

Spokane County Building & Planning

The Comprehensive Plan

The Legislature adopted the Growth Management Act in 1990 in response to concerns that uncoordinated and unplanned growth, together with a lack of common goals expressing the public's interest in the conservation and wise use of our lands, pose a threat to the environment, sustainable economic development, and the health, safety, and high quality of life enjoyed by the residents of this state. [RCW 36.70A.060 and 170]

Regional coordination between counties and cities is emphasized in the GMA.

The county-wide planning policies must include guidance for designation of urban growth areas (UGAs) outside of which urban development will not occur. Counties work collaboratively with cities to allocate projected population for the next 20 years. UGAs are designated based upon the need to accommodate population projections.

County and city comprehensive plans are required to include specific elements, or chapters, to address land use, housing, capital facilities, utilities, transportation, rural lands (for counties), and shorelines. [RCW 36.70A.040(3)]



Growth Management Act Overview

A comprehensive plan is "a *generalized* coordinated land use *policy statement* of the governing body of a county or city . . ."

Development regulations are "controls placed on development or land use activities by a county or city . . . "

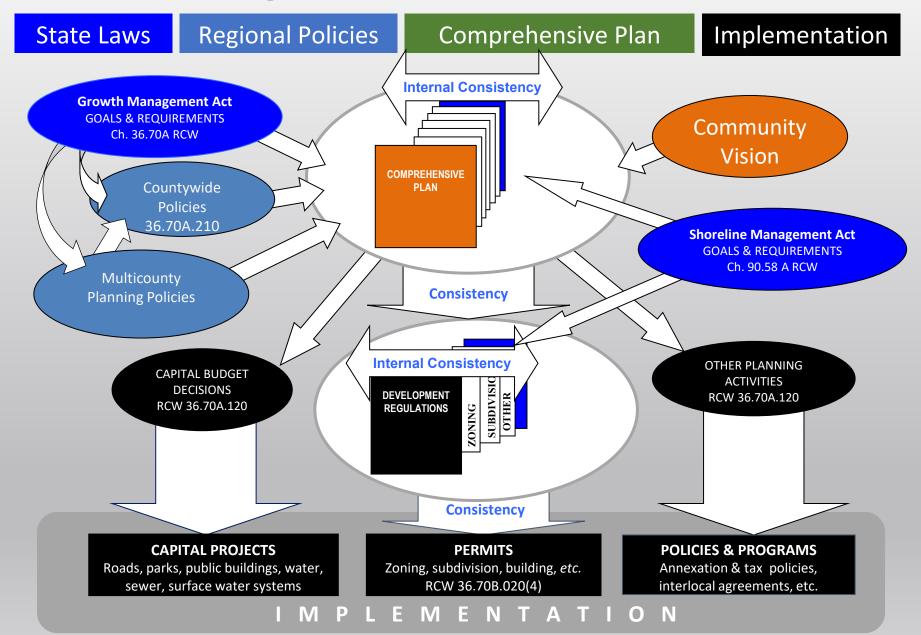
RCW 36.70A.030

The legislature recognizes that *counties are regional governments* within their boundaries, and cities are primary providers of urban governmental services within urban growth areas . . .

RCW 36.70A.210 (1)



Growth Management Act Overview





GMA Planning Goals

RCW 36.70A.020

- 1. **Urban growth**. Encourage development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner.
- **2. Reduce sprawl**. Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development.
- **3. Transportation**. Encourage efficient multimodal transportation systems that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and per capita vehicle miles traveled and are based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and city comprehensive plans.
- **4. Housing**. Plan for and accommodate housing affordable to all economic segments of the population of this state, promote a variety of residential densities and housing types, and encourage preservation of existing housing stock.
- 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, promote the retention and expansion of existing businesses and recruitment of new businesses, recognize regional differences impacting economic development opportunities, and encourage growth in areas experiencing insufficient economic growth, all within the capacities of the state's natural resources, public services, and public facilities.



GMA Planning Goals

RCW 36.70A.020

- **6. 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.
- **7. Permits**. Applications for both state and local government permits should be processed in a timely and fair manner to ensure predictability.
- **8. Natural resource industries**. Maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries, including productive timber, agricultural, and fisheries industries. Encourage the conservation of productive forestlands and productive agricultural lands and discourage incompatible uses.
- **9. 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.
- **10. 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.
- **11. 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.



GMA Planning Goals

RCW 36.70A.020

- **12. 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.
- **13. Historic preservation**. Identify and encourage the preservation of lands, sites, and structures, that have historical or archaeological significance.
- 14. 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 to 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.
- **15. Shorelines of the state**. For shorelines of the state, the goals and policies of the shoreline management act as set forth in RCW 90.58.020 shall be considered an element of the county's or city's comprehensive plan.



2026 GMA Elements

Land Use

Housing

Capital Facilities Plan

Utilities

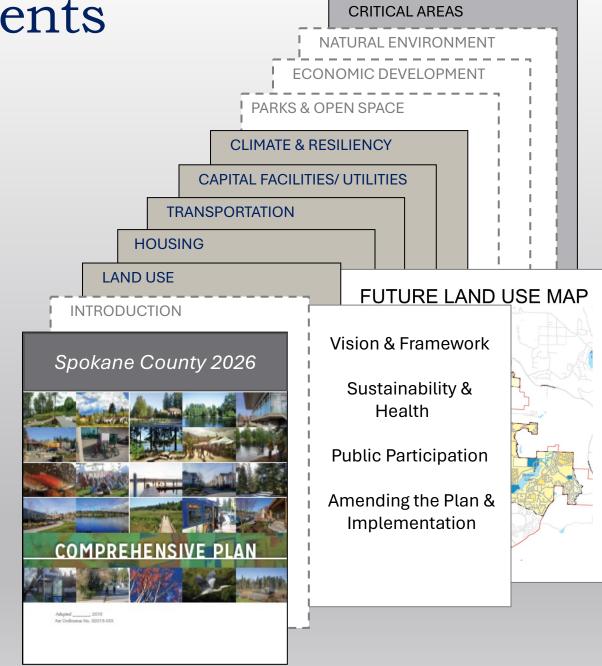
Rural

Transportation

Economic Development

Parks and Open Space

Climate & Resiliency





2026 GMA Elements

Land Use	RCW 36.70A.070(1)	A land use element designating the proposed general distribution and general location and extent of the uses of			
		land			
Housing	RCW 36.70A.070(2)	A housing element ensuring the vitality and character of			
	110 11 0011 0111 010 (2)	established residential neighborhoods			
Capital Facilities Plan	RCW 36.70A.070(3)	A capital facilities plan element consisting of an inventory of			
	110 331 3(3)	existing capital facilities owned by public entities			
T T4:11:4:	RCW 36.70A.070(4)	A utilities element consisting of the general location,			
Utilities		proposed location, and capacity of all existing and proposed			
		utilities			
Rural	RCW 36.70A.070(5)	Counties shall include a rural element including lands that			
		are not designated for urban growth			
Transportation	RCW 36.70A.070(6)	A transportation element that implements, and is consistent			
		with, the land use element.			
Economic Development	RCW 36.70A.070(7)	An economic development element establishing local goals,			
		policies, objectives, and provisions for economic growth			
Parks and Open Space	RCW 36.70A.070(8)	A park and recreation element that implements, and is			
		consistent with, the capital facilities plan element			
Climate & Resiliency	RCW 36.70A.070(9)	A climate change and resiliency element that is designed to			
		result in reductions in overall greenhouse gas emissions and			
		that must enhance resiliency to and avoid the adverse			
		impacts of climate change			



GMA Elements – Land Use

The Land Use Element designates the location, uses and intensities of land. It is essential to plan for population growth and meet the goals of every element.

RCW 36.70A.020 – Planning Goals

Urban growth. Encourage development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner.

Reduce sprawl. Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development.

In Progress: Population Projection Adoption, LCA and Housing Allocation currently underway. Creating a "visioning" process. Complete by the end of 2024.

Next Steps: Urban growth area projections and study areas, analysis of current land use categories and past development, develop scenarios and creative land use and urban design standards, draft goals and policies

GMA Elements – Housing

The Housing Element includes:

- Inventory and analysis of existing and projected housing needs.
- States goals and policies to preserve, maintain, and develop housing.
- Identifies land capacity for housing.
- Ensures adequate zoning to accommodate housing of all incomes.
- Identifies and undoes racially disparate impacts in housing.
- Identifies areas at risk to displacement and creates anti-displacement policies

RCW 36.70A.020 – Planning Goals

- (2) Reduce sprawl. Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development.
- (4) Housing. Plan for and accommodate housing affordable to all economic segments of the population of this state, promote a variety of residential densities and housing types, and encourage preservation of existing housing stock.
- (13) Historic preservation. Identify and encourage the preservation of lands, sites, and structures that have historical or archaeological significance.



GMA Elements – Housing

In progress: A preliminary housing inventory is complete (updated 2025), initial work to form a jurisdictional allocation program, identification of discriminatory policies, and begin public outreach process

Next steps: Draft goals and policies, identification of future housing needs by income, jurisdictional allocation of housing by income bracket, land capacity analysis, identify areas at risk of displacement

Final product: An updated chapter in the Spokane County Comprehensive Plan that fulfills new housing requirements in the GMA per HB1220 and HB1337. Goals and policies that align with those of other relevant Comp Plan chapters (Economic development, Climate, Land Use, etc.)

GMA Elements – Capital Facilities & Utilities

The Capital Facilities Element includes:

- Inventory of Capital Facilities
- Forecast of Future Needs
- Six-Year Finance Plan
- Requirement to reassess if funding falls short

RCW 36.70A.020 - Planning Goals

- (1) Urban growth. Encourage development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner.
- (12) 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.

GMA Elements – Capital Facilities & Utilities

In progress: Coordination efforts between the county owned capital facility departments.

Next steps: Update capital facilities inventory, refine levels of service, forecast future demand based on preferred scenario, coordinate with non-county owned capital facilities.

Final product: A Capital Facilities Plan that addresses the RCW requirements and becomes the guiding document to capital investments that encourage and guide growth over the next 20 years.

GMA Elements – Rural

The Rural Element guides land use and development in areas not designated for urban growth or natural resources.

RCW 36.70A.020 - Planning Goals

- (1) Urban Growth. Encourage Development in Urban Areas.
- (2) Reduce Sprawl. Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land.
- (8) Natural resource industries. Maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries, including productive timber, agricultural, and fisheries industries. Encourage the conservation of productive forestlands and productive agricultural lands and discourage incompatible uses.
- (11) 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.

GMA Elements – Rural

In progress: Coordinate with relevant stakeholders and agencies, review and analyze rural element, review goals and policies, assess innovative zoning techniques for rural densities and character.

Next steps: Inventory and analysis of LAMIRDs, periodic analysis of development occurring in rural areas, draft goals and policies.

Final product: Updated chapter in the Spokane County Comprehensive Plan that fulfills GMA requirements for rural lands. Contemporary goals and policies that align with economic conditions and other relevant Comp Plan chapters (Economic development, Natural Environment, Land Use, etc.)

GMA Elements – Transportation

The Transportation Element ensures that Spokane County's transportation network will have adequate capacity and financing to accommodate future growth.

RCW 36.70A.020 – Planning Goals

- (1) Urban growth. Encourage development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner
- (3) Transportation. Encourage efficient multimodal transportation systems that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and per capita vehicle miles traveled and are based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and city comprehensive plans.
- (12) Public facilities and services. Ensure that those public facilities and services necessary to support development shall be adequate to serve the development at the same time the development is available for occupancy and use without decreasing current service levels below locally established minimum standards.



GMA Elements – Transportation

In progress:

- Creation and finalization of transportation element stakeholder list.
- Public participation
- Inventory of master plans
- Inventory of local county facilities
- Transportation element policies evaluation
- Revising and editing Spokane County's Active Transportation Plan

Next steps:

- Adoption of LOS standards
- Commute trip reduction plan
- Steps that are contingent on the land use element: finance plan, SRTC demand forecast, assess impact of land use map on state facilities and LOS, 10-year multimodal demand forecast, finalization of goals and policies



GMA Elements – Transportation

Final product:

- Updated goals and polices
- 20-year vision for Spokane County's transportation network coordinated with SRTC
- A plan for multimodal transportation facilities and services needed to support the county's 2026-2046 future land use map.

GMA Elements – Economic Development

The Economic Development Element establishes goals and policies for economic growth, vitality, and high quality of life.

RCW 36.70A.020 - Planning Goals

(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, promote the retention and expansion of existing businesses and recruitment of new businesses, recognize regional differences impacting economic development opportunities, and encourage growth in areas experiencing insufficient economic growth, all within the capacities of the state's natural resources, public services, and public facilities.

GMA Elements – Economic Development

In progress: Assessing economic development initiatives by Spokane County organizations

Next steps: "Place-based assets" inventory and evaluation for catalytic targets and initiatives

Final product: Countywide economic development strategies that can guide partnerships and outside efforts to grow a catalytic and sustainable economic recruitment and development program.

GMA Elements – Parks and Open Space

The Parks & Recreation Element shell be consistent with the CFP and includes at least a 10-year demand estimate, tree canopy coverage evaluation, and an evaluation of intergovernmental coordination opportunities for parks.

RCW 36.70A.020 - Planning Goal

(9) 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.

In progress: Planning department and park department coordination of planning efforts

Next steps: Collection of inventory, forecasting demand, visioning

Final product: Coordinated Comp Plan and Parks Plan chapters

GMA Elements – Climate and Resiliency

A climate change and resiliency element that is designed to result in reductions in overall greenhouse gas emissions and that must enhance resiliency to and avoid the adverse impacts of climate change, which must include efforts to reduce localized greenhouse gas emissions and avoid creating or worsening localized climate impacts to vulnerable populations and overburdened communities

Two required sub-elements:

- GHG Emissions Reduction: decrease GHG emissions and decrease VMT
- Climate Resiliency: prevention of and preparation for likely climate hazards

Both sub-elements require goals and policies prioritize "overburdened" communities

This can include groups uniquely susceptible to certain hazards, low-income groups, racial and ethnic minorities, etc.



GMA Elements – Climate and Resiliency

RCW 36.70A.020 – Planning Goals

(14) 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 to 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;

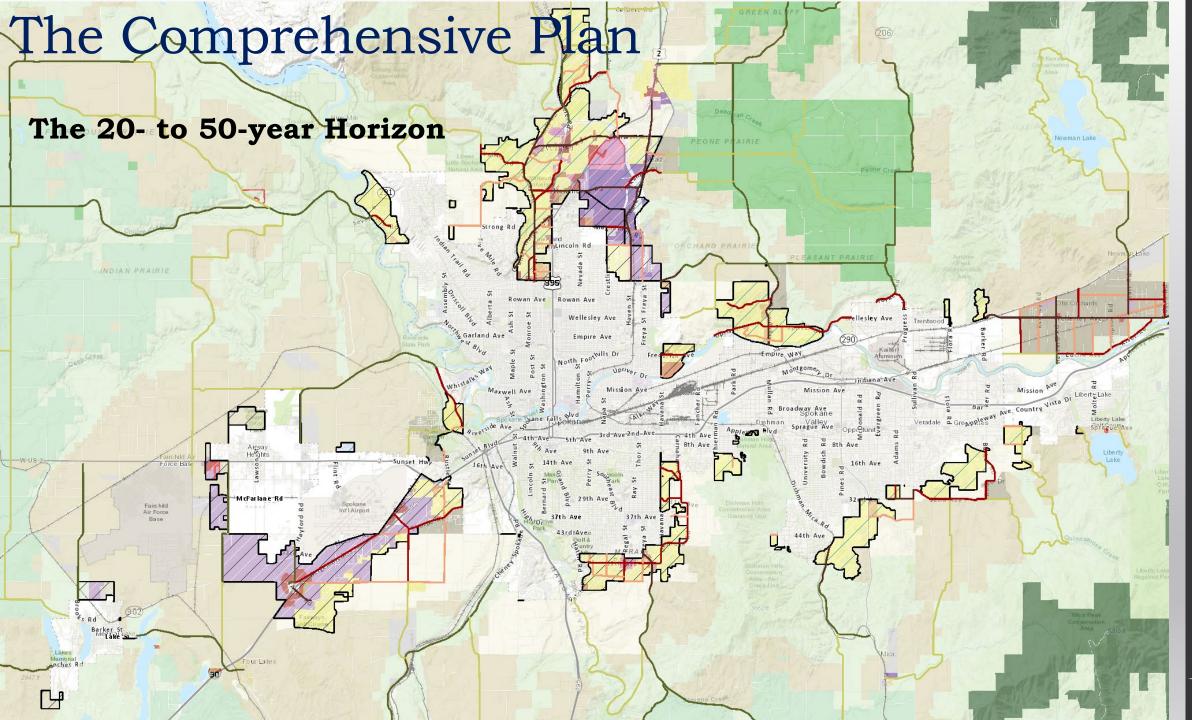
Protect and enhance environmental, economic, and human health and safety; And advance environmental justice.

GMA Elements – Climate and Resiliency

In progress: Climate grant application from Commerce completed, work plan and timeline established, preliminary climate data gathered, awaiting finalization of webpage before reaching out to stakeholders

Next steps: Form Climate Policy Advisory Team (CPAT), begin evaluating available GHG emissions and climate hazard data, determine where consultants are needed, draft goals and policies

Final product: A new chapter in the Spokane County Comprehensive Plan that fulfills GMA requirements for the Climate Change and Resiliency element; goals and policies that align with those of other relevant Comp Plan chapters (Transportation, Natural Environment, Housing, etc.) and with Spokane County's Hazard Mitigation Plan (updating in 2025)





2026 Public Participation Program

Growth Management Act requires...

RCW 36.70A.140 Comprehensive Plans - Ensure Public Participation Requires fully planning counties and cities to establish and broadly disseminate a public participation program for comprehensive plans and development regulations relating to comprehensive plans.

WAC 365-196-600(l)(a)- Requirements

Each county and city planning under the act must establish procedures for early and continuous public participation in the development and amendment of comprehensive plans and development regulations. The procedures are not required to be reestablished for each set of amendments.

Public Participation Program Guidelines were updated and adopted on July 19, 2022, by the Board of County Commissioners Resolution 22-0470.

Spokane Countywide Planning Policies were updated and adopted on December 13, 2022, by the Board of County Commissioners Resolution 22-0859.



Public Participation Program

The objectives of this program include:

- Identify procedures for early and continuous public participation in the development and amendment of comprehensive land use plans and development regulations implementing such plans.
- Create a roadmap by which Spokane County Planning Staff will involve the public throughout the periodic update process.
- Provide information to the public and stakeholders on how they can participate in the process.
- Create innovative techniques to include underserved community groups.
- Appendix A sets the procedures for early and continuous public participation in amending the comprehensive plan and updating development regulations.

PPP Initiatives

Equitable Engagement

- Including underserved community members
- Coordination with community leaders and advocacy groups
- Accessibility
- Language barriers
- Social media

Meeting People Where They Are

- Reaching out at community events to solicit public thoughts
- Farmers markets, universities, fairs, community parades, and cultural events for historically underrepresented communities.

PPP Initiatives

Communication Engagement Programs and Strategies

- Social media programs
- Community consolations consultations
- Media outlets
- Direct communication
- In-person workshops
- Electronic mailing list
- Virtual meetings/forums
- News
- Printed/digital material
- Press releases, public service announcements

PPP Initiatives

Broad Dissemination

• Strategies, online presence, physical presence, social media platforms, physical addresses, media outlets, email contact list, and news updates

Utilization of Website

- Working draft plans, ideas, visions, and scenarios
- Surveys
- GIS story maps
- Public comments
- Fact sheets

Other Public Participation Initiatives

- Workshops/public forums
- Community consultations
- Public Outreach Performance Measures



Visioning Principles

Spokane County and environs – building neighborhoods, not subdivisions

Creating more mixed-use areas for closer proximity of jobs and residences

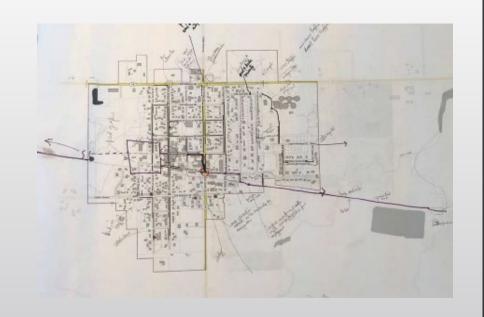
Evolving of Urban Growth Areas

Local Areas of More Intense Rural Development—LAMIRDS as vibrant places with defined character

Rural lands and preservation of lifestyle and resources

More...

...from the Commissioners







Scenario Building – concepts

UGA with annexation program through 2046—joint planning

Extra-urban places grow or form—some LAMIRDS become towns; small cities grow, rural living is supported, resource lands are protected and buffered

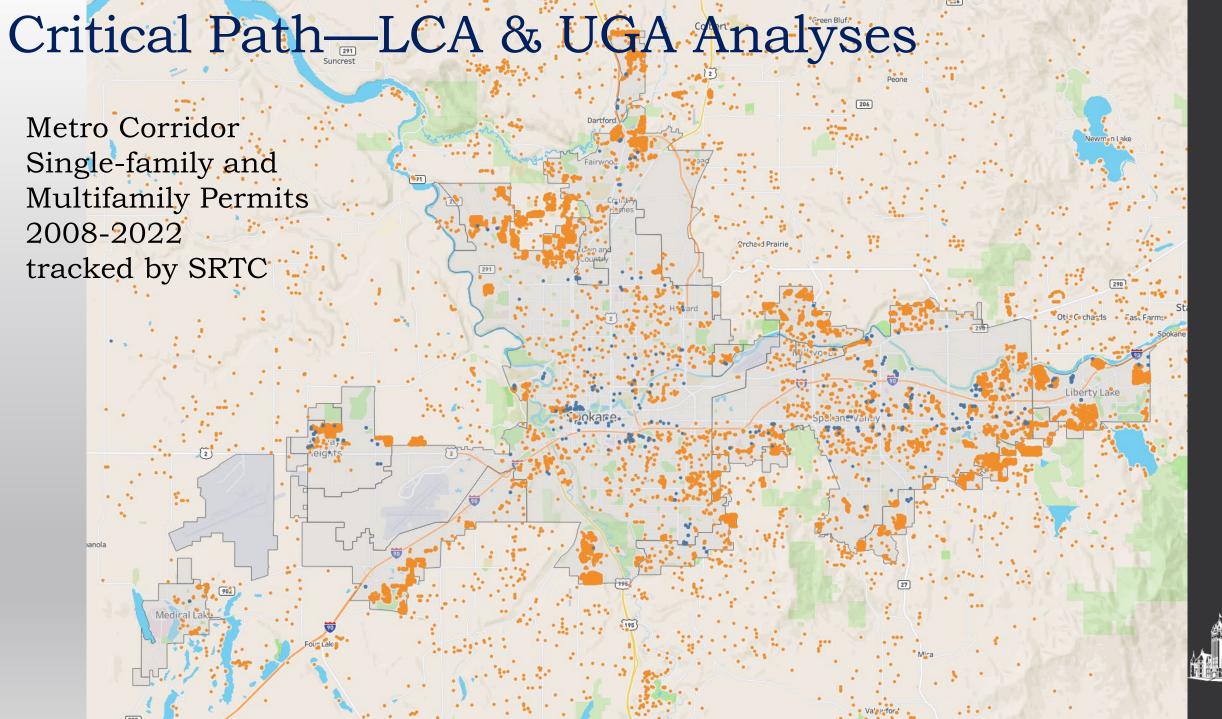
One Spokane—a unified city/county regional planning and development agency

Others to be discovered as the process unfolds... *including today*

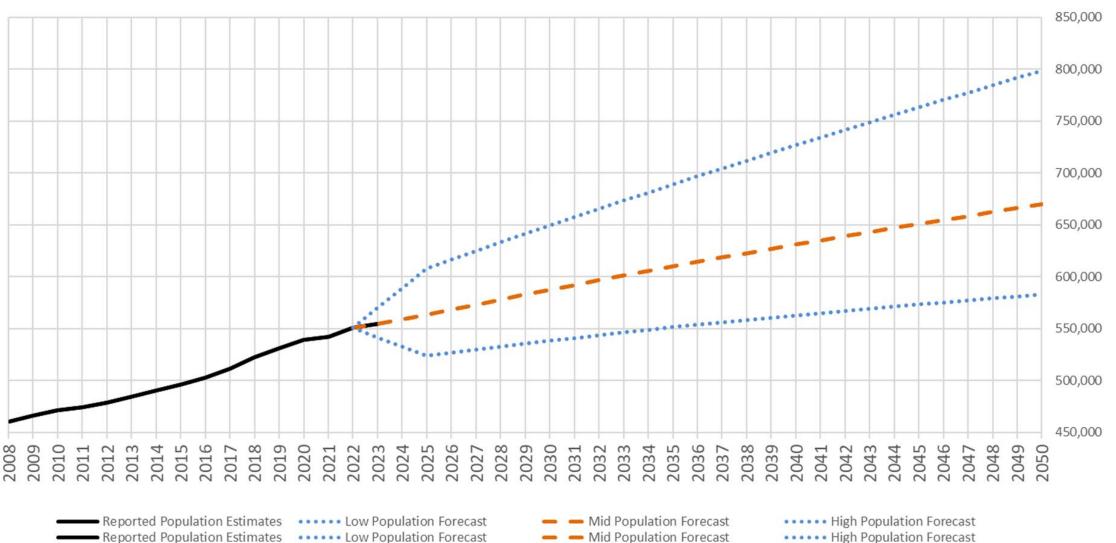
Unincorporated UGAs do not annex—administered indefinitely by SpoCo; *the status quo scenario*.







2022 Spokane County Growth Estimates (Low, Mid, High) by WA Office of Financial Management



This table represents the initial allocation by jurisdiction when considering its capacity, ability to serve, and capital facilities needs.

After each jurisdiction's technical analysis, stakeholder/public input, and SpoCo corroboration, these numbers will be refined.

FIRST ROUND Spokane County Population Estimates

	Baseline Data (OFM) OFM Regression (Adjusted))	
Jurisdiction	Share2023	Pop2023	Share2046	Pop2046	Δ _{pop} 23-46	Δ _% 23-46
Spokane County (Whole)	100.00%	554,600	100.00%	654,665	100,065	18.0%
Unincorporated County (inclusive)	29.46%	163,390	30.38%	198,870	35,480	21.7%
Unincorporated Outside UGA Only	16.94%	93,934	15.07%	98,642	4,708	5.0%
Unincorporated Inside UGA Only	12.52%	69,456	15.31%	100,228	30,772	44.3%
Incorporated Spokane County (sum)	70.54%	391,210	69.62%	455,795	64,585	16.5%
Airway Heights	2.03%	11,280	2.74%	17,945	6,665	59.1%
Cheney	2.37%	13,160	2.53%	16,535	3,375	25.6%
Deer Park	0.89%	4,925	0.96%	6,290	1,365	27.7%
Fairfield	0.11%	600	0.09%	600	0	0.0%
Latah	0.03%	185	0.03%	185	0	0.0%
Liberty Lake	2.37%	13,150	3.35%	21,934	8,784	66.8%
Medical Lake	0.89%	4,915	0.75%	4,915	0	0.0%
Millwood	0.35%	1,925	0.30%	1,974	49	2.6%
Rockford	0.10%	570	0.10%	636	66	11.7%
Spangle	0.05%	280	0.04%	280	0	0.0%
Spokane	41.96%	232,700	39.11%	256,057	23,357	10.0%
Spokane Valley	19.37%	107,400	19.60%	128,313	20,913	19.5%
Waverly	0.02%	120	0.02%	131	11	9.3%
Source	CALC	OFM	REGRESSION	CALC	CALC	CALC

Notes

CALC = Calculated Value, OFM = Office of Financial Management, Δ = delta, or 'change in', inclusive = includes both inside and outside the urban growth area.

Note that the italic "Share 2046" values in italics represent hand adjustment to avoid negative growth.



Current UGA with rural zoning

These lands are the first candidates for geographic reallocation to meet 2046 growth projections.

Urban Growth Areas for the smaller cities and towns must be "right-sized" for each places expected 20-year development horizon.

Jurisdiction	Zoning	Acreage	
Latah	RT	34.0	
Fairfield	RT	24.4	
Rockford	RT	47.3	
Spangle	RT	75.7	
Cheney JPA	RCV	471.0	
	RT	71.6	
Medical Lake JPA	RCV	84.8	
	RT	119.6	
Airway Heights JPA	RT	396.7	
Pillar Rock	RT	58.4	
Indian Canyon JPA	R-5	23.1	
	RCV	140.0	
North Metro UGA - JPA	RT	37.4	
Deer Park JPA	RT	550.2	
Valley	RCV	141.7	
	RT	550.2 141.7 25.5	
Waverly JPA	RT	0.1	
West Plains	RT	0.0	
 Totals		2,301.5	



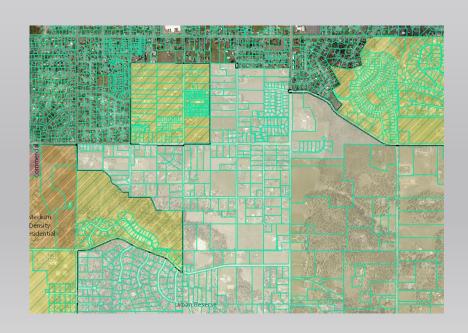
Estimated acreage of undeveloped LDR-zoned land within UGA				3	5	7		
NAME	Acreage	*Unbu	ildable	Net Available	Unit	Density	sity Range	
Alcott JPA	74.7	25%	19	56	168	280	392	
Five Mile UGA	0.3	25%	0	0	1	1	1	
Indian Canyon UGA - JPA	47.5	75%	36	12	36	59	83	
Moran/Glenrose UGA - JPA	131.6	75%	99	33	99	165	230	
North Metro UGA	404.4	50%	202	202	607	1,011	1,415	
Pillar Rock UGA	17.1	25%	4	13	38	64	90	
Seven Mile UGA - JPA	78.7	75%	59	20	59	98	138	
Shawnee UGA - JPA	3.6	100%	4	0	0	0	0	
Upriver UGA - JPA	96.1	50%	48	48	144	240	336	
Valley UGA	784.4	25%	196	588	1,765	2,941	4,118	
West Plains/Thorpe UGA - JPA	397.8	25%	99	298	895	1,492	2,088	
Totals	2,036		766	1,270	3,811	6,352	8,892	
			acres	acres	units	units	units	
				population	8,003	13,338	18,674	



Land Capacity Analysis summary and initial conclusions for UGA impact

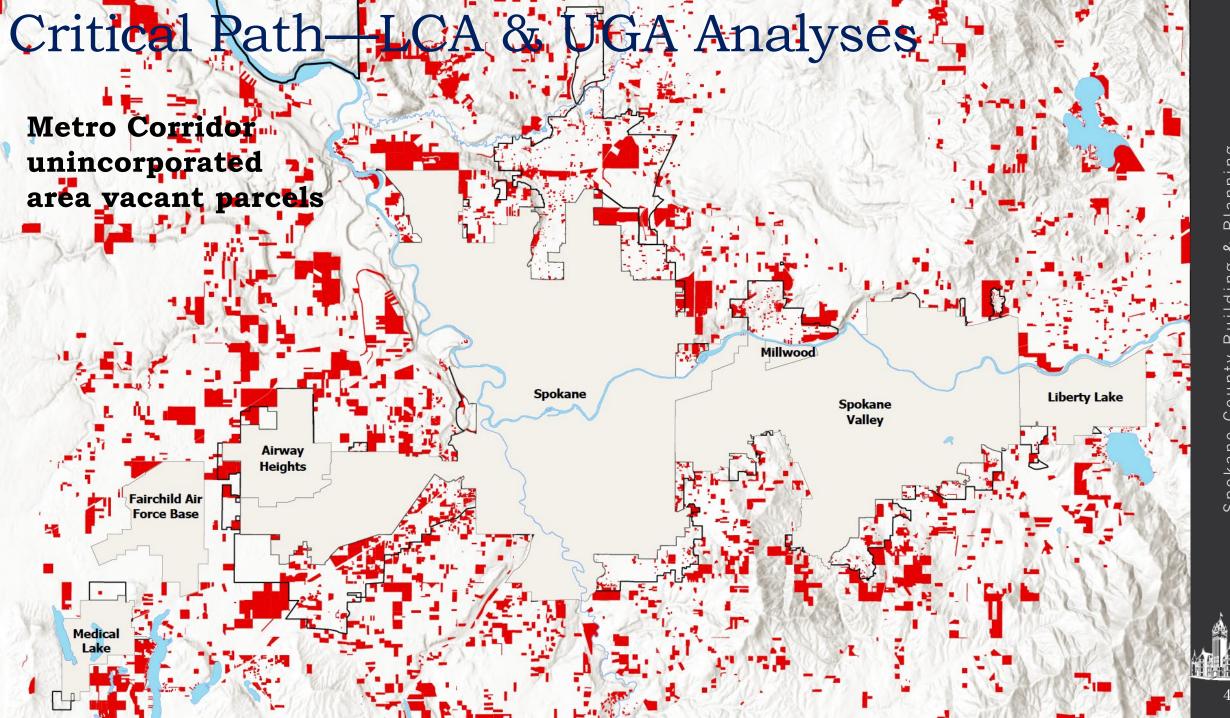
UGA approaches to repurpose original GMA allocations:

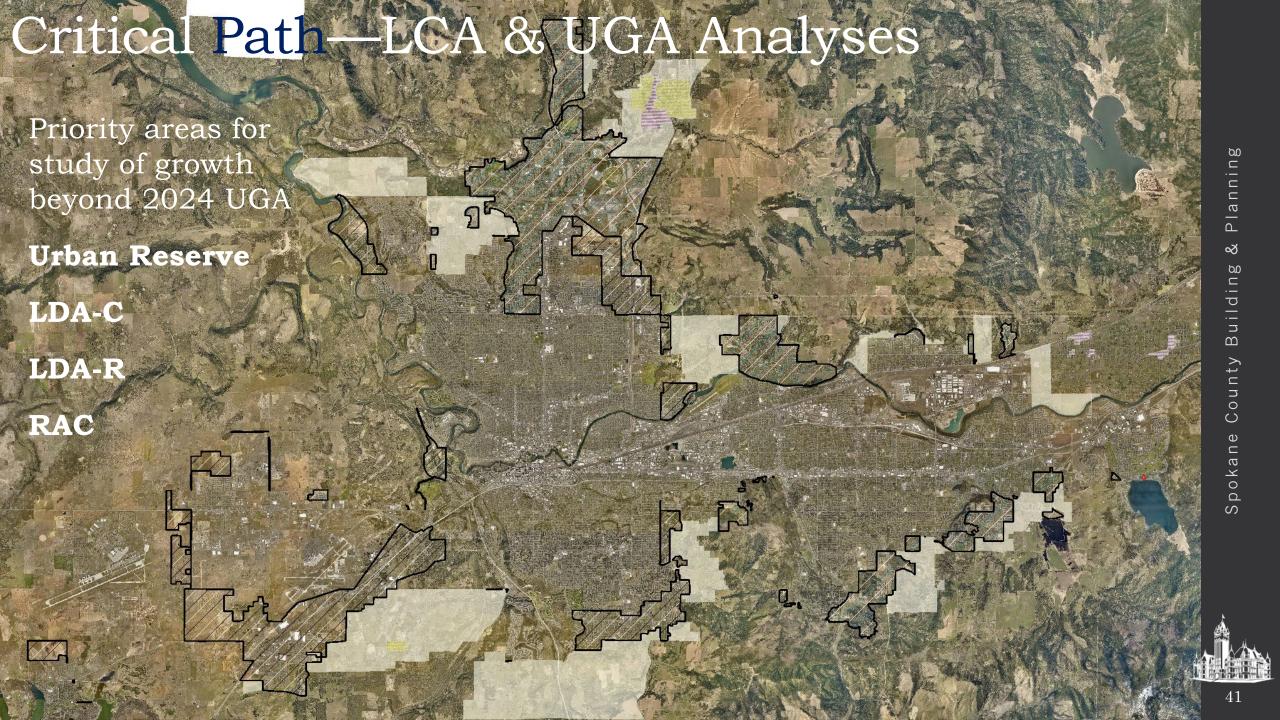
- (1) areas are fully allocated and mapped
- (2) areas are held in geographic reserve for market responsiveness











Roadmap—2024

Gather data for population allocations & market assessment

Initiate the Environmental Impact Statement process

Explore and define scenarios for growth

Create and refine a 2050 Spokane County Vision

Create Urban Growth Area projections & study areas

Assess and refine goals & priorities for growth & development

Craft the initial Plan chapters

Begin "whiteboarding" development regs to implement the vision

Public Engagement & Participation 2024

Partner Engagement & Participation



Roadmap—2025

Complete a detailed analysis of GMA elements

Craft the chapters into an initial Plan

Define neighborhoods and goals to build great places

Craft development regulations to implement Plan objectives

Convene public meetings and studio workshops

Public Engagement & Participation

2025

Partner Engagement & Participation



Roadmap—2026

Refine the chapters to meld GMA requirements with vision

Convene public meetings and studio workshops

Coordinate with partners & stakeholders

Craft the final draft Plan

Washington State departments and other agency consideration

Steering Committee of Elected Officials Consideration

Planning Commission hearings and consideration

Board of County Commissioners consideration





Timeline – 2026 Periodic Update

- July 19, 2022: Public Participation Guidelines adopted by BoCC [22-0470]
- December 13, 2022: Countywide Planning Policies adopted by BoCC [22-0859]
- March 5, 2024: Land Capacity Analysis methodology adopted by BoCC [24-0017]
- May 2024: tentative Comprehensive Plan Public Participation Program consideration
- July 2024: tentative Land Capacity Analysis consideration
- ----, 2024: Spokane County visioning and scenario development
- ----, 2024: Urban Growth Area consideration
- · ----, 2025:
- · ----, 2025:
- · ----, 2025:
- June 30, 2026: scheduled BoCC consideration of 2026 Comprehensive Plan



