Chapter 5

DOWNTOWN STRATEGIES
Downtown Strategies

1.0 STREETSCAPE AND PUBLIC SPACE IMPROVEMENTS

Downtown is a unique place that blends history with modernity, where people gather to live, work, shop, learn, and play. Active and inviting streetscapes and public open spaces provide the intricate framework between built structures where interactions, encounters, and community events occur.

OBJECTIVES

The streetscape and public space improvement objectives of the Plan Update are to preserve and enhance Downtown Spokane’s distinctive environment and history; to foster a sense of identity in Downtown; and to create an exciting, pedestrian-friendly street atmosphere.
Strategies

Complete Streets

As noted in Chapter Three, the green street terminology has become confusing due to widespread use of the term to describe new techniques in storm water management. Therefore, the Plan Update introduces the concept of Complete Streets. The Complete Streets Coalition offers the following definition:

"Complete Streets are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users. Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and bus riders of all ages and abilities are able to safely move along and across a complete street."

The new categorization scheme includes the landscape and streetscape foundation of the 1999 Plan’s “Green Streets,” and adds the following additional layers:

1. All streets in Downtown are meant to move people, not just motor vehicles. Every street in Downtown should be pedestrian-friendly, but there will be different degrees to which pedestrians are prioritized.
2. Stormwater management should be integrated into all Complete Streets to the extent possible.
3. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles should be incorporated in all Complete Street designs to maximize eyes on the street, territorial reinforcement, and both perceptual and actual access control.
MAP 5.1 STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

- Interstate
- Existing Alleys
- Centennial Trail
- Type I Complete Street (Community Activity Street)
- Type II Complete Street (Community Connector)
- Type III Complete Street (City-Regional Connector)
- Type IV Complete Street (Neighborhood Street)
- Bike/Pedestrian Path
- Downtown Boundary

August 2008

1.1 Promote and develop Complete Streets to connect Downtown, Downtown neighborhoods and adjacent neighborhoods with a network of landscaped, pedestrian-friendly streets. Complete Streets are landscaped, tree-lined corridors designed for multiple modes of transportation. Nearly all are meant to balance the various needs of pedestrian and vehicular use. Some include bicycle and transit improvements as well. Pedestrian amenities on Complete Streets may include street furniture, decorative lighting, wide sidewalks with curb extensions (bulb-outs) at street corners, decorative crosswalks, public art, outdoor restaurants, plazas, and improved sidewalk-building interfaces (e.g., awnings, street-oriented retail activity). Use of amenities must conform to the City’s sidewalk encroachment guidelines and sidewalk clear zone standards. The Centennial Trail is a good example of a non-motorized Complete Street.

**Complete Street Types**

There will be four types of “Complete Streets,” based on the primary function of each street within the Downtown network. These street types could accommodate the expansion of Spokane’s system of bikeways including bicycle lanes and shared bike routes where appropriate.

**Type I Complete Streets (Community Activity Streets)** are slow, two-way streets with wide, well-maintained sidewalks and pedestrian amenities to encourage strolling, walking and shopping.

**Type II Complete Streets (Community Connector)** move traffic and pedestrians into and around Downtown. These streets provide some of the major pedestrian connections to surrounding neighborhoods and districts.

The primary function of **Type III Complete Streets (City-Regional Connector)** is to move automobile traffic through Downtown and provide connections with the rest of the City and region. These attractive, landscaped arterials are to be improved with street trees, sufficient sidewalks for pedestrian circulation, and safe pedestrian crossings.

**Type IV Complete Streets (Neighborhood Streets)** carry very little through traffic and tend to have less commercial activity than the other types of Complete Streets. These tend to have generous sidewalks, landscaping, and street trees.

As previously mentioned in Chapter Four, **Alleys** provide another great transportation and public space amenity in Downtown Spokane. While alleys do not fit within the Complete Streets hierarchy, they provide the best opportunity to prioritize the pedestrian above the motor vehicle. All vehicles using alleys should be subordinate to other users, such as pedestrians, bicyclists, and wheelchair users. Alleys should be well-maintained and activated to provide critical mid-block connections and additional opportunities for entrances and outdoor seating along low traffic streets. It is critical that alleys retain their critical functions for deliveries and refuse collection. Encroachments should be removable and allow nightly access.
Specific design guidelines will be developed for Type I, II, III, and IV Complete Streets. All Downtown streets will meet Type IV criteria at a minimum.

**Type I Complete Streets (Community Activity Streets):**
- First Avenue*
- West Main Avenue (east of Lincoln Street)*
- Bernard Street (north of the First Avenue)
- Howard Street
- Post Street (north of First Avenue)
- Riverside Avenue (west of Monroe Street)
- Wall Street (north of First Avenue)*
- Bridge Avenue
- Grant Street
- Sherman Street

*Potential two-way street conversion

**Type II Complete Streets (Community Connectors):**
- Lincoln Street
- Mallon Avenue
- Broadway Avenue
- Monroe Street
- Spokane Falls Boulevard
- Riverside Avenue (east of Monroe Street)
- West Main Avenue (west of Lincoln Street)
- Sprague Avenue
- Stevens Street
- Washington Street

**Type III Complete Streets (City-Regional Connectors):**
- Division Street
- Ruby Street
- Browne Street
- Maple Street
- Second Avenue
- Third Avenue

**Type IV Complete Streets (Neighborhood Streets):**
- Madison Street
- Post Street (south of First Avenue)
- Wall Street (south of First Avenue)
- Bernard Street (south of Pacific Avenue)
- McGlellan Street
- Jefferson Street
- Adams Street
- Cedar Street
- State Street
- Pine Street
- Cowley Street
- Spokane Street
- Short Avenue
- Olive Avenue
- Riverpoint Boulevard

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**Implementation Priority**

Five Complete Streets have been identified as high priority projects for implementation. Complete Street improvements will be facilitated by the City of Spokane. A variety of funding mechanisms may be necessary.

1. *First Avenue:* This street is prioritized to support the development momentum in the Davenport District and support the pedestrian and bicycle connection west from the Downtown Core.
2. *East end of West Main Avenue:* Main Avenue is prioritized because of its potential to support development between Spokane Falls Boulevard and Main Avenue, as well as the strong linkage it will create between the Downtown Core, the Convention Center, East End, and the University District.
3. *Howard Street:* This is the primary pedestrian spine linking Downtown Spokane and the North Bank through Riverfront Park.
4. *Division Street:* Division Street is prioritized because of its visibility as a main entrance to Downtown from Interstate 90.
5. *Post Street:* This street has continued potential as a promenade with an enhanced level of pedestrian character, acting as both a pedestrian and vehicular (two-way traffic) link connecting major office, arts, and development opportunities to the Retail Core.
Public Space Improvements
An interconnected and welcoming system of parks and plazas provides an important refuge from the density and urbanity of Downtown.

Riverfront Park
1.2 Take steps to activate the Howard Street corridor through Riverfront Park with bicycle amenities, transit connections, pubs, eateries, and coffee shops. Actively program portions of Riverfront Park and work to provide improved access to the Falls from the south side of the Spokane River.

District Plazas and Gathering Places
1.3 Develop a system of gathering places, parks, and plazas in each Downtown district to provide a local focal point and meeting place for residents, shoppers, and visitors. General locations with potential for use as public open space have been mapped, but specific sites have not yet been identified. Guidelines should be developed to identify appropriate sites and design elements (e.g., use of public art, landscaping, and other features) for neighborhood gathering places.

1.4 Implement the BID streetscape plan by increasing the number of planters, benches, and bike racks throughout the District.

Event Streets
1.5 Perform a study to establish an event streets overlay within Downtown that helps to ensure accommodation and optimization for the closure and use of certain streets for street fairs, Hoopfest, walks/runs, bike races, and other events.

Skywalk Improvements
Concentrate Skywalks
1.6 Concentrate skywalks as functional links in the Downtown Retail Core, strengthening the connections between activities in the retail core by expanding or possibly removing skywalks where appropriate, and providing incentives for property owners through the design review process to remove or expand skywalks.

Maintain and enhance existing skywalks of functional importance. Consider the removal of existing skywalks that are not well utilized and have a negative impact on the aesthetics of connected buildings within the context of a Skywalk Master Plan.

New additions to the skywalk system should improve overall connectivity of the existing system, including connections to parking areas. Skywalks should not detract from building design and should not be added to historic buildings.

Skywalk Design – Improved Street Linkages
1.7 Orient skywalks to the street level by improving the visual and functional connection of skywalks to the street. Provide incentives for property owners to upgrade and improve the general appearance of their skywalks.

Skywalk System Coordination
1.8 Improve signage and develop brochures to guide skywalk users. Address other problems such as locked doors, hours of use, and lack of system coordination.
MAP 5.2 OPEN SPACE NETWORK

Downtown Boundary
Major Pedestrian Route
Interstate
Streetscape Improvements

Centennial Trail
Railroad
Open Space Connection
Spokane River

Existing Parks and Open Space
Existing Plaza Space
Proposed Parks and Open Space
Proposed Plaza Space

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2.0 MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION

As Downtown Spokane becomes an increasingly popular destination, transportation and circulation issues become more and more critical to the area’s livelihood. Ideally, residents of Downtown neighborhoods will enjoy walking to nearby offices and restaurants, bicyclists will safely navigate Downtown streets, commuters will take advantage of numerous transit and parking opportunities, and drivers will travel smoothly into Downtown.

Current national and global economic forces are making use of traditional, single-occupancy automobiles less attractive. Transit and bicycle ridership is at record levels nationwide and will likely continue to trend upwards. Spokane can build upon its existing transit system and commute programs to encourage various transportation choices in Downtown. These efforts will make the Downtown experience more pleasant for everyone, as well as reduce congestion and improve air quality.

OBJECTIVES
The transportation and circulation objectives of this Plan Update are to efficiently move people into and around Downtown via all modes of travel; to make the streets pedestrian-friendly so that Downtown is a pleasant experience once people arrive there; and to promote active transportation choices because of the significant benefits to individual health and the environment.

STRATEGIES

Overall Transportation

2.1 Work to achieve a high occupancy vehicle/ride-share split of 33% to, from and within Downtown by the year 2013.

2.2 Ensure that the Riverside Avenue extension through the University District is designed and constructed as a Type II Complete Street (Community Connector) with adequate right-of-way to accommodate a dedicated rapid transit alignment and bicycle lanes. Promote an alignment that provides sufficient space between the roadway and the railroad for pedestrian-scale development on both sides of the street.

2.3 Avoid creation of additional couplets and crossovers (sweeping roadway alignment transitions between coupled one-way streets and two-way streets).
Pedestrian

One-way Conversions

2.4 Convert selected Downtown streets to two-way traffic while maintaining major arterial streets as one-way couplets. The following preferred street network, or portions thereof, should be implemented if further traffic and cost analyses support the alternative. Two-way conversions are intended to calm traffic and improve the pedestrian atmosphere.

East/West one-way streets to convert to two-way:
- Sprague Avenue
- First Avenue
- Main Avenue, east of Lincoln (long-term conversion; see discussion below)

North/South one-way streets to convert to two-way:
- Wall Street

First and Sprague Avenues, and Wall Street, will be converted to two-way streets before Main Avenue. In the short-term, recommended Main Avenue improvements include a reduction of lanes from four to three and addition of one bicycle lane. It is important to transit function within Downtown that a dedicated westbound transit lane be maintained on Sprague Avenue (and possibly an eastbound lane on Main Avenue) to accommodate bus and streetcar traffic. Circulation changes will affect all modes of travel within Downtown. Conversion of West Main Avenue to two-way traffic has not been explored with all property and business owners along the corridor. In addition, future transportation infrastructure could change the role of Main Avenue Downtown. These conversations are necessary before a final configuration is determined.

It is important to note that there are several trade-offs to consider when determining the long-term configuration of Main Avenue. Conversion to a two-way street would support a pedestrian-friendly and retail-supportive environment by calming traffic along this primary retail street, and promoting local circulation; access to businesses along Main Avenue; and a more intuitive navigation for visitors. The community perceives two-way streets as safer and strongly supports converting one-way streets to two-way streets in Downtown. However, such a conversion may create more traffic conflicts because one-way streets are more efficient than two-way streets for overall auto circulation within Downtowns. One-way streets also increase traffic capacity; reduce conflicts between pedestrians, bicycles and motor vehicles at intersections; allow for a more efficient operation of traffic signals; reduce stops, delays and emissions; and provide easy access to and from Downtown.

Pedestrian crossings should be signalized where feasible within Downtown to accommodate safety and comfort.
2.11 Provide a pedestrian and bicycle connection between the Riverpoint Campus and the South University District across the railroad tracks. Depending upon the final alignment of the Riverside Avenue extension, a bridge could span both the railroad tracks and Riverside Avenue to provide a strong link within the University District and open the South University District for development.

Wall Street Pedestrian Zone Conversion
2.12 Allow automobile access to the existing pedestrian mall along Wall Street. Continue to prioritize the pedestrian with distinct signage, additional public art, and other pedestrian amenities. Use removable bollards to restrict traffic to accommodate live entertainment and other events that activate the street. Coordinate designs with transit improvements at the STA Plaza.

Centennial Trail

The Centennial Trail is an important transportation and recreational resource for Spokane. Its most concentrated usage is in the Downtown area.

2.13 Maintain and improve the existing Centennial Trail as a major pedestrian and bicycle east-west link from the Downtown Core to nearby residential neighborhoods, Riverpoint Campus, Gonzaga University, and the Kendall Yards Area. Improve and expand connections to neighborhoods with signage, landscaping, and other amenities.
MAP 5.3 CIRCULATION

- Tax Parcels
- Downtown Boundary
- Two-Way Street
- One-Way Street
- One-Way Direction
- Two-Way Conversion
- Potential Two-Way Conversion

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Bridge Design
2.14 Any bridge construction or renovation should be consistent with the street’s Complete Street designation (see “Complete Streets” in Section 1.0, Streetscape and Public Space Improvements) and maintain or improve the existing level of pedestrian amenities.

2.15 Maintain the historic character of existing bridges, such as the Monroe Street Bridge.

2.16 Lighting at bridge crossings should be designed to highlight their character and provide a visual connection between Downtown and the adjacent neighborhoods.

Rapid Transit
2.17 Ensure that street standards, land uses and building placement support the facilities and services needed along transit routes to make transit viable.

2.18 Provide transit shelters, bus benches, and other features that support transit use in key locations, such as where transit use is especially needed.

2.19 Establish and measure transit levels of service to meet concurrency requirements and assure that transit can compete with other transportation modes within 20 years, as outlined in the Regional Transportation Plan.

2.20 Promote the development of future light rail from Coeur d’Alene to the Airport, serving Downtown along Riverside Avenue. Bus rapid transit (BRT) could provide service along these alignments until light rail is implemented.

2.21 Establish street design parameters (i.e., median width, lane width, sidewalk width, on-street parking) so that new development along the future rail line can be designed in anticipation of future needs.

2.22 Provide for three future light rail stops in the Downtown along Riverside Avenue at:
   1. Riverpoint Campus
   2. Riverside at Bernard Street (near the Intermodal Center)
   3. Riverside at Wall Street (STA Plaza)

Bus Circulation/Service
2.23 Retain the STA Plaza as a central transfer center, but not as a timed transfer center. Physical improvements are needed at the Plaza, such as reconfiguring bus bays on Sprague and Riverside Avenues, widening the sidewalk on Sprague Avenue, and adding new bus bays on Wall Street.

2.24 Bus routes destined to key employment generators should have shorter headways, specifically during the peak hours, to accommodate commuter travel and to increase ridership.

2.25 Implement transit signal prioritization along select corridors within and approaching the Downtown (i.e. Division Street) to improve transit travel time.

2.26 Install bus shelters, street lighting, and other transit amenities at select bus stops within Downtown that have the highest number of boardings.

Streetcar System (See Map 5.4)
The Spokane Streetcar Feasibility Study1 identified a streetcar transit capital improvement project and two potential alignments through the Downtown Plan Study Area. DKS Associates suggests that this concept could be integrated as an extension of the Downtown circulator short-term strategy discussed in the University District/Downtown Spokane Transportation Improvement Plan2, which could initiate the development of a long-term fixed-rail Downtown circulator concept. However, further studies are in progress regarding the most appropriate application of a streetcar concept to Downtown Spokane and appropriate alignments; as well as how to integrate future rail systems efficiently into the fabric of Downtown Spokane.

North-South Streetcar Line

2.27 The existing north-south trolley bus system could be expanded to connect the Medical District through the Downtown Core to the North Bank, the Arena and Kendall Yards and Riverpoint Campus. Further study may be required to determine the feasibility of converting from a bus system to an electric streetcar along Howard Street through Riverfront Park; but this could provide both a functional transportation connection to the Spokane Arena and the North Bank as well as an exciting attraction to Downtown and Riverfront Park with minimal pollution impacts. The current capacity study of Spokane’s bridges will help to determine whether Howard or Post Street provides a better crossing of the Spokane River. Connect the Medical District and the University District with a shuttle-type transportation service.

East-West Trolley Lines

2.28 An east-west streetcar system could connect Browne’s Addition through the Downtown Core to the Riverpoint Campus. The alignment could include a streetcar couplet on First and Sprague Avenues between Browne’s Addition and Post Street, a three-block north-south segment on Post between First and Main Avenues, and a two-way streetcar operation on Main Avenue (assuming a future conversion of Main Avenue to two-way operations). Alignments along Riverside Avenue and Spokane Falls Boulevard should also be explored. When coupled with the north-south alignment, the streetcar system would provide clean and reliable circulation through the Downtown and provide key connections between Downtown districts and mutual influence areas.

Bicycle System

The bicycle system objectives of this Plan Update are intended to efficiently move bicycles into and around Downtown by linking existing bicycle routes, and increasing bicycle facilities.

Downtown Bikeways

2.29 Develop a system of bikeways through Downtown along pedestrian oriented “Complete Streets” connecting to existing bicycle routes in the City and the Centennial Trail, along the Spokane River. Bikeways within the City of Spokane include any facility designed to accommodate bicycles such as a path, lane or shared roadway. The proposed Downtown bicycle system includes the following routes and bikeway facilities:

- Centennial Trail
- Howard Street through Riverfront Park
- University District railroad crossing

**Bicycle Lane:** The bicycle lane framework would link the following network of key Downtown roadways:

- Main Avenue between Monroe and Pine Streets (eastbound)
- Spokane Falls Boulevard from Hamilton Street to Monroe Street (westbound)
- Howard Street between Fourth Avenue and Spokane Falls Boulevard; between Mallon and Maxwell Avenues
- Jefferson Street between Fourth Street and Riverside Avenue (northbound/southbound)
- Riverside Avenue between Monroe and Maple Streets; and from Division Street along the Riverside Avenue extension to the west (eastbound/westbound)
- Bridge Street/Ida Street between Adams and Monroe Street (eastbound/westbound)
- Sherman Street from Fifth Avenue to Pacific Avenue (northbound/southbound)
- Fourth and Fifth Avenues between Jefferson and Sherman Streets (eastbound/westbound)
- Second Avenue through Downtown (westbound)

**Shared Bicycle Route:** Shared Bicycle Routes are motor vehicle roadways that are designated as a route for bicyclists.
MAP 5.5 BICYCLE IMPROVEMENTS

- Existing Multi-use Path
- Proposed Multi-use Path
- Proposed Bike Lane
- Proposed Shared Route
- Proposed External Bike Connection
- Long-term Bike Improvements
- Parcels
- Parks
- Spokane River
- Study Area
- Railroads
- Interstate
- Potential Ped/Bike Bridge

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Interstate
Railroads
Existing Multi-use Path
Proposed Multi-use Path
Proposed Bike Lane
Proposed Shared Route
Proposed External Bike Connection
Long-term Bike Improvements
Parcels
Parks
Spokane River
Study Area
Railroads
Interstate
Potential Ped/Bike Bridge

0 500 1,000 Feet

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To North Spokane
To Mission Park
To East Spokane
To Riverside State Park
To High Bridge Park
To Fish Lake Trail

Centennial Trail

Fast Forward Spokane
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with signs and/or roadway markings, and fill a gap in the bicycle lane network.

- Mallon Avenue between Howard and Lincoln Streets
- Lincoln Street/Post Street north from the Post Street Bridge
- Pine Street between Riverside and Trent Avenue
- Riverpoint Boulevard between Spokane Falls Boulevard and the Centennial Trail
- McClellan Street south from Sherman Street

**External Bicycle Connections:**
In addition to the bikeway facilities described above, future external bicycle connections need to be considered to support anticipated future needs of bicycle commuters:

- West along Second Avenue to Fish Lake Trail; Main Avenue to High Bridge Park; and Bridge Avenue to Riverside State Park
- North along Howard Street to North Spokane
- Northeast to Mission Park and Iron Bridge
- East along Trent Avenue to East Spokane
- Southeast to Liberty Park, Ben Burr Trail and Underhill Park
- South to South Hill, South Spokane and Southeast Boulevard

2.30 Provide adequate City of Spokane staff dedicated to pedestrian/bicycle planning, coordination, education, and encouragement; to ensure that projects are developed that meet the safety, access, and transportation needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-motorized modes of transportation. Implement Comprehensive Plan policy that calls for a Pedestrian/Bicycle Coordinator in the City.

2.31 Provide sufficient short and long-term bicycle parking facilities throughout Downtown and explore provision of other end-of-trip facilities (showers, changing rooms, lockers, etc.) at key destinations in Downtown; such as secured locations within parking structures. Mechanisms may include public subsidy, financial incentives, and/or regulatory incentives.

2.32 When roadways are being repaved, reconstructed, and/or new signals are being implemented; special consideration should be taken to consider bike facility development. For example, Loop detectors can be placed in the bicycle travel lane to provide bicycle detection at traffic signals. Establish a coordination policy on rehabilitation projects to consider striping bicycle lanes on City-designated routes before authorizing rehabilitation/reconstruction.

2.33 Require new developments to provide bicycle parking with each new building or redevelopment project. For example, the City may coordinate with major employers to provide bicycle parking.

**Loading and Service Access**

2.34 Ensure that commercial and office areas have adequate access to facilities for deliveries and refuse collection.

**Accessibility**

2.35 Ensure that all public spaces Downtown meet or exceed Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards.

**PARKING**

2.36 Continue to implement the recommendations of the Downtown Parking Demand Study (2005).

2.37 Institute an advanced parking management system with Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) to increase efficiency and ease of use of parking supply in Downtown including, but not limited to:

- Consolidated Parking Meter Pay Stations (one to two per block face)
- Parking Guidance Systems
- Standardized Parking Access Signage

2.38 Assess parking supply and demand in the West End.

**Strategic Parking Management**

2.39 Continue support for the Parking Steering Committee and the active role of the Business Improvement District (BID) in parking issues.
2.40 Explore a local improvement district (LID) for Downtown to raise revenue for short-term off-street parking facilities.

2.41 Establish an Entertainment Parking District to support parking turn-over and customer service in the Davenport District.

2.42 Examine the feasibility of establishing a transportation management area (TMA) for Downtown or specific districts to encourage non single occupancy vehicle trips and implement transportation demand management (TDM) strategies.

Public Parking Structures

2.43 Develop additional off-street parking structures for short-term parking Downtown while encouraging long-term parking on the periphery of Downtown. Continue to connect the peripheral parking to the Downtown Core with the trolley system and pedestrian links. Continue the CityTicket program.

On-Street Parking

2.44 Prioritize on-street parking for short-term users such as shoppers and office visitors. Increase supply of on-street parking on selected streets as noted in the 2008 University District/Downtown Transportation study.

Private Parking

2.45 Explore the creation of spaces/payment structure for motorcycles, mopeds, and neighborhood electric vehicles (NEVs).

2.46 Encourage property owners to provide on-site parking for customers, residents and visitors and to promote alternative commute modes for Downtown employees.

2.47 Explore programs to help offset, share, and otherwise reduce the cost of providing parking for residential development in Downtown to make such developments more financially attractive.

2.48 Coordinate a joint marketing message on pricing of private off-street facilities.

Design Standards

2.49 Improve design standards for parking structures to make them more aesthetically pleasing and pedestrian-friendly. Integrate street-level commercial uses into parking structures to enhance street activity.

2.50 Improve design standards for surface parking lots to incorporate landscaping and pedestrian and bicycle amenities.

Car Sharing

2.51 Investigate car sharing options and timing for Spokane with a first phase focusing on Downtown. Work with existing car rental companies as an interim strategy.
3.0 GATEWAYS, SIGNAGE, & WAYFINDING

A gateway, signage, and wayfinding program will inform residents and visitors of the existence and location of community services, recreational opportunities, retail shops, restaurants, campuses, parking, restrooms, and other information. A signage and gateway program will also support the creation of a cohesive identity for Downtown and its sub-districts. A successful signage scheme has been implemented in many other communities of various sizes. A clear hierarchy should be established to provide both directional and identification signage.

Gateway features are related to signage in helping to identify Downtown Spokane and signal the start of a unique area. Such features can be created through a combination of landscaping, directional signage, lighting, public art, and building design. They can range from subtle to monumental in scale, but all gateways should fit with the overall character and image of surrounding development and Downtown Spokane.
CHAPTER FIVE DOWNTOWN STRATEGIES

MAP 5.6 GATEWAYS & INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

Gateway
Major Gateway
Underpass Enhancements
Ped/Bike Bridge Addition/Enhancement
Downtown Boundary

FAST FORWARD SPOKANE DOWNTOWN PLAN UPDATE

June 2008
OBJECTIVES

The gateways, signage, and wayfinding objectives of this Plan Update are to establish a clear identity and positive image for the Downtown. Gateways should signal entry into Downtown or a sub-district while a variety of signage may help brand different areas. Wayfinding for all modes of travel will help visitors navigate the Downtown easily and safely.

STRATEGIES

Entries and Gateways

Interstate Gateways

3.1 Create and maintain attractive, landscaped, and lighted gateways at major exits from Interstate 90. Design and construct an attractive signed entry gateway at the major Interstate 90 gateway entry into Downtown. Gateway signage may be installed in the vicinity of other Interstate 90 Downtown ramps outside of WSDOT right-of-way; a maximum of two entrance markers (one in each direction) are allowed. 4

3  See WSDOT’s Roadside Classification Plan for regulations

Downtown Entries and Gateways

3.2 Create attractive, well-landscaped, lighted and signed entry gateways into the Downtown. Entry gateway features should be created along major arterials extending from Interstate 90 through the Downtown and at major intersections, including the following:

First Priority Entries:
- Division and Interstate 90
- Stevens and Spokane Falls Boulevard
- Monroe Street Bridge

Second Priority Entries:
- Lincoln or Walnut and Interstate 90
- Monroe and Boone
- Howard and Boone
- Division and Boone
- Division Street Bridge
- Spokane Falls Boulevard Bridge

Enhanced Underpasses of Railroad Viaduct:
- Division and Railroad Viaduct
- Lincoln and Railroad Viaduct
- Walnut and Railroad Viaduct

3.3 The Division Street interchange off of Interstate 90 is a major entry point into Downtown Spokane. Improve Division Street with landscaping, signage, and lighting, creating an attractive entry boulevard from Interstate 90 through the Downtown.

3.4 Prohibit new billboard advertisements in the Downtown Core.

3.5 Prohibit new dynamic full-color digital signs within Downtown Spokane.

3.6 Encourage preservation of existing painted signs on the sides of buildings in Downtown. Consider allowing new painted signs on buildings with appropriate design/content review.

3.7 Implement banner management strategies with placement priorities including replacing light poles Downtown with “banner-friendly” poles; continue banner maintenance strategy; and begin process of establishing new brand for the Downtown banners.

Wayfinding

3.8 Continue implementing new directional signage for parking.

3.9 Establish and install a hierarchy of wayfinding signage for the Downtown for bicyclists, motorists, and pedestrians that clearly delineate Downtown Districts, directions and distance to major attractions.
4.0 INFRASTRUCTURE

The modern city requires infrastructure for transportation, water, sewer, and communications networks. Older facilities are in need of repair and upgrade, while new demand for fast telecommunications requires the addition of new lines to the underground network. Communications infrastructure is critical to development of the South University District and Riverpoint Campus.

OBJECTIVE
The infrastructure objective of this Plan Update is to provide information technology, water, sewer, and wastewater services to support Downtown businesses and residents.

STRATEGIES

Street Infrastructure
4.1 Coordinate resurfacing and other street and stormwater improvements with the implementation of other improvements (e.g., Complete Streets) detailed in this Plan Update.
4.2 Weigh costs and benefits of investments in alternative modes of transportation as a means to avoid increasing roadway capacity.
4.3 Fix deteriorating sidewalks and enforce sidewalk maintenance ordinances.

Communications Infrastructure
4.4 Continue providing latest information technology infrastructure to Downtown.

Water and Wastewater Infrastructure
4.5 Improve the sewer system, storm, drainage, and flood control systems as needed to support Downtown development. Minimize or eliminate need for high cost upgrades and retrofits by adopting sustainable methods, such as re-use, detention of roof runoff into the combined sewer system, and routing of clean water to clean water drains.
4.6 Improve water systems as needed to support Downtown development. Minimize the need for upgrades and retrofits through conservation, reuse, detention, etc.

Bridges
4.7 Add new pedestrian/bicycle bridge connections along Grant Street corridor across the railroad in the University District and on a lower deck of the Maple Street Bridge.
4.8 Explore addition of a streetcar connection on the Howard Street Bridge through Riverfront Park (or other bridges).

4.9 Explore possible solutions to maintain vehicular access to and across the Post Street Bridge.

Coordination of Improvements
4.10 Support the City’s effort to coordinate infrastructure installment.

The Washington Water Power building just north of Spokane City Hall is currently in use by Avista Corp.
5.0 HOUSING

Since the 1999 Plan, the Downtown Spokane housing stock has become more diverse. Condominiums and apartments are being added to a mix that was dominated by multi-family rental units targeted for low income and elderly occupancy. While it is important to continue to meet the housing needs of Spokane’s low income and elderly populations, Downtown can benefit from a continued increase in market rate housing. While the housing market has weakened in the last year, the apartment market and the long-term outlook for all segments and types of housing in Downtown continue to be strong and, therefore, should remain a primary focus of the Plan Update for Downtown.

OBJECTIVE

The housing objective of this Plan Update is to provide Downtown housing that meets the needs of a wide range of consumers, from publicly-subsidized, affordable housing to luxury units. Increasing the number and diversity of Downtown residents will help to support retail and neighborhood services, and generate day and night activity in Downtown Spokane. Improving the live-work balance (people choosing to live near employment or education) will decrease automobile use, congestion, pollution, and the need for additional roadway capacity.

STRATEGIES

5.1 Create new and promote existing incentive programs to encourage residential rehab and infill projects in the Downtown, such as loan, grant or tax abatement programs for redevelopment in target areas and renovation of historic properties.

5.2 Continue to support the development of an affordable market for market-rate and high-end Downtown housing to create a more balanced spectrum of residential opportunities in Downtown Spokane.

5.3 Promote housing with a wide array of dwelling sizes to accommodate single-person households to families moving to and staying in Downtown Spokane.

5.4 Continue to work with public, private, and non-profit housing developers to create affordable housing options available Downtown and on the periphery. Leverage public, private, state, and federal funds to renovate deteriorated buildings and support local land use and regulatory incentives.

5.5 Use federal and local historic district designation to create opportunities for federal rehabilitation tax credits.

5.6 Provide density bonuses for development projects with an affordable housing component.

5.7 Establish a consortium of local lenders to facilitate the financing of housing Downtown.

5.8 Promote residential development in the Kendall Yards and South University District mixed-use urban village areas.

5.9 Continue to provide home improvement loans and down payment assistance programs.

5.10 Strive to provide neighborhood amenities for residents of Downtown including parks, plazas, schools, a grocery store, and locally-serving commercial uses.

5.11 Promote and support a variety of off-campus student housing.

5.12 Update the Downtown housing demand study to aid developers, lenders, and investors in understanding the depth and breadth of the market potential.
CHAPTER FIVE  DOWNTOWN STRATEGIES

6.0 ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

A major emphasis of community members during the process to prepare the Plan Update was on environmental stewardship. Environmental stewardship in Downtown Spokane includes protection of the Spokane River, Gorge and shoreline, responsible management of storm water runoff, support of the local food shed, mitigation of heat island effects, use of renewable energy sources, integration of sustainable building materials and technologies, decreasing dependency on the automobile, waste reduction and recycling, and improved live-work balance (see earlier sections).

OBJECTIVES

The environmental stewardship objectives of this Plan Update are to protect, maintain, and enhance the environmental quality and natural resources within and around Downtown Spokane for current and future generations.

STRATEGIES

Water Quality

6.1 Implement the recommendations in the Great Spokane River Gorge Strategic Master Plan.

6.2 Implement the recommendations and policies outlined in the Shoreline Master Program as it relates to water quality issues and challenges in Downtown.

6.3 Include sustainable stormwater techniques in all new street and street resurfacing projects.

6.4 Encourage on-site use of stormwater and provide incentives for rainwater catchment and gray water systems.

6.5 Revise tree and planting list to ensure landscaping is climate-appropriate and requires minimal irrigation.

6.6 Allow public-private partnerships for responsibility of stormwater management.

Food Systems

6.7 Support local farmers markets, public markets, and community supported agriculture (CSA) programs.

6.8 Encourage use of locally-produced food in Downtown restaurants.

6.9 Encourage urban agriculture and community gardens, especially in mixed use urban village areas like Kendall Yards and the South University District.

Climate Change Mitigation

6.10 Increase transit ridership, encourage public and non-motorized transit options, walking, bicycling, carpooling, and the use of alternative fuel vehicles.

6.11 Encourage green roofs on new and existing structures within Downtown.

6.12 Encourage planting and maintenance of street trees throughout Downtown Spokane.

Sustainable Construction and Operation

6.13 Encourage sustainable building materials and both active and passive technologies to minimize energy use.

6.14 Explore systematic provision of renewable energy sources and promote integration of renewable energy technologies in new development and renovations.

6.15 Promote energy-efficient materials and supplies for use in building maintenance and operations.

6.16 Adopt a policy that all new City-owned or -occupied buildings must be LEED® certified, and existing buildings be programmed to move towards and achieve certification when and where feasible.

Waste Reduction and Recycling

6.17 Develop a comprehensive waste reduction and recycling program for the Downtown that includes purchasing green products, encouraging compostable bags, sidewalk and curbside recycling, and composting.
7.0 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic development is the process of intervening in the local economy to promote its health, stability, and sustainability. A healthy economy is based on sustainable growth in jobs and income. A healthy economy also generates governmental revenues that support the community facilities and services needed and desired by residents. Downtown Spokane should continue to foster and support creativity and innovation to retain and attract the best and brightest businesses and employees.

Economic development tools can also help to retain and attract businesses to an area. There are many avenues for business support, such as the existing Business Improvement District (BID), the City’s Economic Development Division, and Greater Spokane Incorporated, the merged entity formerly operating as the Spokane Regional Chamber of Commerce and the Spokane Area Economic Development Council. Other economic development tools include programs that market and promote Downtown, programs that provide services such as technical assistance and low-interest loans to businesses, and state designation of the University District as an Innovative Partnership Zone.

OBJECTIVES

The economic development objectives of this Plan Update are to retain existing Downtown businesses and attract new businesses to Downtown Spokane to extend the Downtown revitalization into the University District and accelerate the developing academic health center at the Riverpoint Campus; and to create a vibrant commercial sector supported by employees in Downtown offices and retail establishments, as well as visitors from the rest of the City, region, and out of town.

STRATEGIES

Downtown Business Development Strategy

7.1 Implement a comprehensive Downtown Business Development Plan with a set of integrated programs to attract new economic activity and retain existing businesses Downtown.

7.2 Periodically conduct market studies to stay abreast of emerging opportunities for Downtown Spokane.
CHAPTER FIVE  DOWNTOWN STRATEGIES

Retail Strategy
7.3 Develop a comprehensive retail strategy for the Downtown that differentiates between the various concentrations and pockets of retail and entertainment uses to prevent competition between districts.

Business Development
Business Retention and Recruitment
7.4 Expand and aggressively promote technical assistance programs for business retention and development. The program should target a broad range of business types and sizes, from large, established companies to small, start-up operations.

7.5 Explore a program to provide direct and indirect financial support (e.g., rent assistance, marketing assistance, business support services) to new businesses to increase chances of success and decrease negative perceptions of struggling businesses and vacant storefronts.

7.6 Promote creation of additional retail, office, and research incubation space in Downtown Spokane.

Marketing
7.7 Develop a cooperative marketing and Downtown promotion campaign with Greater Spokane Incorporated (GSI), the City, the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB), the Downtown Spokane Partnership (DSP) and Business Improvement District (BID), Riverpoint Campus, and University District, utilizing the Spokane: Near nature. Near perfect. regional brand.

Emerging Clusters
7.8 Promote high-tech biomedical, medical technology, and other business clusters in Downtown Spokane.

7.9 Provide targeted neighborhood economic development funding for wealth-generating activity consistent with Neighborhood Plans.

7.10 Provide strong support for growing the biomedical/health/life sciences innovation enterprise centered on the Riverpoint Campus.

Public-Private Partnerships
7.11 Utilize existing groups, such as the BID, to coordinate Downtown projects and programs such as special events, advertising, and parking programs.

New Resources
Tax Increment Financing
7.12 Utilize the new tax increment district that includes Kendall Yards and a large portion of the West Central Neighborhood and the power to utilize tax increment financing (TIF) to support development of Kendall Yards, the South University District, and redevelopment/public improvements in developed areas.

Convention Center Expansion
7.13 Support and promote the expansion of the Spokane Convention Center on the block south of the current facility, which is bounded by Spokane Falls Boulevard, Main Avenue, Washington, and Bernard Streets.

Downtown Public Market
7.14 Create a public market on a Downtown site that would support residential uses and attract visitors from across the region. The market could be seasonal, weekly, and/or daily, depending on the demand.

Downtown Grocery Store
7.15 Encourage the development of at least one full-line grocery store in Downtown.
CHAPTER FIVE  DOWNTOWN STRATEGIES

8.0 ARTS, CULTURE, & ENTERTAINMENT

Downtowns are traditionally the cultural centers of cities, bringing people together for a “night on the town.” The INB Performing Arts Center, Fox Theater, Bing Crosby Theater, play houses, live entertainment, the Spokane Arena, theaters, and Riverfront Park offer numerous opportunities for sampling exciting events Downtown.

OBJECTIVES

The arts, culture, and entertainment objectives of this Plan Update are to foster and support an exciting mix of traditional and innovative art forms; to take pride in the rich cultural character of Downtown, and to celebrate creativity, diversity, and understanding through participation in the arts. Downtown should provide adequate facilities for performance, exhibition, readings, and other events.

STRATEGIES

Public Museum

8.1 Encourage and promote the development of a public museum Downtown including focus-specific museums for children, art, science and technology, and river environments. Science and technology museums have been particularly successful in other major cities and would complement the growing high tech sector of Spokane’s economy. The new Mobius Science Museum is a compelling destination project that will likely be developed on the North Bank.

Street Artists and Public Art

8.2 Support and encourage street artists, musicians, and public art in Downtown Spokane.

Live-Work Options

8.3 Encourage lofts and live-work units, especially in transitioning areas, to encourage artists and other crafts people to locate Downtown and in the University District.

Davenport District

8.4 Support continued development and redevelopment in the Davenport District centered along First Avenue adjacent to the Steam Plant.

Spokane Arts Commission

8.5 Support the Spokane Arts Commission in efforts to develop arts programs, festivals, and public outreach and education in Downtown.

Art Galleries

8.6 Continue to support local artists and galleries through efforts like the First Friday art walk.
9.0 MANAGEMENT, MARKETING, & PROGRAMMING

The Downtown Spokane Partnership (DSP) and the Business Improvement District (BID) are primarily responsible for management, marketing, and programming in Downtown Spokane. These functions are critical to a successful Downtown.

OBJECTIVES
The management, marketing, and programming objectives of this Plan Update are to ensure that the Downtown remains a safe and inviting destination and home for visitors, businesses, and residents.

STRATEGIES

Management
9.1 Continue police enforcement services through the City of Spokane.

9.2 Continue implementation of the BID to fund clean, safe, marketing, and parking programs in the Downtown Core to BID Ratepayers.

9.3 Continue the City’s new street tree grant program for new street trees and irrigation. Coordinate with stormwater management techniques for green infrastructure.

9.4 Continue ongoing coordination and advocacy on behalf of Downtown businesses and residents.

9.5 Pursue expansion of the BID boundary to encompass a larger portion of Downtown.

Marketing
9.6 Promote Downtown as a regional destination for both local and regional residents and tourists.

9.7 Conduct periodic consumer surveys to provide insight into usage patterns of Downtown.

9.8 Partner with the Spokane Convention and Visitors Bureau as well as others to maximize promotion of Downtown amenities.

9.9 Continue to provide multi-media promotions and advertisements for Downtown and its many events.

Programming
9.10 Enhance Downtown as a regional center of cultural and entertainment activity through publicity for and creation of events.

9.11 Secure sponsorships for various events and promotions.

The Davenport District is the new hub of arts, culture, and entertainment for the Inland Northwest.
10.0 STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

It is important that the regulatory and administrative frameworks support the vision, goals, and objectives of the Plan Update. As the Community Vision and supporting strategies evolve, so must the standards and design standards.

OBJECTIVES

The standards and guidelines objectives of this Plan Update are to ensure that the development standards and design guidelines for Downtown support the Community Vision and optimize both public and private interests.

STRATEGIES

10.1 Update zoning regulations to require, allow, or prohibit actions as described in the Plan Update.

10.2 Update the Downtown Design Guidelines to facilitate the desired built form objectives and strategies outlined in Chapter Four.