunity for all.

Summary

THRIVE Spokane is the Spokane community's roadmap to guide economic development efforts across the county over the next five years. Through a robust stakeholder engagement process, the Greater Spokane community came together to identify the region's most pressing challenges and greatest opportunities to reduce economic barriers and increase economic opportunity for all. The four guiding principles in this CEDS—recovery and

resilience, competitiveness, equitable growth, and connectivity—are structured to complement and build on one another to create a holistic approach to economic development. The CEDS includes new, as well as existing, strategies, all developed by the CEDS steering committee with the input of leaders and community members across the region. Whether it be deploying community wealth building⁴ strategies for driving resilience or strengthening business retention and expansion efforts to make the region a stronger economic competitor, collaboration and coordination across sectors will be essential to the successful implementation of *THRIVE Spokane*. With ambitious and bold initiatives, the plan is designed to allow regional leaders and implementation partners to act swiftly as economic conditions change.

⁴ Democracy Collaborative, Community Wealth Building (CWB) initiative, <https://community-wealth.org/>

Analysis

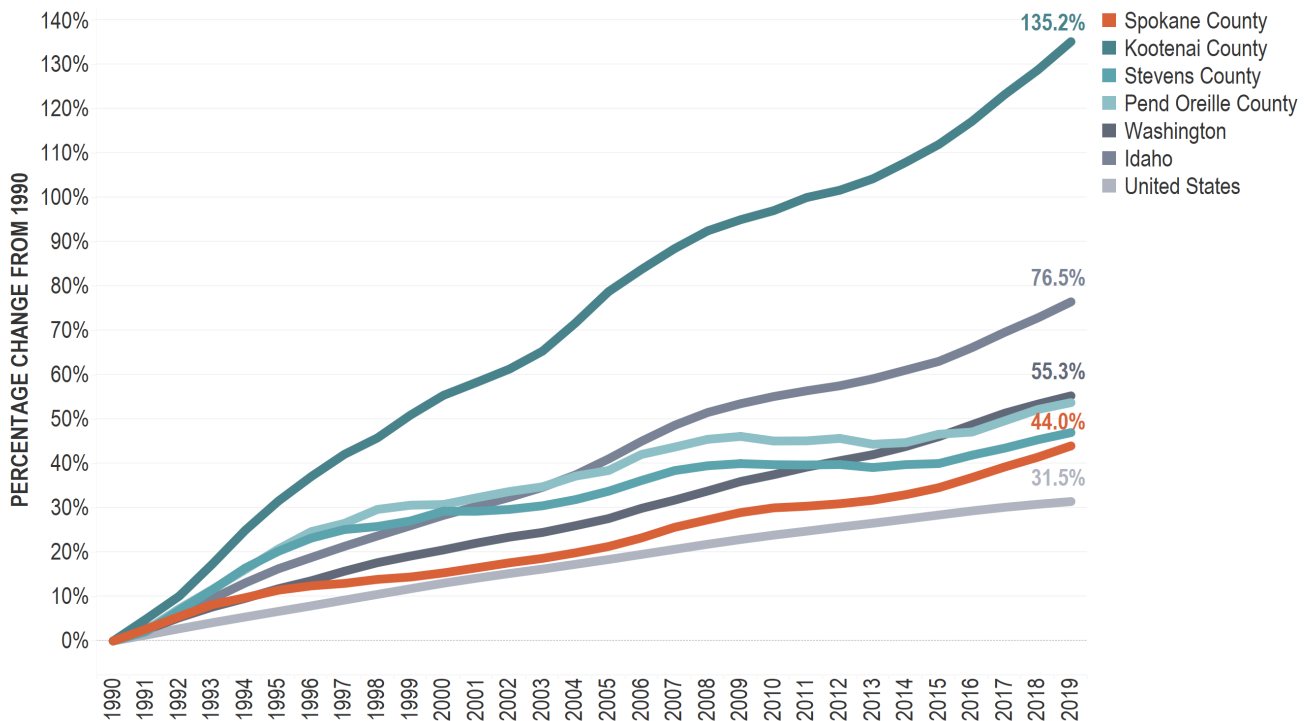
Economic Context

As part of the planning process, TIP Strategies conducted a broad analysis of the economic and social conditions that influence economic vitality and competitiveness. The data used for this background analysis came from the US Census Bureau's 2019 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year average sample, the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, and Emsi. The data was compiled at the start of the project and at the time, reflected the most recent available. Although there are local sources featuring more recent data, such as Spokane Trends,⁵ for the purposes of this project, it was necessary to use data that can be directly compared to neighboring communities in Idaho, as well as peer communities throughout the US. Data sets were chosen intentionally to ensure that the same methodology was used to create accurate comparisons, as well as offer the ability to track data changes longitudinally. The assembled data exposed trends and patterns that have continued in recent years. These trends and patterns were used as the basis for the SWOT analysis and as the foundation for the data-driven strategies presented in the Action Plan.

Economic Explorer

Although the CEDS only includes strategies for Spokane County, TIP's economic analysis encompassed Stevens and Pend Oreille Counties in Washington and Kootenai County, Idaho, which are part of the Spokane-Coeur d'Alene combined statistical area (CSA). Due to Spokane's geographic location on the Idaho border and the bi-state dynamics, including a cross-border labor shed, it was imperative to understand the characteristics of the other counties in the CSA. The complete analysis, including comparisons to statewide and national data, can be found at thrivespokane.org. Key findings from this interactive Tableau workbook, summarized here, informed and shaped the direction of the CEDS.

Figure 1. Population Change: Spokane County and Comparison Regions



Source: US Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program; Moody's Analytics; TIP Strategies, Inc.

⁵ SpokaneTrends.org is a collaboration between the city of Spokane and Eastern Washington University, with the support of Providence Health & Services, to provide relevant community data in a user-friendly format.

The region is growing and attracting new residents.

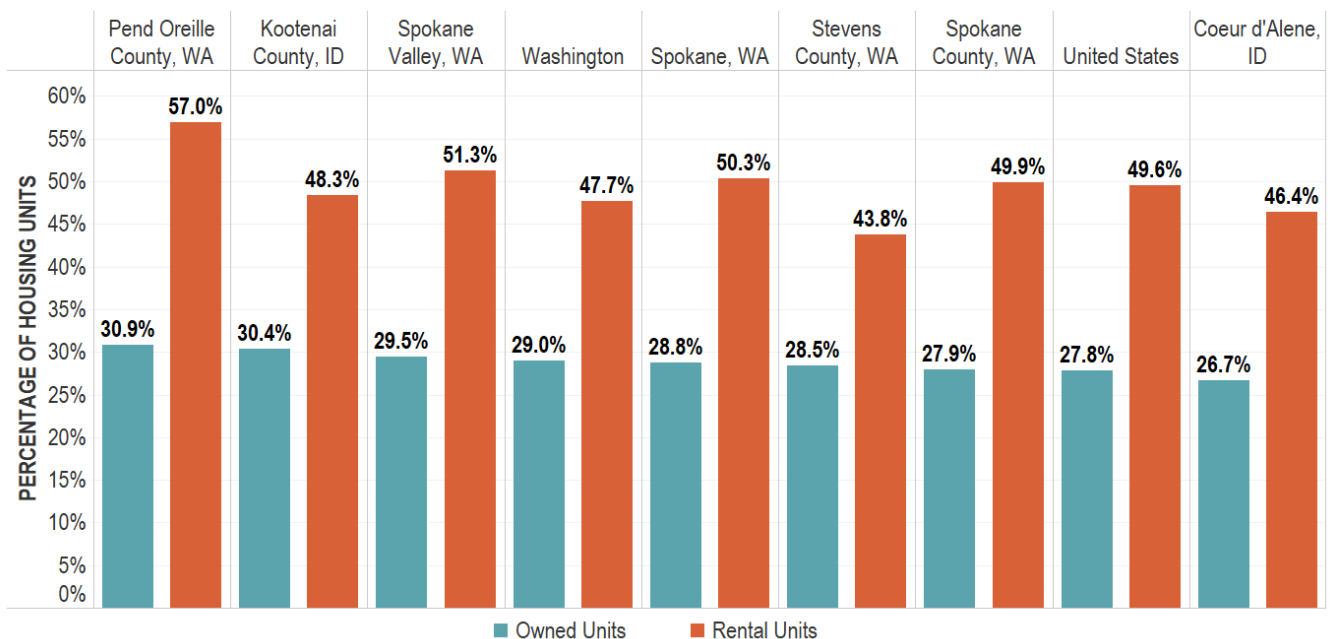
Spokane County continues to be the most populous county in Eastern Washington, with an estimated 2021 population of just over 541,000. The county reached a milestone population marker of 500,000 in 2017. Since then, the county continues to grow at a steady pace and has increased by 44 percent over the last three decades. This growth has been overwhelmingly driven by strong positive net in-migration to Spokane County from other parts of the US; more than 75 percent of population growth since 2015 can be attributed to net domestic migration. Small neighboring counties continue to grow as well, and often at a faster pace (see Figure 1, page 7). Kootenai County, Idaho, to the east has grown particularly fast, more than doubling its population in the same 30-year period. Despite this strong growth, it was still less than one third of Spokane's total population in 2019.

Regional growth has stressed the housing supply as affordability escapes many.

The 2019 median home value in Spokane County (\$225,000) was on par with the national median (\$218,000) and in the middle of the regional values, though Spokane City's median home value did not follow this trend and was lower than nearby regions at \$188,000. Despite modest home values, housing affordability in the region is challenging (see Figure 2, page 8), as 28 percent of homeowner households and one half of all renter households in Spokane County were cost-burdened (paying more than 30 percent of income on housing). Comparing median household income with the median home value, Spokane County residents may be able to afford a home, but minor changes to mortgage terms or slight fluctuations in income could put homeownership out of reach. More recent data from the Federal Housing Finance Agency and the National Association of Realtors show how this trend has accelerated since 2019 (see Figure 3, page 9). Through 2019, the average appreciation of single-family homes in the Spokane metro area increased by 2 to 3 percent each quarter. The already-high appreciation rate has continued to increase, peaking in the second quarter of 2021 when the average home appreciated by 8.7 percent in a three-month period. This rapid appreciation can be seen in the median listing prices, which hit a new high in January 2022, at nearly \$490,000.

Figure 2. Housing Affordability, 2019

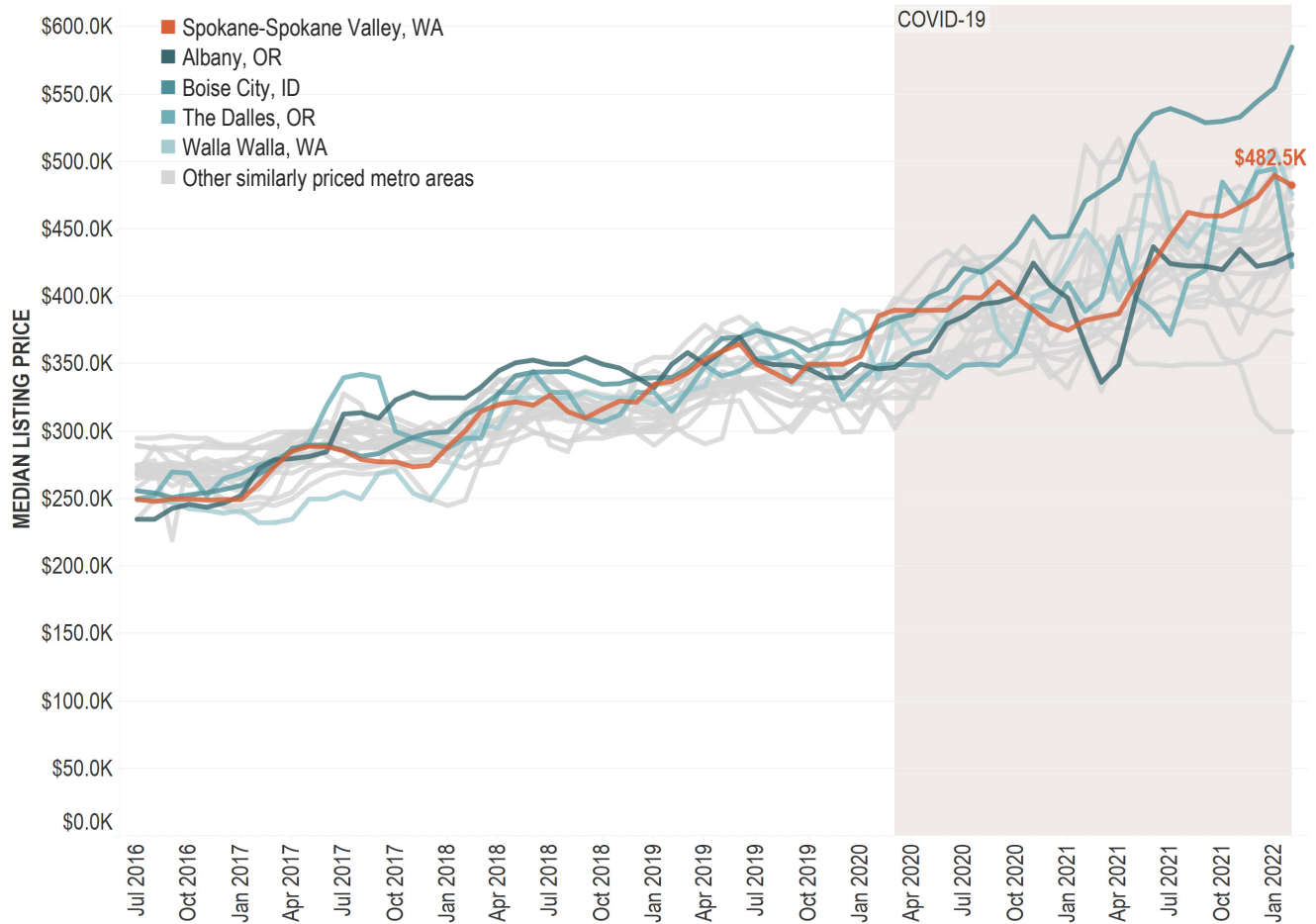
Share of housing units whose occupants spend more than 30% of household income on housing expenses (i.e., rent or mortgage payments)



Source: American Community Survey, 2019 5-year sample; TIP Strategies, Inc.

Figure 3. Median Listing Price Trends of MLS-Listed For-Sale Homes

With comparisons to metro areas within 10 percent of Spokane's median listing price for at least three-quarters of the months measured.



Source: National Association of Realtors, Realtor.com residential listings database <https://www.realtor.com/research/data/>; TIP Strategies, Inc.

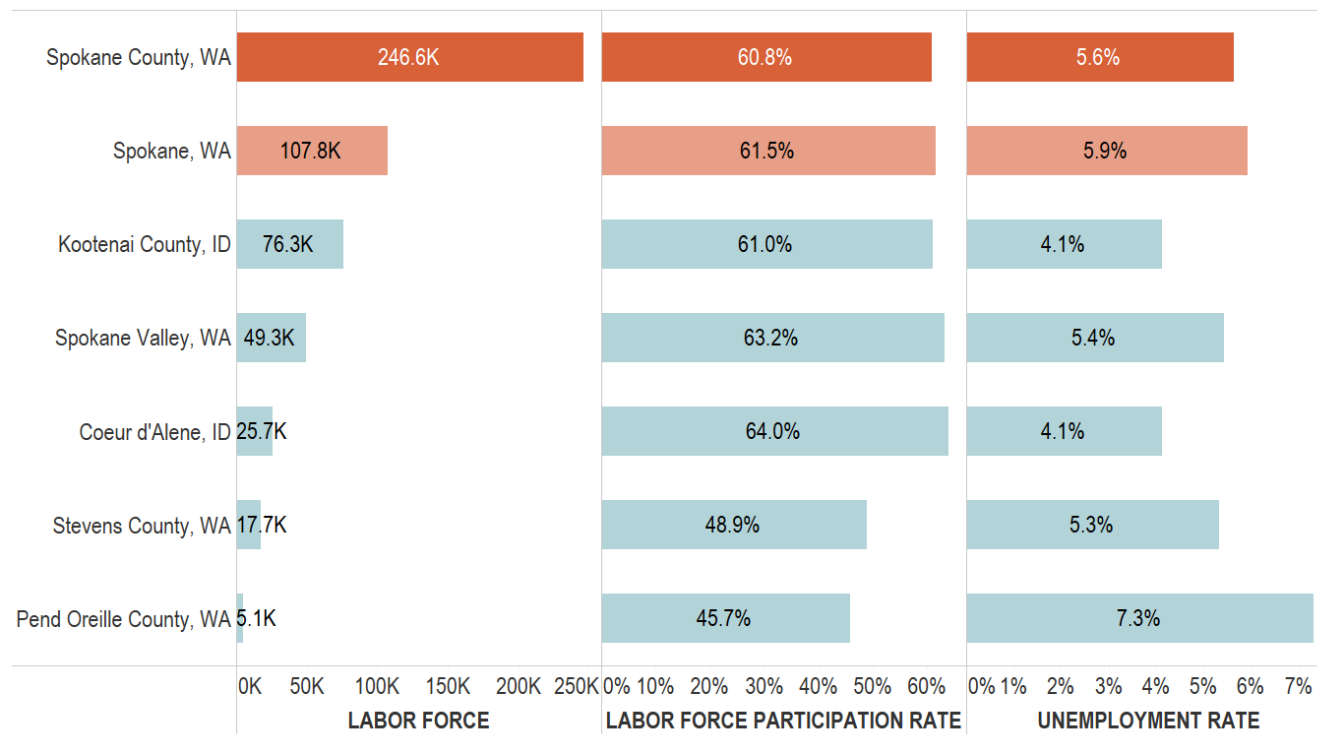
Notes: Metro areas were defined as similarly priced if the median listing price of homes for sale on the multiple listing service (MLS) was within 10 percent of values in the Spokane metro area across at least three-quarters of the months analyzed. The similarly priced metros represented by gray lines include the following: Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell, GA; Chico, CA; Crescent City, CA; Fernley, NV; Grand Junction, CO; Kingston, NY; Laconia, NH; Merced, CA; Morehead City, NC; Nogales, AZ; Red Bluff, CA; Richmond, VA; Salisbury, MD-DE; Show Low, AZ; Trenton, NJ; Worcester, MA-CT; and Yuba City, CA.

Spokane workers make up the largest labor force in the region.

Despite Spokane County's relatively large labor force of nearly 250,000, the County's labor force participation rates in 2019 were a bit lacking at 60.8 percent compared to the state and national benchmarks of around 63 percent during that same time period (see Figure 4, page 10). County employment has grown consistently since 2011 and surpassed pre-Great Recession levels in 2016. The COVID-19 recession led to widespread employment contractions, but the effect was relatively smaller in Spokane County (a 3.6 percent decrease) compared to the Great Recession (4.3 percent) and compared to statewide and national declines.

Figure 4. Labor Force Detail, 2019

Labor force size, labor force participation rate, and unemployment rate for selected geographies



Source: American Community Survey, 2019 5-year sample; TIP Strategies, Inc.

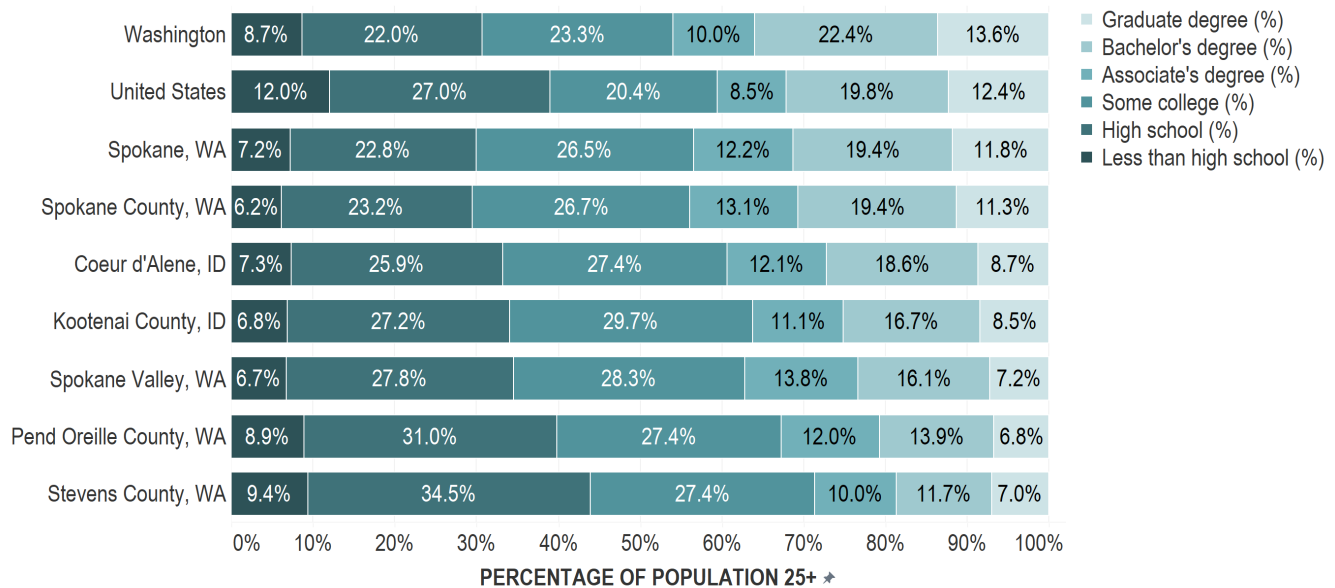
Note: Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) is estimated as the quotient of the civilian labor force and the population 16+. The labor force comprises all employed and unemployed persons.

Residents in the Spokane region have higher overall education rates, but average income levels.

Though more than 84 percent of Spokane's population identifies as white, the county tends to be more diverse than neighboring regions, though less so than Washington state overall. Spokane County also tends to have more educated residents with at least 31 percent holding a bachelor's degree or more, though this is slightly below state and national levels (see Figure 5, page 11). However, higher educational attainment may not have translated into higher wages as the median household in Spokane County sits below the national median and only slightly above its rural neighbors (see Figure 6, page 11). Moreover, the county has an elevated federal poverty rate at 13.7 percent of the population, compared with only 10.8 percent for the state.

Figure 5. Educational Attainment, 2019

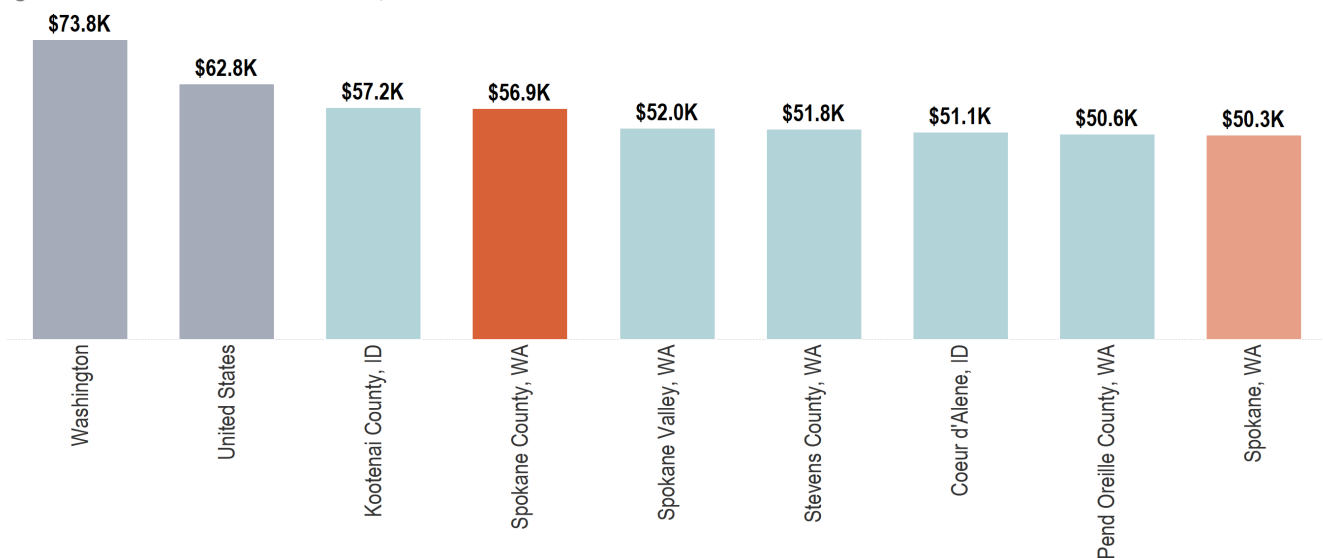
Population (25+) by share of educational attainment



Source: American Community Survey, 2019 5-year sample; TIP Strategies, Inc.

Notes: Educational attainment only measured for population 25 and older. High school includes equivalency. Some college indicates no degree was received. Graduate degree includes professional degrees and doctoral programs.

Figure 6. Median Household Income, 2019

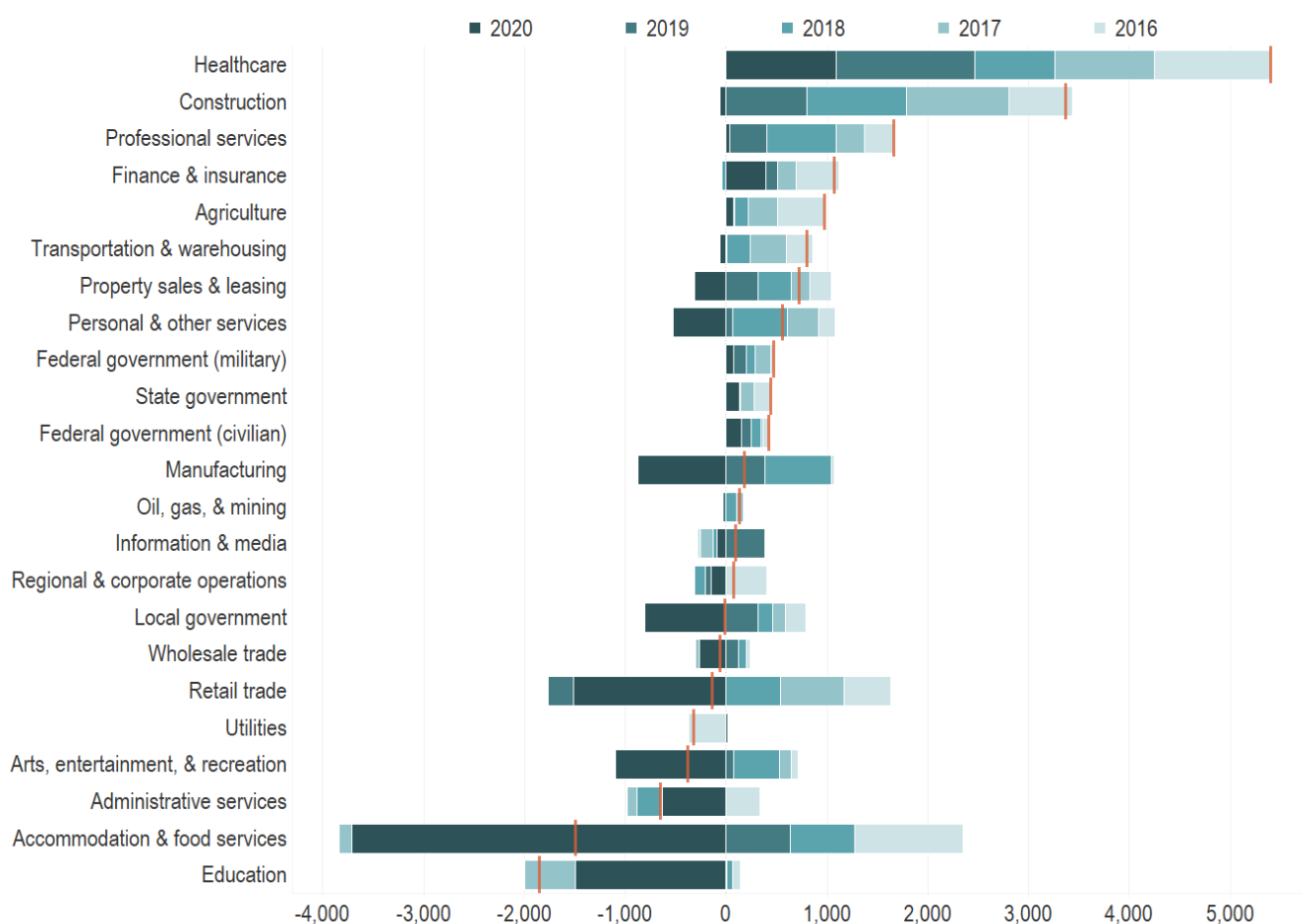


Source: American Community Survey, 2019 5-year sample; TIP Strategies, Inc.

Stable trends point to a strong healthcare sector as manufacturing gradually declines.

Healthcare continues to be the largest employer sector in Spokane County with over 46,000 jobs in 2020—more than 18 percent of total employment. Growth in this sector has been steady over the last 20 years and is on track with state trends and even slightly outpacing national growth. Though the manufacturing sector stabilized after 2008 and has experienced modest gains since 2010, the long-term trend is still downward, declining by more than 21 percent in the last 20 years. The retail, accommodation and food services, and education sectors are all major employers in Spokane County and were steadily rising through the end of 2019; however, these sectors saw substantial losses as a result of the pandemic recession, shedding a combined total of over 6,700 jobs in 2020 (see Figure 7). Sales workers, food preparation and serving workers, and instructors followed a similar pattern with significant reduction in jobs over the same period. Office and administrative workers—the largest occupational group in the county—also saw losses, but this occupation group appear to be on a longer-term gradual decline as there are 3,100 fewer of these jobs in the county compared to 2015.

Figure 7. Net Employment Change for Selected Period by Sector, Spokane County, WA



Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS); Emsi 2021.3 – QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed; TIP Strategies, Inc.

Note: Red bars indicate the total net change from 2016 to 2020.

Occupational Risk Tool

With the threat of new COVID-19 variants, the Occupational Risk Tool provides a timely examination of occupations likely to be affected by public health and economic crises. The interactive data visualization, available at thrivespokane.org, explores occupational risk from two sources: the risk to personal health from COVID-19 and the economic risk from job or income loss. The two risk sources are used to plot a position for more than 700 occupations that illustrates the amount of risk to earning and health that residents may experience as a result of their job. The information can be mapped by ZIP Code and disaggregated across demographic groups and by individual occupations within major occupational groupings as well as by major industry sectors. While workers continue to face health risks associated with in-person work, communities that understand the pain points of their local labor force will be better equipped to respond effectively to the evolving needs of resident workers.

One in three workers living in the Spokane Metro are in jobs with a high risk to earnings and to personal health.

One third of all workers (33.7 percent, totaling over 266,000) living in the Spokane metropolitan area are in the highest risk quadrant with relatively high risk to personal health and earnings (see Figure 8). This share is just above the national rate of 31.1 percent and in the middle of the distribution among similar-sized metro areas (those with 100,000 to 500,000 workers). A few of the largest occupations in the highest risk quadrant include Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Personal Care Aids, and Waiters and Waitresses.

Workers in low-wage jobs face disproportionately higher risks to both their earnings and health.

Risk is also disproportionately distributed among low-wage jobs. While 48 percent of jobs in the region pay less than \$20 per hour, these jobs comprise 70 percent of jobs with the highest level of risk to both earnings and personal health. Often, Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) are disproportionately employed in these low-wage jobs. Not only are BIPOC populations more likely to be employed in jobs with greater exposure to risks, but they are also earning less in those jobs.

Risk is not evenly distributed throughout the region.

An analysis of occupational risk by ZIP Code shows that some areas of the Spokane metro have higher shares of at-risk workers than other areas (see Figure 9 and Figure 10, page 7). More than 20 percent of worker residents in the northern reaches of Pend Oreille County, as well some areas on the north side of the city of Spokane, may experience high personal health and earnings risks as these areas have relatively high concentrations of food service, sales, or administrative occupation workers. In contrast, downtown Spokane has the highest share of low-risk resident workers (10.9 percent) in the metro with a relatively large number of lower risk business and management occupations.

Figure 8. Employment Share by Risk Quadrant

Share of resident workers by their occupation's quadrant on the risk plot. Risk to earnings and health within a quadrant vary by occupation.



Sources: US Department of Labor (O*NET); ACS 2018 5-year sample via IPUMS; Emsi 2021.2 – QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed; Gascon & Werner (April 3, 2020), "COVID-19 and Unemployment Risk: State and MSA Differences," Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis; TIP Strategies, Inc. Note: Only detailed occupations with more than 10 resident workers in the region are included. Unemployment is by occupation group (2-digit SOC). Selected occupations' "essential" and "salary" indicators have been modified from their initial designations by the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis.

Figure 9. Occupational Risk Map: High Risk to Earnings & Personal Health

Share (%) of workers in their resident ZIP Code in occupation with *high risk to earnings and high risk to health*. Darker grey Zip Codes have higher shares.

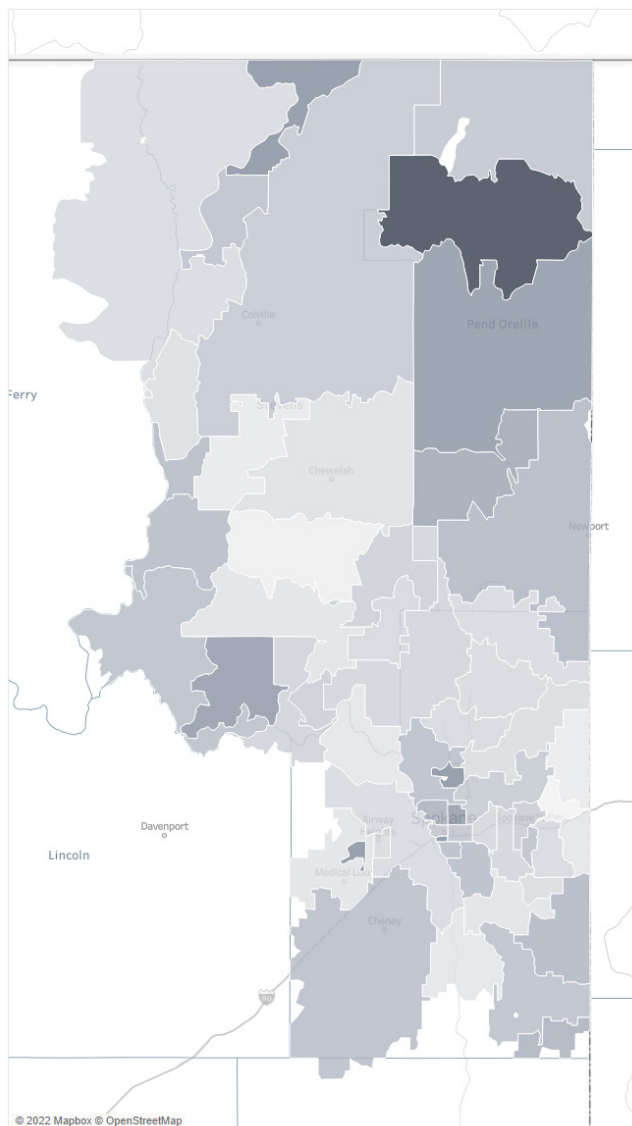
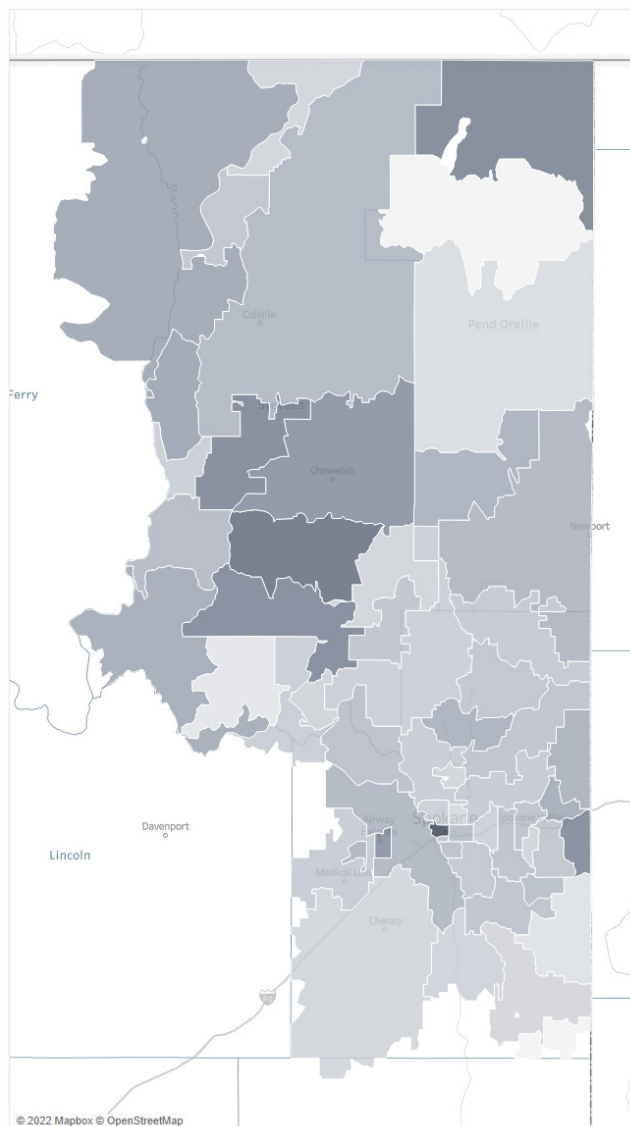


Figure 10. Occupational Risk Map: Low Risk to Earnings & Personal Health

Share (%) of workers in their resident ZIP Code in occupation with *low risk to earnings and low risk to health*. Darker grey Zip Codes have higher shares.



Notes: Only ZIP Codes with at least 50 total resident workers and at least 1 resident worker matching the selection criteria are shown (PO Boxes or other single-address ZIP Codes are also excluded). Only detailed occupations with >10 resident workers in the region are included. In risk score calculations, unemployment by occupation group (2-digit SOC) is used, and selected occupations' "essential" and "salary" indicators have been modified from their initial designations by the St. Louis Fed.

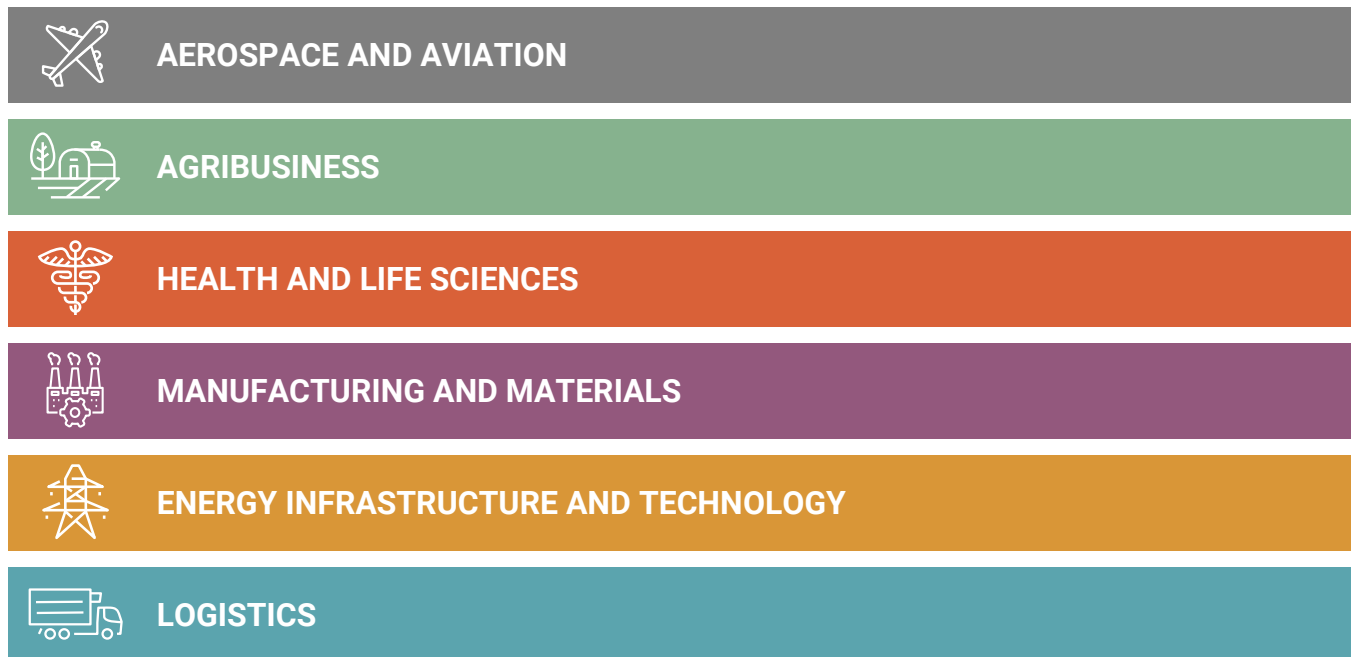
Sources: US Department of Labor (O*NET); ACS 2018 5-year sample via IPUMS; ACS 2019 5-year sample; Emsi 2021.2 – QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed; Gascon & Werner (April 3, 2020), "COVID-19 and Unemployment Risk: State and MSA Differences," Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis; TIP Strategies, Inc.

Target Sector Analysis Overview

Following an analysis of quantitative, qualitative, and strategic factors, six sectors were identified as target industries for business development. These six sectors not only have a strong presence in the Spokane region, but also throughout Washington State, in addition to demonstrating growth potential. Industries within the target sectors include both local and traded sector businesses, as well as businesses of all sizes, from micro enterprises to the region's largest employers. (See Appendix A for a discussion of local and traded sectors.)

Occupations within the target clusters also tend to have higher than average wages, which offer opportunities to increase equity across the region by investing in skills-based workforce development. Cluster development efforts, including investments in workforce, supply chain development and local materials sourcing, and business growth and recruitment, are critical for future economic growth. Furthermore, the role of technology and innovation must be considered in industry development efforts, as they cut across all sectors. Strategies to fuel growth and investment are included in the CEDS. The full target sector analysis can be found in Appendix B.

Figure 11. *THRIVE Spokane* Target Sectors



Community Engagement

With guidance from THRIVE Spokane Steering Committee members, intentional inclusivity was the focus of the plan's community engagement process. The lynchpin for these activities was a series of roundtable discussions. The steering committee helped develop a targeted list of area experts and regional leaders to gather input on challenges and opportunities for the CEDS. Roundtables were organized by topic, including sector-focused discussions, as well as sessions centered on broad issues and programmatic areas. The roundtable discussions were supplemented with one-on-one interviews to solicit feedback on issues that did not surface in a collective setting.

While most roundtable discussions took place over 60 minutes, the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion warranted a 2-hour workshop that provided a space for a human-centered listening session and deepened relationships across the community. The workshop laid the foundation for stronger partnerships and created additional opportunities for BIPOC organizational leaders to shape key components of the CEDS, including the co-

creation of strategies and actions specific to the needs of BIPOC business owners and communities. Although there is still work to be done to build trust throughout the community, this discussion was an important first step in that process.

Surveys also provided the public the opportunity to shape *THRIVE Spokane* without scheduling constraints. A community vision survey generated nearly 1,000 responses and input from a wide range of diverse voices. The success of this survey is due, in part, to a targeted digital campaign to reach underrepresented demographic groups and geographies. Survey responses were disaggregated to compare responses across different demographics and geographies, and insights from the data were used to craft the *THRIVE Spokane* vision statement.

Two other surveys targeted towards regional business leaders in the aerospace industry and the health and life sciences industry helped to gather industry-specific insights. With the growing importance of both industries in the region, these survey data were used to bolster *THRIVE Spokane*'s strategies around leveraging industry synergies and building a resilient supply chain.

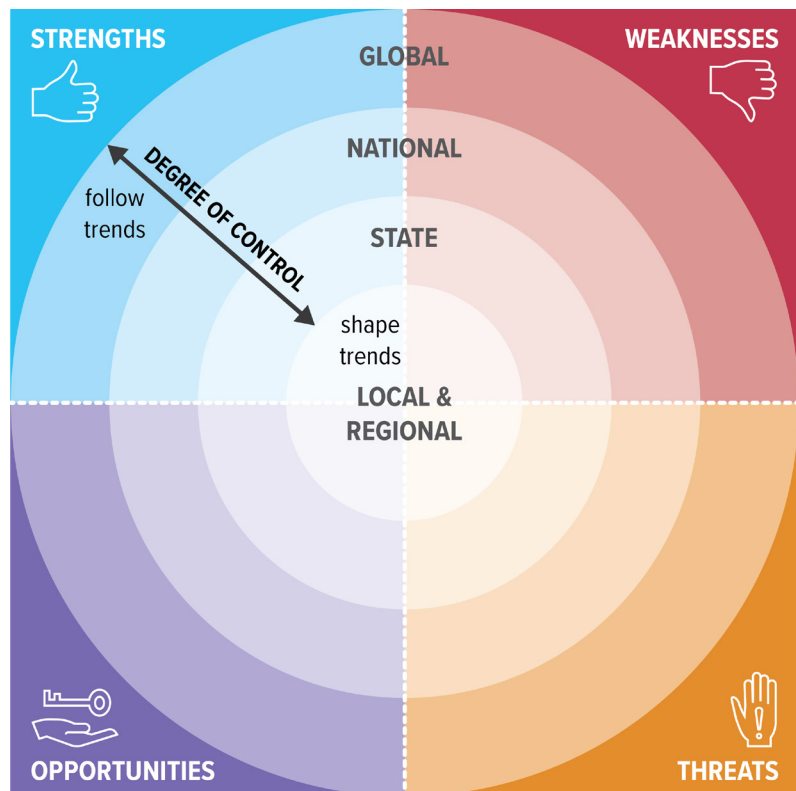
A marketing campaign supported outreach for *THRIVE Spokane* and an associated media kit provided partners with logos, social media graphics, a press release, and several print articles. Greater Spokane Inc. also maintains a CEDS project website, www.thrivespokane.org, with background reports, presentations on the planning process, and information on ways to provide feedback.

SWOT Analysis

The SWOT Analysis is the culmination of both qualitative and quantitative research outlined in the previous sections. Building on these findings and observations, TIP conducted a more extensive review of Greater Spokane's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT). The SWOT analysis summarizes the Spokane region's competitive position and highlights factors that differentiate the area from competition. The diagrams in Appendix B summarize the results of the analysis. Items closer to the center of the graph are more local in nature. Those at the outer corners are influenced by state, national, or global trends, placing them largely outside local leadership's control (see Figure 12).

While it is important to be aware of national and global trends, many of which have been accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the focus should be on maximizing the Spokane community's strengths and opportunities. Nearly every strategy and action in the plan is supported by findings from this analysis.

Figure 12. SWOT Analysis Overview Diagram
See Appendix B for Detailed Diagrams



Action Plan

Goal 1. Recovery and Resilience

Target efforts that prepare the region to avoid, withstand, and recover from economic shocks and natural disasters.

Greater Spokane's economic prosperity is directly linked to its ability to avoid, withstand, and quickly recover from major disruptions to its economic base. Whether it be natural disasters or economic shocks similar to those experienced at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the region can strengthen its recovery efforts and bolster its long-term resilience through responsive and steady-state initiatives. Responsive initiatives reinforce and expand capacities for a region to be responsive following a shock. They include activities like establishing strong communication channels to understand business needs after an incident. Steady-state initiatives, on the other hand, are long-term strategies to withstand or avoid a shock altogether. These initiatives can include creating redundancies in broadband networks to protect commerce channels or enhancing job-driven training around skills that are easily transferable across occupations and industries. Through the CEDS process, the Spokane community identified resilience as a top priority. With a pool of available federal funds and emerging technologies, the region is in a prime position to address modernizing infrastructure as well as social inequities, each of which influence an area's ability to recover from disruption. With this commitment, the Spokane region can collectively work towards building a flexible workforce, supporting business needs, and hardening infrastructure, among other initiatives outlined in this section, all of which can position the Greater Spokane economy for resilient growth.

Strategies and Actions

1.1. Support a resilient local workforce by improving job-driven skill sets and reducing barriers to employment (see Action 3.5.3).

1.1.1. Engage business associations to inform the workforce system of emerging hiring trends, to address skill and opportunity shortages, and prepare workers for high-growth, high-demand jobs of the future.

1.1.2. Work with Spokane Workforce Council to expand skill training opportunities to focus on transferrable workforce skills so that workers can better shift between jobs or industries.

Example: In Clark County, Washington, the region's associate development organization (ADO), the Columbia River Economic Development Council (CREDC), and Workforce Southwest Washington (WSW) are closely aligned partners. In addition to being collocated in one office, staff from both organizations come together for an annual retreat to develop cohesive strategic workplans. Joint business visits are also conducted for nearly every business recruitment and expansion meeting. Furthermore, the executive director of WSW has a permanent board seat on CREDC's board and vis-à-vis; WSW is also a top-level investor in CREDC.

1.1.3. Expand wraparound investments to reduce barriers to employment, such as efficient routes to connect workers to employment centers, development of a diverse set of attainable housing options, broadband expansion to help remote workers complete their work effectively, or business support for early learning programs to extend childcare hours.

1.2. Focus on upstream opportunities to build a responsive and resilient supply chain to support the region's target sectors.

1.2.1. Identify opportunities to nearshore or localize suppliers to shorten supply chains and reduce risk.

1.2.2. Coordinate local supply chain networking events to connect manufacturers, including raw materials suppliers, across the region. Ensure BIPOC businesses have the support and resources needed to attend these events (see Strategy 3.2 and Action 3.7.3).

- 1.3.** Invest in the development of downtowns and commercial centers throughout Spokane County through small business support, residential expansion, and storefront revitalization.
- 1.3.1.** Support the modernization and increase the competitiveness of aging downtown commercial buildings, especially in historically underserved areas.
 - 1.3.2.** Identify municipal/county-controlled land in urban areas for residential housing units, as well as in-fill opportunities, especially in downtowns.
 - Pursue redevelopment of large surface parking lots with mixed-use, urban, and residential building with housing units at different price points (see Strategy 3.1).
 - 1.3.3.** Prioritize downtown investments and revitalization efforts that support local businesses, including basic infrastructure and non-motorized transportation routes (see Strategy 4.1).



CASE STUDY

REBUILDING FOR RESILIENCY: A PATH FORWARD FOR VISIT FORT COLLINS

Location: Fort Collins, CO

More Information: [Rebuilding For Resiliency](#)

In response to the drastic decline of tourism activity due to the pandemic, Visit Fort Collins (VFC), the City's official destination marketer, created *Rebuilding For Resiliency: A Path Forward for Visit Fort Collins*, a destination master plan. The plan's recovery strategies fall into four main categories: securing competitive funding, refocusing its marketing campaign on leisure activities and youth sports, developing community connections, and leveraging brand promise. Each strategy defines the recovery challenge, response action, task timing, and necessary community partners to ensure a quick return to pre-pandemic growth trajectories while also contributing to the City's overall recovery and economy. Through the report's implementation, a tourism improvement district (TID) was created to fund marketing and sales support for hotels within the district through the addition of a lodging tax. The new fee is projected to raise \$800,000 a year, in addition to lodging tax revenue. The City is paid 2 percent of the revenue each year for collecting the fee, while VCF receives 70 percent. The remaining funds are directed towards the City's Fort Fund arts and culture grants.

- 1.4.** Establish strong communication channels to understand business community needs and to promote business continuity and preparedness.
- 1.4.1.** Leverage Spokane's business support organization network to establish a process for regular communication with businesses to understand their priority issues and needs.
 - 1.4.2.** Host workshops to ensure that businesses understand their vulnerabilities in the face of disruptions.
 - 1.4.3.** Provide tools to help businesses overcome their vulnerabilities and to ensure they have processes in place, such as succession planning, ecommerce sales expansion, continuity plans, and digital literacy, to continue critical operations in the event of an unplanned disruption or disaster (see Action 3.6.2).
- 1.5.** Promote technology resilience by ensuring redundancy in telecommunications and networks.
- 1.5.1.** Coordinate with telecommunication providers to resolve weak service zones to ensure residents can easily access information and resources (see Action 3.6.1).
 - 1.5.2.** Work with municipalities to expand redundancies to ensure there are no single points of failure and to protect public safety in the event of natural or manmade disasters.

- 1.5.3. Facilitate rapid deployment of telecommunications and network lines across Spokane County, especially in major employment areas and commercial corridors.
- 1.6. Address climate resilience by modernizing infrastructure systems to withstand disruption, improve efficiency, and enhance connectivity.
 - 1.6.1. Launch a feasibility study for hardening infrastructure systems most vulnerable to changes in climate and weather patterns, such as wildfires, severe storms, and flooding.
 - Apply community wealth building initiatives to ensure neighborhoods with limited resources have equal access to system modernization and improvements⁶.
 - 1.6.2. Support existing work to bury electric lines to mitigate potential impacts of severe weather events.
 - 1.6.3. Continue to invest in and expand sustainable infrastructure, such as permeable pavement and flow-through planters, to mitigate stormwater impacts on sewer systems.

⁶ Building Resiliency through Green Infrastructure: A Community Wealth Building Approach, <https://democracycollaborative.org/learn/publication/building-resiliency-through-green-infrastructure-community-wealth-building>

Goal 2. Competitiveness

Position the Greater Spokane region as a strong competitor to attract talent, capital, and resources for strategic economic development.

Strategies and actions under the guiding principle of competitiveness revolve around fundamental economic development activities. These activities aim to generate investment, create employment opportunities, and spur wealth creation in greater Spokane by positioning the region as a strong competitor in the attraction of talent, capital, and resources. Building a more robust business retention and expansion (BRE) program, encouraging targeted real estate development, and launching marketing campaigns form the foundation for success. As a major business hub for the Inland Northwest, the Spokane region can benefit from local industry synergies. Targeting real estate development in priority areas will help the region implement equitable growth initiatives, uplifting long-neglected communities and expanding housing supply to maintain a relatively low cost of living. Meanwhile, launching high-impact external marketing campaigns that highlight the region's quality of life amenities can help attract tourists and talent. Through regional collaboration and coordination, community leaders can pursue strategic economic development opportunities that embrace the region's competitive advantages and continue to grow a thriving local economy.

Strategies and Actions

- 2.1. Pursue innovative financing options, like external funding opportunities (philanthropic, state, federal), for economic and community development projects.
 - 2.1.1. Form an Economic Development District through the US Economic Development Administration to access more funding opportunities and technical assistance.
 - Convene regularly to address regional issues, track metrics, and benchmark peer communities.
 - Monitor the economic dashboard for early warning signs then proactively address potential disruptions and economic challenges.
 - 2.1.2. Expand the use of financing options, including research and development tax credits, new market tax credits, and opportunity zones, to attract investment.
 - Ensure projects leveraging federal incentive programs align with neighborhood needs (see Strategy 3.1) and minimize the displacement of communities.
 - 2.1.3. Create and maintain a database to gather all funding opportunities in one place and work with economic development partners to apply for and use external funding more effectively.
 - Host workshops to educate community leaders, decision makers, elected officials, and the media on external funding opportunities and how they work.
 - Leverage tools such as [GrantStation](#) to develop the database.
- 2.2. Position the region for equitable real estate development including the development of commercial and industrial space to meet business needs as well as the development of a diverse housing stock to meet the needs of a growing population (see Action 3.3.2).
 - 2.2.1. Ensure the region has adequate commercial and industrial developments, particularly class B office space, to support business retention, expansion, and attraction efforts.
 - Market [Advantage Spokane's Real Estate Opportunities](#) to ensure that businesses are fully aware of available real estate space in the region.
 - Support the development of flexible spaces that accommodate growing start-ups (see Strategy 4.2).

- 2.2.2.** Launch a land banking project to identify and assemble industrial redevelopment opportunities in underserved areas, including brownfield and greyfield sites.
- 2.2.3.** Invest in mixed-use projects and smaller-scale projects that bring new urban housing, retail sites, restaurant space, and entertainment space (see Strategy 4.3).
- 2.2.4.** Expand and preserve a full range of housing options (owner and rental, using local housing action plans as a baseline) (see Action 3.3.3).
 - Ensure public and private sector coordination, including the city of Spokane and Spokane County's Public Development Authorities (PDAs).
 - Target new housing developments in areas that can easily connect low-income workers with growing employment centers throughout the region.
 - Explore zoning policy changes to ease processes and reduce barriers to housing development.
- 2.2.5.** Evaluate community land trusts and community investment funds (CFI) as an innovative mechanism for long-term housing affordability.
- 2.2.6.** Leverage state and federal funds to implement strategies in local housing action plans.
- 2.2.7.** Promote the region's identity and high quality of life to support tourism, business attraction, and talent attraction and retention.
- 2.2.8.** Partner with Visit Spokane on marketing campaigns to raise the region's profile and assist with business and talent attraction.
- 2.2.9.** Update talent recruitment and retention tools regularly, including materials and programming, that build on the strong presence of the local higher education institutions.
 - Target young professionals, high-demand occupations, and remote workers to build the region's talent base.



CASE STUDY

IMAGINE PITTSBURGH

Location: Pittsburgh, PA

More Information: [Pittsburgh Passport](#)

Approximately 10 years ago, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, realized it had a talent problem. Carnegie Mellon University was educating some of the most talented and innovative engineering students in the country, but after graduation, they were leaving in droves for jobs on the East and West Coasts. Community leaders collaborated and identified three key factors. The first was that students did not feel they had any connections to the city; some never even left campus during their school tenure. The other two factors were the city's lack of vibrancy and density of innovative jobs to keep graduates. Out of these findings, Imagine Pittsburgh was born, with the primary goal to better integrate students into the local community. After nearly 10 years and investments in quality of place, Pittsburgh has increased student retention and is recognized as a leading innovation hub. Imagine Pittsburgh has continued to evolve, including the addition of the Pittsburgh Passport Summer Internship Series in 2019. The Passport Series offers a wide range of programs, from social events to industry tours designed to connect students to the city outside of working hours. In today's competitive talent landscape, the extent to which a region can retain higher-ed graduates is a top consideration for decision makers when evaluating corporate expansions or relocations.

- 2.3.** Strengthen existing business growth and retention programs and bolster business recruitment efforts, especially around target sectors.
 - 2.3.1.** Invite regional workforce development specialists on business retention and expansion (BRE) visits where workforce is likely to be a major issue of need.
 - 2.3.2.** Include questions about existing business vendors and suppliers during BRE visits and events to uncover supply chain recruitment opportunities (see Action 1.2.1).
 - 2.3.3.** Set a goal of attracting a major anchor institution to support target sectors.
- 2.4.** Engage the Fairchild Air Force Base in regional economic development initiatives that leverage the Spokane region's aerospace and defense assets.
 - 2.4.1.** Continue Forward Fairchild's work to maintain strong business relationships with the base and to integrate military leaders into the Spokane community.
 - 2.4.2.** Connect military personnel separating from service in the region with local aerospace employers.
- 2.5.** Fortify the region's health and life sciences industry by enhancing sector-specific workforce development initiatives and business services.
 - 2.5.1.** Work with medical education institutions and healthcare systems to increase medical residency positions to retain top health and life sciences talent within the region.
 - 2.5.2.** Support Evergreen Bioscience Innovation Cluster's work to attract health and life sciences entrepreneurs and companies by strengthening the ecosystem of the sector's business support in the region.
 - 2.5.3.** Attract research and development investments to support university and college researchers and innovators in life sciences.
 - 2.5.4.** Deploy strategies to upskill workers within the health and life sciences industry, as well as build awareness of career opportunities in the sector (see Strategy 3.5).

Goal 3. Equitable Growth

Seek to understand, address, and dismantle outcome disparity through intentional initiatives that include all Spokane residents in the benefits of economic growth and prosperity.

Certain geographies in Spokane County have been largely overlooked for major development projects for too long. These areas have been inequitably perceived as ill-suited for real estate investment and business development, in part because of missing critical infrastructure. Meanwhile, certain populations within Spokane have experienced systematic exclusion from full participation in many aspects of economic prosperity. This reality must change if the Spokane region wants to achieve its goal of maintaining diversity, equity, and inclusion as core values. All regional economic development initiatives must include a racial justice outcomes analysis so that equity efforts in the Spokane economy are not siloed or sidelined alongside traditional economic development activities. Prioritizing funding for equitable growth initiatives until racial and other social disparities are no longer significantly measurable in the market is essential to change the unequal opportunity landscape. Equitable economic growth should be considered as both a process and an outcome. It is a process in that initiatives, programs, and policies must be developed and delivered by impacted communities to ensure inclusive community engagement that centers diverse experiences and reduces historic and existing barriers to full participation in the local, regional, national, and global economy. Equitable growth becomes an outcome once a person's identity or identities no longer impacts their ability to experience the benefits of economic growth or prosperity. By making intentional investments and prioritizing resources for underserved geographies and populations, the region can collectively work towards implementing equitable growth initiatives that preserve and advance economic opportunity for all Spokane residents.

Strategies and Actions

3.1. Prioritize sustainable funding for coalitions, including the Business Equity Coalition and the Multi-Ethnic Development Council, that are accountable to the communities they serve in addressing DEI issues, building trust, creating strong communication channels, and fostering collaboration across Spokane County (see Action 1.3.2 and Strategy 4.4).

3.1.1. Convene human resources professionals on a regular basis to understand barriers and opportunities to drive equity in the private sector.

- Encourage employers to revisit their human resource processes to promote more inclusive and equitable hiring practices; study the current skills and experience listed on job postings and remove unnecessary requirements; connect businesses with tools and resources to develop pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship, on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, internships, and other earn-and-learn models.
- Identify metrics to evaluate business equity in Spokane County.

3.1.2. Deploy resources for community organizations on topics such as decolonization and anti-racism, consensus building, and government relations.

Example: The [Future Ground Network](#) began as a pilot program in Ontario and Quebec to convene and mentor the non-profit environmental community. The online resource hub provides monthly trainings and toolkits on topics ranging from the Land Back movement to campaign strategizing and grant writing, for community service providers. In 2021, the program launched nationally and now serves over 3,000 members and 150 organizations across Canada.

3.2. Devote resources to and build capacity of an ecosystem of support by and for BIPOC business owners, including CDFIs and early-stage business funding (see Action 1.2.2).

- 3.2.1.** Elevate the region’s buy local campaigns, such as [Live Local INW](#), to support locally owned BIPOC and small businesses.
- 3.2.2.** Convene financial lending organizations (banks, CDFIs, credit unions) to improve collaboration on loans and long-term, flexible financing options available to BIPOC business owners.
 - Explore alternate funding tools like co-ops to provide BIPOC business owners with other forms of innovative financing.
- 3.2.3.** Support Indigenous businesses and Tribes seeking funding opportunities for community and business investment.
- 3.3.** Drive equitable economic and workforce development by targeting investments and resources in communities and populations that need them most (see Action 2.1.2).
 - 3.3.1.** Incorporate community benefit agreements for companies recruited to Spokane and for new public and private projects developed by regional corporations and institutions.
 - Draft these agreements in a manner that gives preference to contracting with locally owned firms; suppliers that have a diverse ownership and workforce; and companies that utilize apprenticeship programs.
 - 3.3.2.** Reduce barriers to public-private development projects in priority areas to attract additional investment, promote real estate development by community-based entities, and job growth from locally owned businesses, while pursuing policies and processes to stabilize communities and mitigate gentrification (see Strategy 2.2).
 - Create community-based financing mechanisms that provide business and real estate ownership opportunities for more community members.
 - Explore vacancy taxes for undeveloped land and parking lots to reduce displacement pressure in historically under-invested areas.
 - 3.3.3.** Recruit and fund housing industry innovators to lead the rapid development of more privately-owned, permanently affordable housing, such as apartment cooperatives, conversion of mobile home parks to resident-managed nonprofit associations, development of multiple limited-equity micro-village infill developments and cohousing communities in a variety of formats (see Action 2.2.4).
 - Plan for the protection and incremental expansion of transportation-oriented business districts by increasing allowable housing and commercial densities in these areas (see Strategy 4.1).
- 3.4.** Strengthen science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education and culturally competent and trauma-informed programs in PreK-12 schools in the Spokane region.
 - 3.4.1.** Support [Spokane STEM](#)’s existing work to enhance STEM education opportunities for all youth in the region by increasing the number of students pursuing and achieving success in STEM careers through collaboration with business, early learning, PreK-12, higher education, and community leaders.
 - Elevate Innovia’s Promise Scholarship Initiative to ensure that every child has opportunity and access to their career or college of choice.



CASE STUDY

GREENVILLE RACIAL EQUITY AND ECONOMIC MOBILITY COMMISSION (REEM)

Location: Greenville, SC

More Information: [Racial Equity Index](#)

Building on the momentum of the nationwide social justice movements in the summer of 2020, the Greenville Racial Equity and Economic Mobility Commission (REEM) was created to identify and address systemic racial barriers in Greenville County. REEM is headed by United Way of Greenville County (UWGC), the Greenville Chamber of Commerce, and the Urban League of the Upstate. To better understand the role of race in economic mobility, UWGC released the Greenville Racial Equity Index in June 2021. Through collaborative partnerships with local community and economic development professionals and institutions, REEM has identified five focus areas: income and wealth, criminal justice, education and workforce development, health and wellness, and communitywide learning. Each area has a corresponding subcommittee staffed by community and business leaders, totaling more than 30 people. Currently, REEM is working on a community engagement strategy (informed by focus groups, surveys, and community dialogs) that will provide action-oriented recommendations for each focus area to be carried out by the appropriate subcommittee. One policy change that has already come out of the Criminal Justice Committee is the duty-to-intervene obligation for police officers who witness colleagues using excessive force. Additionally, the police force will provide implicit bias training for all officers.

- 3.5. Strengthen the regional talent pipeline by aligning efforts with current and future workforce needs and by ensuring economic opportunity is equally accessible to all residents regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or other identity (see Action 2.5.4).
 - 3.5.1. Focus efforts on underserved and at-risk youth by coordinating efforts with nontraditional economic development organizations and connecting opportunity youth to programs and resources like those offered through [Next Generation Zone and Legacy Learners LLC](#).
 - 3.5.2. Expand career exploration activities connecting students and adults to job opportunities in the region.
 - Continue to sponsor and amplify outreach about career fairs and hiring events.
 - 3.5.3. Uplift BIPOC workers by connecting them with clear career pathways that offer workers earn and learn initiatives like stipends, paid-work experience, internships, or on-the-job training (see Strategy 1.1).
 - 3.5.4. Invest resources and capacity into programs that expand reentry pathways to employment and reintegration of formerly incarcerated individuals, while reducing system entry and recidivism by fully implementing proven criminal justice system reforms.
 - 3.5.5. Support organizations, such as the Resource Center of Spokane County, that address barriers to employment, including childcare and mental health (see Action 4.5.3).
- 3.6. Prioritize digital equity initiatives by ensuring equal access to broadband and supporting digital literacy programs for underserved communities and businesses in both rural and urban communities throughout Spokane County.

- 3.6.1.** Target broadband expansion efforts in neighborhoods with weak service zones (see Action 1.5.1) and support publicly owned infrastructure.
- 3.6.2.** Support digital literacy programs in low-income communities by improving access to broadband-ready devices and services for residents and businesses (see Action 1.4.3), with an emphasis on programs led by members of those populations and communities.
- 3.7.** Expand public contracting opportunities for BIPOC owned businesses, including support and mentorship programs to alleviate procedural barriers.
 - 3.7.1.** Conduct disparity studies to better understand existing public procurement and contract awards by demographic characteristics and increase diversity.
 - Use findings from the disparity study as a baseline metric.
 - Ensure transparent reporting and metric development to track progress.
 - 3.7.2.** Support existing business groups geared towards BIPOC business owners to create a framework for a mentorship program to assist businesses pursuing public contracts.
 - 3.7.3.** Promote and adopt practices around procurement localization and diversification, including unbundling contracts and the development of a diverse/small business supplier database (see Action 1.2.2).

Goal 4. Connectivity

Promote the interconnectedness of Greater Spokane and drive cross-sector partnerships to align efforts that advance economic opportunity for all.

The fourth goal area for the CEDS is centered around the concept of connectivity, a concept that encompasses investments needed to grow the region's creative economy, improve communication channels, and support physical infrastructure development. This goal area also lays the groundwork to support other aspects of economic development, including fostering resilient economic growth and developing a strong quality of place. In order to grow the region's creative economy, enhanced alignment is needed between greater Spokane's public and private sector programs, organizations, and nontraditional economic development partners to improve synergies and address the region's most pressing issues. Furthermore, the goal of connectivity extends beyond traditional infrastructure investments, like transportation improvements, to include broadband expansion that can support innovation and investments in early childhood education to support working parents. As the lines between economic development and community development blur, enhancing regional infrastructure will be essential to connect people and business to the tools they need to thrive. To amplify the collective impact of regional partners, the opportunity remains to break down silos and work collaboratively to align efforts that advance economic opportunity for all Spokane residents.

Strategies and Actions

- 4.1.** Identify and prioritize infrastructure investments and projects to enhance existing developments and stimulate new projects, especially in underserved and rural communities (see Actions 1.3.3 and 3.3.3).
 - 4.1.1.** Facilitate the rapid deployment of telecommunications and broadband networks in growing commercial centers to meet business needs, including small industrial parks (see Action 1.5.3).
 - 4.1.2.** Install necessary utility structures in growing commercial centers, such as the West Plains Airport Area and the Hillyard neighborhood.
 - 4.1.3.** Focus "complete streets" investments, including sidewalks and street lighting, in historically underserved areas and downtowns (see Action 4.3.1).
 - 4.1.4.** Prioritize transit-oriented development, including non-motorized routes, to connect residential and commercial areas.
- 4.2.** Bolster and continue to align the network of entrepreneurial support organizations and resources (see Action 2.2.1).
 - 4.2.1.** Annually update the Startup Spokane Knowledge Network, an asset map of entrepreneurial support resources, and make it publicly available.
 - 4.2.2.** Support youth entrepreneurship programs to help Spokane's young residents cultivate an entrepreneurial spirit, building a community culture of innovation.
 - 4.2.3.** Grow the region's creative economy by deepening ties between the public sector, education, and the private sector.
- 4.3.** Create vibrant and inclusive communities by investing in the resources needed to activate public spaces, support arts and culture, and expand outdoor recreation opportunities for all (see Action 2.2.3).
 - 4.3.1.** Invest in the infrastructure needed to stimulate public spaces, such as Wi-Fi and sidewalks (see Action 4.1.3).
 - 4.3.2.** Identify park and green space development opportunities, including bike paths and hiking trails, to increase the percentage of residents in the region that live within a 10-minute walk to a public space.

- Increase public green spaces that connect retail sites with surrounding sites along major commercial corridors and adjacent neighborhoods.

4.3.3. Encourage and promote public outdoor events, such as art shows or farmers' markets, that draw people to downtowns and commercial districts.

4.4. Develop and implement a method to proactively involve community-based organizations to provide input on economic development initiatives, to improve access to other community leaders, and to initiate continuous improvement of the *THRIVE Spokane* CEDS (see Strategy 3.1).

4.4.1. Host biannual community connections to provide a time and space for community-based organizational leaders to meet with economic development partners, share common pain points, and identify collaborative solutions.

4.5. Invest in high quality childcare through public-private partnerships to support Spokane's working parents and ensure the region's youngest members are school-ready.

4.5.1. Establish a fund by private businesses that invests in childcare service networks to support their employees.

4.5.2. Expand business resources geared towards local small businesses in the childcare and early education industry. These resources can include customized business training and mentorship to improve quality, along with materials to strengthen the talent pipeline for early learning educators.

4.5.3. Identify childcare deserts,⁷ especially in high poverty areas, to target areas with the most critical needs (see Action 3.5.5).



CASE STUDY

APPENDIX A. THE PROVIDENCE FOUNDATION

Location: Providence, RI

More Information: [The Providence Foundation](#)

The Providence Foundation (PF) was established as a nonprofit in the mid-1970s to promote economic development in downtown Providence through policy advocacy, land use development and management, community and stakeholder engagement, and business attraction and recruitment. The Foundation values diversity and represents the interests of businesses, property owners, residents, and nonprofit institutions in the area. Additionally, PF recognizes downtown Providence's outsized and integral role in the state's larger economy but does not limit development activities to only the downtown area. To further their mission, PF created the Downtown Providence Parks Conservancy (DPPC) as an operating division that seeks to preserve and develop the city's historic downtown through the creation and use of public spaces. The Executive Director of the Foundation is obligated to simultaneously serve as the Executive Director of the DPPC. PF is an active partner in supporting Providence's nascent innovation district and markets downtown businesses and cultural programming through a partnership with the Downtown Improvement District. Altogether, the Providence Foundation leverages public private partnerships to diversify funding sources for redevelopment initiatives that foster robust economic ecosystems.

⁷ The Center for American Progress, Child Care Deserts data visualization, <https://childcaredeserts.org>

- 4.6. Recognize and invest in the major transportation and freight mobility systems that support the Spokane regional economy.
 - 4.6.1. Continue to advocate for increased investments in Spokane International Airport to grow passenger and cargo capacity.
 - 4.6.2. Advocate for transportation infrastructure investments that support business growth areas to enhance workforce access to employment centers.
 - 4.6.3. Develop a unified transportation priority list through the local regional transportation planning organization, Spokane Regional Transportation Council, to support state and federal grant funding and a robust regional transportation system.

Appendices

Appendix A. Target Sector Analysis

See separate PDF to review content for this section.

Appendix B. SWOT Diagrams

Additional detail about the diagrams presented in this section is provided in SWOT Analysis, page 16 .

Figure 13. Spokane Strengths and Weaknesses

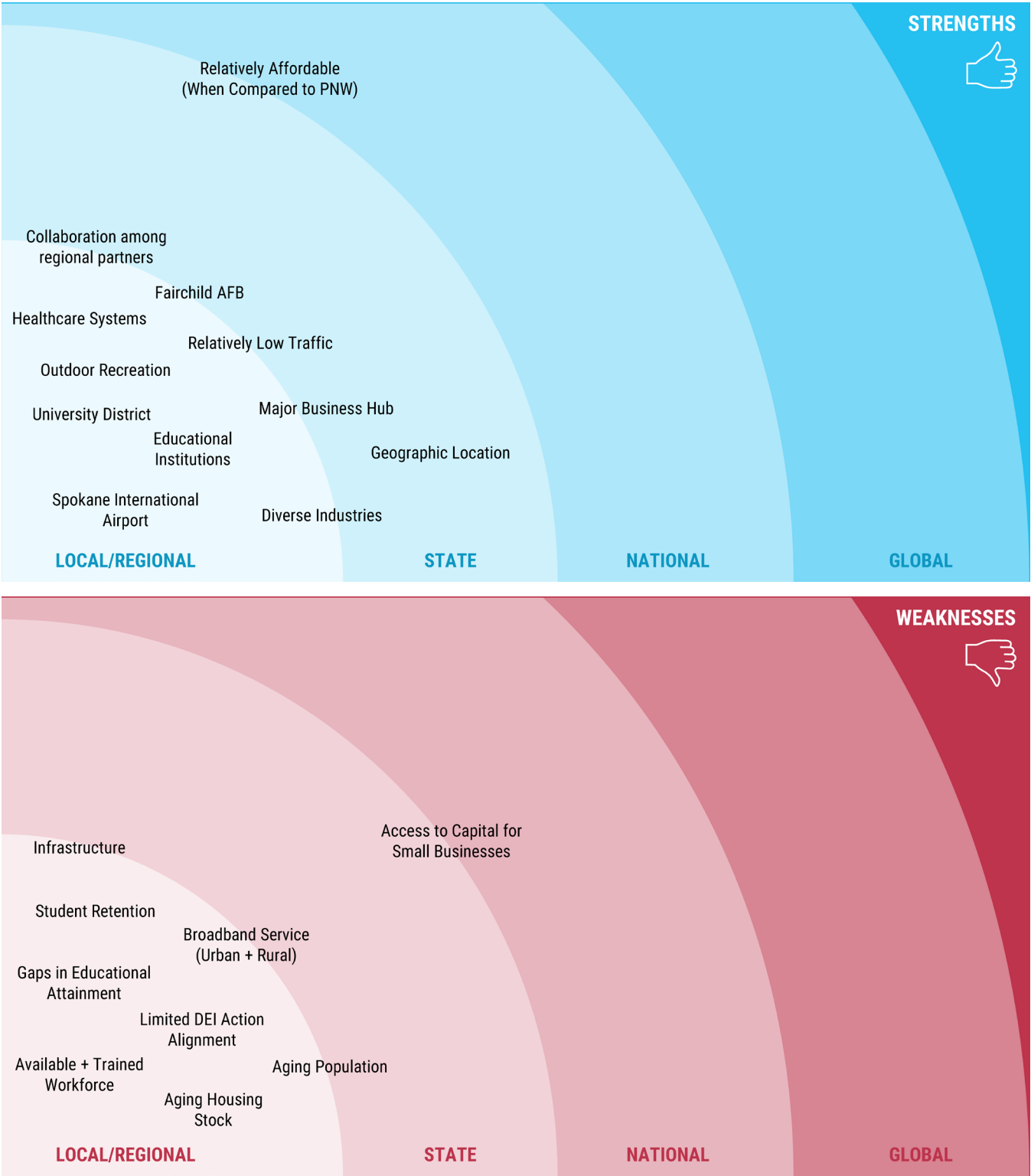


Figure 14. Spokane Opportunities and Threats

