

2024 state of downtown report

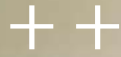
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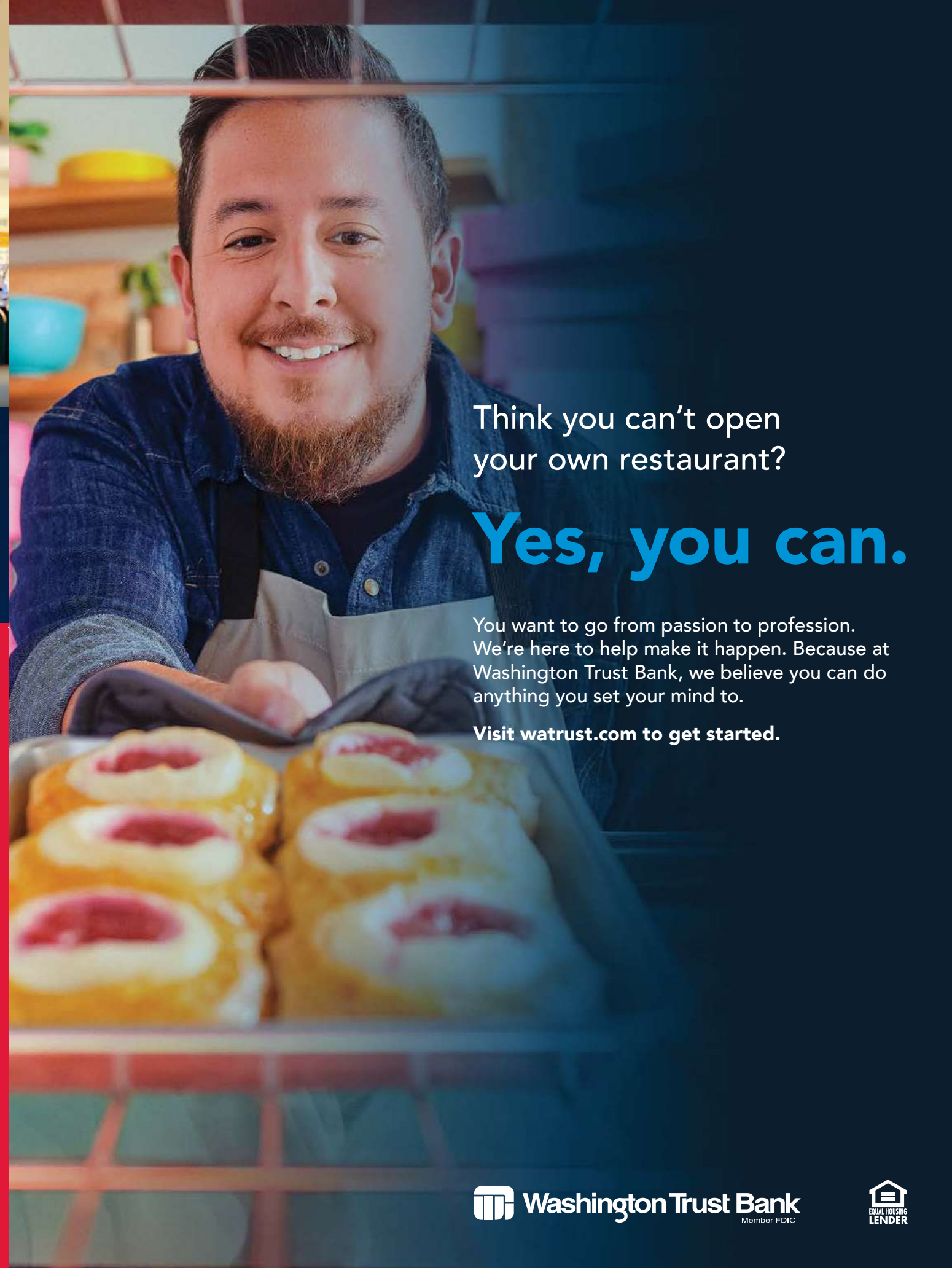
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**6** The Future of Cities | Interview with Carol Ross Barney

### COMMUNITY IS DOWNTOWN

**7** Seizing Our Opportunity

**8** Announcing Downtown Spokane's Best in BID Award Winners

### BIG IDEAS ARE DOWNTOWN

**10** Why Not Spokane? Expo '74's Lasting Effect on Tourism

**14** The Perfect (Soccer) Match: Spokane Velocity FC & ONE Spokane Stadium

### BUSINESS IS DOWNTOWN

**16** Why Offices in Downtown Spokane Still Have Appeal

**18** Inclusive Development Council: Objectives & Focus for 2024

### DEVELOPMENT IS DOWNTOWN

**20** Spokane Development Map

**22** Innovating Together: Spokane's Tech-Forward Economic Resilience

**26** Historic Preservation: A Catalyst for New Housing Units in Downtown Spokane

**28** Downtown Spokane's Residential Renaissance

### PEOPLE ARE DOWNTOWN

**31** Downtown is a Family Favorite

**32** Indaba Coffee: Love People, Love Coffee

**34** Perspectives from a Downtown Resident

### CONNECTION IS DOWNTOWN

**36** Exploring Spokane

**38** Pedaling Through Spokane

### PARTNERSHIP IS DOWNTOWN

**40** DSP Board/Membership

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# THE FUTURE OF CITIES

interview with award-winning architect carol ross barney

Famed architect Carol Ross Barney, keynote speaker at Spokane's 2024 State of Downtown, is renowned for her work in creating exceptional public spaces that enhance urban environments – such as the beautiful Chicago Riverwalk in her hometown – and for her keen insights on the future of cities.

She is the recipient of the 2023 American Institute of Architects Gold Medal and has garnered more than 200 major design awards throughout her 50-year career.

Events from Ross Barney's childhood, such as JFK's inauguration address, fueled her desire to change the world instead of waiting around for others to do it.

She had always loved making things and planned to be an artist, but the more she thought about it, she realized she could have a greater impact by creating spaces that would make people feel good about their lives.

“today 56% of people live in cities, and by 2050, that number will jump to 70%”

“A lot of times, architects and people who make buildings wait to be told to make buildings sustainable,” said Ross Barney. “We can't wait anymore. We have to do this. This has to be a basic value.”

What's exciting for Ross Barney about speaking in cities like Spokane is the ripple effect it creates. “My own projects make an impact. But as a group, if we can talk about what we need to do together, it's much more powerful. If I do one sustainable building, you have one sustainable building. But if I make people interested in sustainability and they ALL go do one, you could have an infinite number.”

Cities continue to be the future of our society and how we live together. Today 56% of people live in cities, and by 2050, that number will jump to 70%. Not only are cities dense, diverse, and remarkable, they are energy centers and dollar centers, producing about 80% of the world's Gross Domestic Product.

When asked whether communities like Spokane should lean into density, Ross Barney said we can't afford not to. Cities are where we can live most effectively in terms of both energy efficiency and intellectual energy. When you combine the great products and ideas coming from cities with sustainable design, you have an equitable place to live that's good for both people and the planet.

“I firmly believe that cities are our future and the 21st century – our century – will be the century of the city,” said Ross Barney.

When people hear the word “density,” they may think of cities like Tokyo with 30 million people living in one spot. Those are not the cities Ross Barney is talking about. The cities she wants to improve the designs of and make better for people are mid-sized cities like Spokane. She said, “I think, in the end, they may be the most livable cities we can make.”

Ross Barney went to see her guidance counselor at her Catholic Girls High School and said, “Sister, I think I want to be an architect.” She didn't hear “girls aren't architects” or “wouldn't you rather be an interior designer?” Sister told her, “OK, I'll find out what schools you should apply to.”

“I've never looked back,” said Ross Barney. “I love what I do. And I'm still really fascinated by the idea of making space for people.”

Ross Barney believes the future of cities is all about concentrating on the existential challenge of our time, which is sustainability and climate change. Radical sustainability is needed for cities to be safer – to have cleaner water and cleaner air – and every little thing we do or don't do affects that. Sustainability is also key in making cities equitable and resilient against climate threats.

There are many facets to cities tackling sustainability, starting with how designers specify projects.



## SEIZING OUR OPPORTUNITY

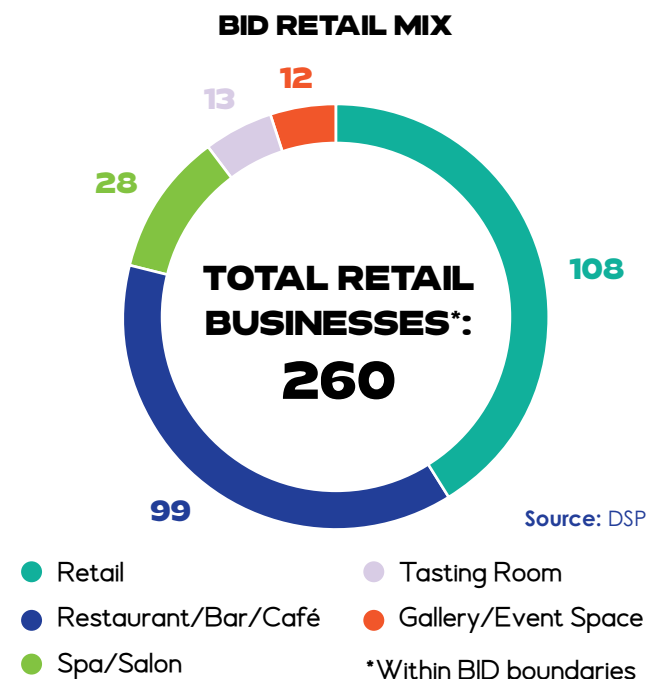
By Emilie Cameron, President & CEO of the Downtown Spokane Partnership

Downtown is special. It's a hub for activity and the anchor for our region.

Our identity, economic health and civic pride are fundamentally intertwined with the health of downtown Spokane. After the pandemic put a freeze on downtown's primary advantage as a place where people and ideas come together, intersect and spark innovation, it's finally thawing and downtown Spokane is finding itself in a moment of unprecedented opportunity.

From Gen Z to Millennials and Boomers, the research is showing they're still attracted to downtown and the diverse, sustainable lifestyle it provides. With the traditional office ecosystem transforming to flexible, creative new destinations to attract employees, today there's a necessity to expand and create new amenities, like active storefronts filled with restaurants and immersive retail, creative civic spaces, and a neighborhood where residents can also thrive.

As downtown Spokane evolves into a multi-dimensional mixed-

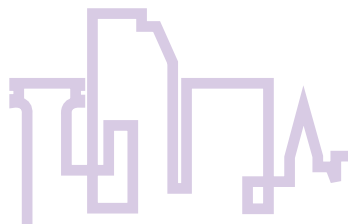


use neighborhood, there will be more demand for housing and programming. Activity creates exciting, positive occasions for everyone to re-experience the heart of our region. Already in 2024, downtown has hosted the return of beloved traditions like Bloomsday and the Lilac Festival, in addition to new and exciting events from the return of NCAA basketball playoffs at Spokane Veterans Memorial Arena, world championships in The Podium and the inaugural season of high school sports and professional soccer at ONE Spokane Stadium.

Amid all this excitement, we understand the most critical ingredients in reviving a strong downtown continue to be an environment that is clean, safe and welcoming. As the manager of the Business Improvement District (BID), the Downtown Spokane Partnership is uniquely positioned to provide the services that ensure everyone enjoys our great downtown. Like the more than 1,000 similar business improvement districts across the country, BID-funded services and programs ensure that the people that work, live, visit and recreate in our district can flourish.

We continue to work closely with city and regional elected officials, community and civic leaders, property owners, commercial tenants, residents, and nonprofits to adopt policies, investment and support that can enhance Spokane's urban core and continue to fuel our regional economy.

The DSP is honored to continue our mission of building a better place to live, work and do business for all. Our future is bright together.



## announcing downtown spokane's best in bid award winners

Spokane residents have voted for who they think is best-of-the-best in downtown. Check out the winners of the second annual "Best in BID" Awards and make plans to visit them all soon.

### friendliest staff: **first avenue coffee**

Coffee is always the best way to start the day, especially when served by the friendly staff at First Avenue Coffee. Much like their impressive 40-foot-long coffee bar, their welcoming vibes are boundless ... because their team believes that kindness (and damn good coffee) is their gift to the community. Inside their vibrant coffee shop, you can connect, share stories, and treat your tastebuds to everything from classic coffee beverages to seasonal concoctions and hand-made goodies. Earth-friendly too, their coffee is 100% organic, shade grown, Rainforest Alliance Certified, ethically traded, bird friendly, and locally roasted by Roast House Coffee.

### most community involved: **auntie's bookstore**

Auntie's Bookstore, located on the corner of Main and Washington, is Spokane's favorite literary landmark, carrying both new and used books (including books from your local authors), gifts and Spokane specialty items. In true most-community-involved form, they offer a variety of events for the public, including book clubs for every interest, story times, author events, book signings, workshops and so much more.

### most unique menu: **indigenous eats**

Hunters and gatherers alike won't have to search too hard to find a unique and delicious meal: just head to Indigenous Eats on the third floor of River Park Square. Serving contemporary Native American comfort food inspired by the rich culture and tradition of Indigenous people, you'll enjoy big flavors (and portions!), with favorites such as NdN tacos with ground beef, ground bison, or vegetarian; or handhelds like the POWWOW Angus beef burger or Chicken Dance Sandwich, served between two frybread buns, complete with huckleberry relish sauce. To serenade your sweet tooth, order a side of frybread sprinkled with powdered sugar ... lightly fried, airy and oh-so-irresistible.

# THE RESULTS ARE IN!

### best late-night hangout spot: **durkin's**

With its speakeasy vibe, intimate basement bar, upscale diner food, and divinely crafted cocktails, it's easy to see why Durkin's Liquor Bar, located at 415 West Main Street, is a favorite late-night hangout spot, whether you start your evening there (and never leave!) or head in after a show. From small plates like grilled chicken wings and crab cakes to heartier fare like Steak Au Poivre or Mushroom Gnocchi with sherry cream, there's something to please every palate. And if you're craving some serious comfort food after a night out, you can't go wrong with Durkin's Famous Double burger, described by fans as "the best burger they've ever had."

### best new business: **house of brunch**

Whether you're in the mood for something sweet, savory, or classic, House of Brunch at 818 West Riverside Avenue is the place to indulge in - dare we say it - the best brunch of your life. Of course, every self-respecting brunch enthusiast knows you need the perfect drink to pair with your meal, and they've got you covered with cocktails, mocktails, bubbles, coffee and more. "To own a restaurant has been a dream of mine since I was a dishwasher at 15 years old, and I have worked in restaurants my entire life towards that goal," said Jackson Connery, Executive Partner/Owner. "To see how much the community supports us and loves what we are doing is incredibly rewarding."

### most instagrammable spot: **emma rue's**

#love. No doubt you'll love the hip ambiance (no filter needed) of Emma Rue's luxe café, offering European-inspired cocktails, artisanal coffee, French wines, and French-inspired desserts and savory bites. Located at 17 South Howard Street, inside the historic Symons Block Building, Emma Rue's is the perfect hub for those looking to satisfy their sweet tooth late in the evening. Regulars rave about their correttos (Italian coffee cocktails) and light, airy cinnamon coffee cake. Be Instagram ready, grab your besties, and join them for live jazz music every Thursday evening.

### best family-friendly spot: **riverfront park**

If you grew up in Spokane, you likely have an old album packed with photos of fun-filled days spent at Riverfront Park: riding the hand-carved Loeff Carrousel (and reaching desperately for a ring!), making friends with the ducks, and feeding the famous metal Garbage Goat. Today this newly renovated 100-acre greenspace continues to be a favorite memory-making spot for families, with attractions and activities to enjoy year-round: a night of skating and hot cocoa at the Numerica Skate Ribbon, a breathtaking view of the Spokane Falls on the Numerica Skyride, or a mesmerizing Pavilion Light Show.

### best hidden gem: **chicken-n-mo**

For regulars of Chicken-N-Mo, located at 414 1/2 West Sprague, it's not so much a hidden gem as a local treasure, one that's been serving up the taste of Texas in Spokane for over 30 years. This small intimate space is big on Southern flavors, from perfectly crispy fried chicken and catfish to meaty, melt-in-your-mouth ribs. (Don't forget the Old South barbeque sauce created by owner Bob Hemphill.) Plus, it has all the sides you can dream of, like hushpuppies, sweet potato tots, greens, beans and rice. As impressive as the food is the Southern hospitality you'll experience every time you visit.

### best breakfast: **satellite diner**

It's said that breakfast is the most important meal of the day ... and at Satellite Diner, it's the most delicious one too. Located at 425 West Sprague Avenue and open seven days a week until 2 a.m. (breakfast for dinner - we're in!), your only challenge will be deciding what to order. Favorites include scratch-made Biscuits and Gravy; Chicken Fried Steak; Eggs Benedict; Joe's Special Burrito made with seasoned ground beef, fresh spinach, parmesan and cream cheese; and the best-selling Satellite Scramble with three eggs, diced ham, German sausage and hash browns. Go crazy and smother it with sausage gravy and cheese.

### best place to check out art: **entropy**

It's easy to get lost inside ENTROPY record store + vintage + art gallery, browsing their hundreds of unique records. But be sure to venture up the spiral staircase of this architectural wonder to the second-floor rotunda to view one-of-a-kind art exhibitions by local artists. While any day is a great day to pop in, why not make it an event and visit during First Friday? This is downtown's weekly art event, where various venues showcase the work of local artists, makers, musicians and more. For more details about First Friday, go to [downtownspokane.org](http://downtownspokane.org).

### best gem for shopping: **boo radley's**

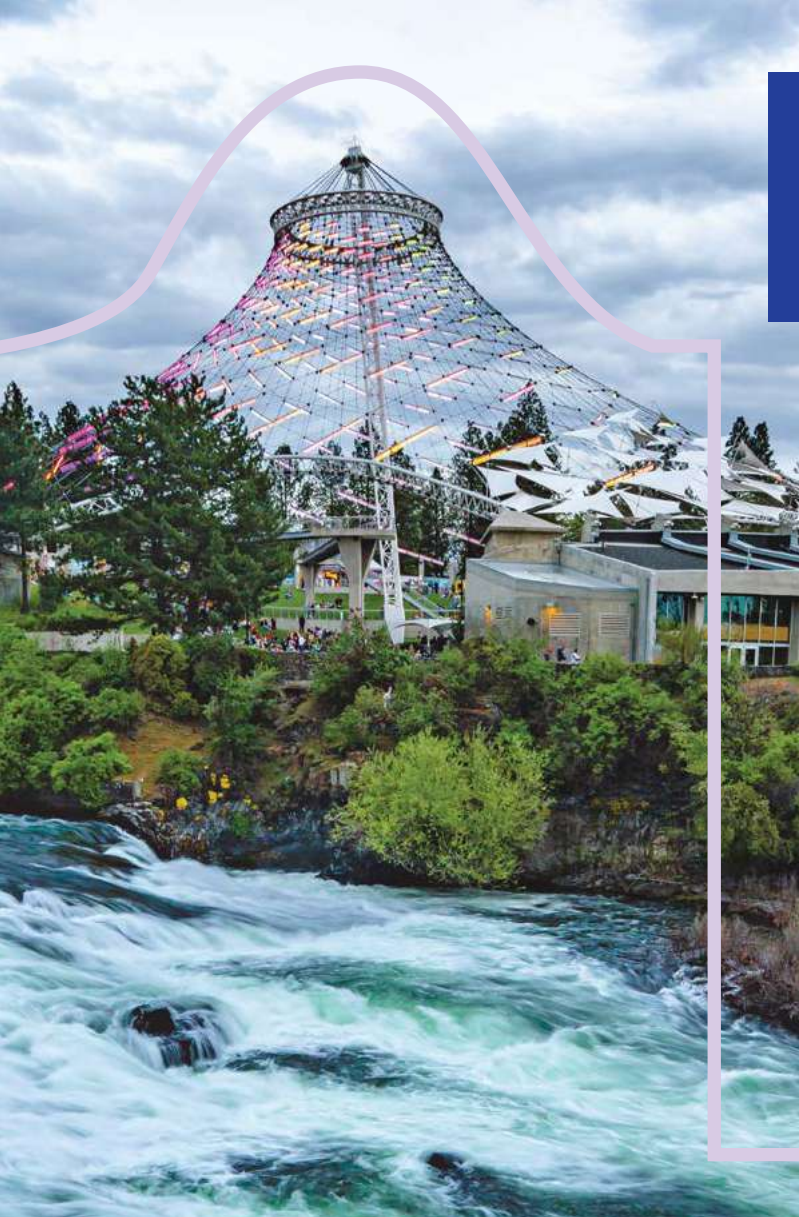
Boo Radley's, named after the eccentric recluse in "To Kill a Mockingbird," has been a beloved shopping gem for both locals and out-of-towners since 1993. Known as a toy store for all ages, Boo's - located at 232 North Howard Street - is home to a vast treasure of weird and wonderful novelties, including old-school lunchboxes, socks with sarcastic sayings, unique stickers created by their staff, and tons of pop culture-themed gifts. "We strive to be a unique and welcoming store for everyone," said manager Claire Menzer. "Our goal is for people to feel like they are part of our Boo club, and to embrace their weirdness! And thanks to everyone who voted for us, our customers mean the world to us!"



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## 2023 VISITOR SPENDING

\$1.48 Billion in total visitor spending in 2023 (Spokane County) – an increase of 3.9% over 2022

**\$414M**

FOOD & BEVERAGE

**\$316M**

RETAIL

**\$250M**

TRANSPORT

**\$368M**

LODGING

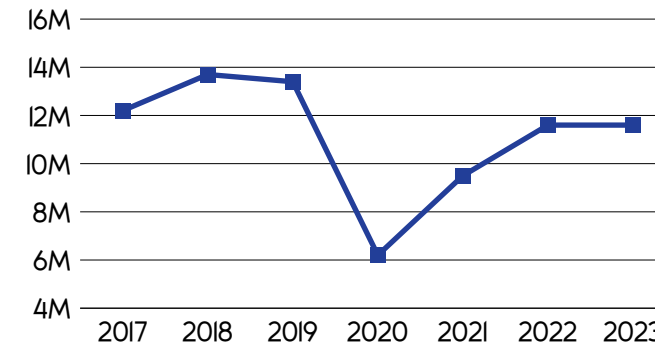
**\$127M**

RECREATION/ ENTERTAINMENT

Source: Visit Spokane

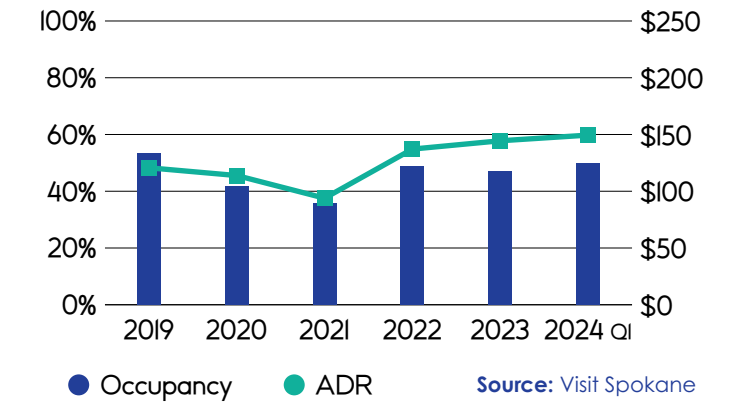
Photo Credit: Nick James

## ANNUAL BID VISITOR VISITS



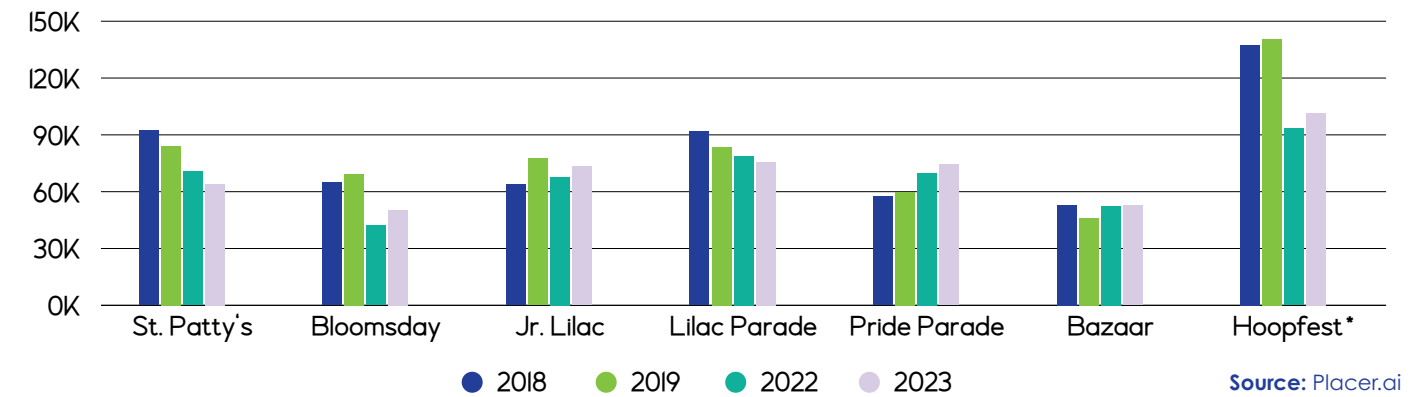
Source: Placer.ai

## DOWNTOWN HOTEL OCCUPANCY % AND AVERAGE DAILY RATE



Source: Visit Spokane

## BID VISITOR VISITS ON EVENT DAYS



Source: Placer.ai

# WHY NOT SPOKANE?

## expo '74's lasting effect on tourism

By Kate Hudson, Visit Spokane

Visitors and residents alike cannot help but swoon over the Expo ethos that, 50 years later, continues to permeate Spokane's Riverfront Park. Millions have enjoyed the vibe – and it is a vibe – that emanates from the roaring falls, historic buildings, and delightful experiences of restaurants, bars, and shops. Spokane is a thriving cultural hub of the Inland Northwest.

This was not always the case, however. Imagine, if you will, a place so bleak and polluted that no one wanted to visit. It is not hyperbole to envision an introduction to a "Twilight Zone" episode. Simply put, this area would likely be just that if it weren't for the visionaries who led the charge to plan and host a World's Fair.

### a quick history

It's incredible to think the railroad, the very thing that made Spokane an accessible, modern, and desirable destination in the late 1800s, had, by the 1970s, turned it into a bit of a mess. Years of pollution had turned Spokane's greatest asset, the Spokane River, into an eyesore. Leave it to a group of citizens who called themselves Spokane Unlimited to step up. They posed the question, "Why not Spokane?" Without this group, it's fair to say Spokane might not be on any visitor's radar. We most certainly wouldn't have the business tourism brings to Spokane.

Officially known as the International Exposition on the

“without this group, it's fair to say spokane might not be on any visitor's radar”

Environment, the Expo brought approximately 5.6 million people to Spokane. It was a once-in-a-lifetime chance for Spokane to generate international interest and attention for itself. It was also when city leaders realized Spokane could be a premier tourist destination.

The planning and execution of Expo '74 not only cleared out the blight along our riverbank and created 100 acres of green space, but it also led to the construction of our Convention Center and what was then known as the Opera House. We now know it as The First Interstate Center for the Arts, a state-of-the-art facility into which the State of Washington invested \$7.5 million.



Photo Credit: Nick James



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## 2023 TOURISM ECONOMIC IMPACTS IN CONTEXT

# \$1.48B

### IN VISITOR SPENDING

The \$1.48 billion in visitor spending means that approximately \$4.0 million was spent EVERY DAY on average by visitors in Spokane County.

# \$635M

### LABOR INCOME

The \$635 million in total income generated by tourism is the equivalent of \$2,975 for every household in Spokane County.

# 17,587

### TOTAL JOBS

The total number of jobs sustained by the visitor economy (17,587), including indirect and induced benefits, accounts for 5% of all jobs in Spokane County.

# \$227M

### STATE & LOCAL TAXES

The \$227 million in state and local tax revenue received in 2023 would be enough to pay the salaries of nearly 2,600 police officers in Spokane County.

Source: Visit Spokane

pledges from businesses to provide funding for organizations that would specifically contribute to the economic growth in the region. Included in this plan was providing staff and convention sales efforts to fund an expansion at the Convention Center. The Public Facilities District was formed in 1989. The expanded convention space, called the Ag Trade Center, opened and moved Spokane into the regional and state convention business, opening the door for larger meetings. In 1995, the Spokane Veterans Memorial Arena opened on the site of the old Coliseum. In 2002, Spokane voters approved a bond issue to expand the Convention Center further and improve the Spokane County Fair & Expo Center. Today, we have the new 5,000-seat outdoor ONE Spokane Stadium and The Podium, which makes Spokane a fierce competitor in sports tourism.

### the fair changed everything

It's fair to say Expo was a game changer. It gave us our beloved Riverfront Park, the major tourist attraction in Spokane and one of the most vibrant city parks in the world. Even National Geographic agrees, listing it in 2020 as one of the country's most beautiful urban parks. The City of Spokane estimates more than 3 million people visit Riverfront Park annually.

Expo's ripple effect has been long-lasting. Tourism is now a \$1.4 billion industry and provides \$1,000 in tax relief to every assessed household in Spokane County. Visitors pay a lodging tax and sales tax when they're here. We reap the benefits, and our exceptional selection of locally owned restaurants wouldn't disagree: tourists make the difference.

Expo gave Spokane the impetus to try big things. In the last 50 years, Spokane has created Bloomsday, one of the largest road races in the country, and Hoopfest, the largest 3-on-3 basketball tournament in the world.

Look to the Historic Davenport Hotel and Martin Woldson Theater at The Fox as prime examples of what happens when we invest and take chances. Both of those Spokane gems were nearly leveled into parking lots. It is difficult to conjure the image of those empty parking lots without the beauty of Riverfront Park. Downtown Spokane would be a wasteland that is impossible to promote to tourists and conventions alike.



Dignitaries cut the ribbon to open 2024 celebrations  
Photo Credit: Miles Bergsma

### a sustainable future

This author, currently writing from the Los Angeles Convention Center and promoting Spokane to 5,700 tour operators, travel agents, and travel media from around the globe attending what's called IPW, has Expo to thank for the opportunity. It made Spokane a desirable location for travelers. If you're curious, our top areas of interest from overseas travelers and tour operators were from The Netherlands. They appreciate the access to the outdoors, renovated historic architecture, and, of course, our stunning Riverfront Park on the banks of the roaring Spokane River.

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# THE PERFECT (SOCCER) MATCH



Photo Credit: USL Spokane

When talks of a pro soccer team in Spokane got serious, the vision was for ONE Spokane Stadium to be packed full of enthusiastic soccer fans, where matches are fun, festive social events, adding to the vibrancy of downtown.

Well, at Spokane Velocity FC's sold-out home opener on March 16, 2024, that's exactly what happened.

"Downtown was just buzzing, and the stadium was bursting at the seams. It was a very special moment," said Dave Sonntag, United Soccer League Spokane's Vice President of Marketing & Communications.

ONE Spokane Stadium, the new outdoor sports facility located on downtown's North Bank, features all the top-notch attributes of a large professional soccer stadium but on an intimate scale.

"There is not a bad seat in the house," said Sonntag. "You are right on top of the action, and it is a big-time atmosphere. You're in the heart of downtown, overlooking the city. You can see the sunset. And there's professional sports going on right in front of you."

While many teams play on sub-par pitches at local colleges, where you can still see football lines or the set-up takes hours, ONE Spokane Stadium has quickly established itself as the best stadium in USL League One. Sonntag said he'll often see other soccer clubs, when taking the field for warmups, marveling at the stadium and getting out their cell phones to take video.

Playing in ONE Spokane Stadium has had a major impact on attendance. Spokane Velocity FC has the second-best attendance numbers in USL League One, with more than 4,000 people per match. This is second only to the Richmond Kickers, the longest continually operating pro soccer team in the country.

"This town loves sports," said Sonntag. "We run into people on the concourse or in the stands who are just so grateful and have waited so long to have professional soccer, or really any professional sports, in Spokane."

Spokane is also a town that loves tradition. Before every match, the 509 Syndicate, the club's first supporters' group, gathers at the Rotary Fountain in Riverfront Park and marches to the stadium, where they'll continue to cheer and chant.

For anyone who's on the fence, Sonntag's message is to just come check it out. You'll be surprised at how cool the atmosphere is, and it's incredible to see professional athletes playing up close. Being downtown elevates the entire experience, as you can make an entire day of it with your family.

If the stadium were anywhere else in the city, Sonntag doesn't believe they'd have the same level of investors, partners or visibility. Downtown has embraced pro soccer, from parking specials at River Park Square to match-day deals at restaurants and breweries. Even when the team's on the road, there are robust match-watches at Flat Stick Pub, Brick West Brewing Co., and Hat Trick Brewing.

USL Spokane's goal for the future is to keep growing and bringing in more partners, including non-profits, with a focus on youth soccer. With the club's level of talent - from coaches to players around the world - they want to share that talent with area youth, creating a culture of soccer in Spokane and showing kids what's possible.

More excitement is on the horizon when the women's Super League Spokane Zephyr kicks off in mid-August. This is the highest level of women's soccer in the United States.

"There are so few opportunities for women in professional sports right now. And so many women who are qualified to play professional soccer that just don't have a job. We get to be a part of changing that," said Sonntag.

Get in on the action and come spend a day downtown. For information on events and more, visit [downtownspokane.org](http://downtownspokane.org)



Member Nik P., Co-Owner of Phinney Ridge Painting. Paid for participation.

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Business Share savings required to establish membership; not all will qualify. Federally insured by NCUA. Business member was compensated for their participation.



# WHY OFFICES IN DOWNTOWN SPOKANE STILL HAVE MASS APPEAL

When HMA CPA outgrew their space on Riverside Avenue two years ago, their ownership group had to decide if they wanted to stay downtown.

Ultimately, the answer was a resounding yes.

Mike Whitmore, CPA and shareholder, said a key benefit of being downtown is the impromptu networking that occurs. Every time they go out for lunch, they'll see attorneys, bankers, and other clients, so it keeps them connected to the business community.

Their central location at 601 West 1st Avenue, inside the Washington Trust Bank Tower, is convenient for clients, and most importantly, they have a staff that wants to be downtown.

The office foodies appreciate all the restaurants nearby, and with a parking garage that employees can access anytime, it's easy to rendezvous for group events like Bloomsday or bring their families downtown for a day at Riverfront Park or shopping at River Park Square.

There's also the fun – and laughs – of renting Lime Sooters in the summer and zooming over to Kendall Yards for lunch. (Beware of the "biker gang" of accountants on scooters!)

HMA CPA has adopted a hybrid approach to work, with everyone in the office on "Together Tuesdays." Although employees can work remotely the other days – depending on years of experience – nearly half choose to be in the office every day.

"If you want a culture where people feel like they can flourish, you need to foster that, and frankly, it's hard to foster that remotely," said Whitmore. He explained that as accountants, data is big to them, and there's a lot of data showing that remote workers have lower job satisfaction, productivity rates and sense of belonging.

"We want to make sure that everyone is mentally healthy, and our relationships with other people have a big effect on our mental health," said Whitmore. "Having an office with a physical footprint, where staff feel like they're part of the community, increases their wellness, and that's important to us as employers."

After spending 20 years downtown in the Peyton Building, Coffman Engineers faced a similar decision as HMA CPA when their lease was up and plans were underway to convert the historic building into living spaces.

Karl Kolb, Coffman Engineers Senior Vice President, Managing Principal & Northwest Regional Manager, said that after surveying staff and talking with leadership, they decided to stay in the downtown core for several reasons: the central location for clients and employees; the accessibility of hospitality amenities for out-of-town business guests; STA's mass transit offerings; and all the attractions downtown, from Riverfront Park to shopping, sports and entertainment venues.

Downtown is also the perfect backdrop for team-building activities, and for long strategic planning meetings, they'll often head offsite to a gorgeous venue like Ruby River Hotel, The Davenport Grand Hotel or the Historic Davenport.

When Coffman Engineers found their new location at 221 North Wall Street, they took advantage of the fresh start and intentionally designed a space that would reflect their culture and approach to collaboration.

"We wanted to celebrate those things we do better when we're together and create a space for that to happen," said Kolb.

Their new location features a "charrette room," an informal, extremely flexible large space, so that everyone, from contractors to architects or community partners, can set up whatever kind of creative workspace they need. They also built an expanded breakroom with lots of social space, where employees can play games and socialize during their lunch hours.

For people who bike to work or like to get out on breaks to ride, walk or run the Centennial Trail, they can take advantage of building amenities including shower rooms and locked, lighted indoor bike storage.

From their office windows, they have a view of Riverfront Park, which is especially spectacular in the winter when you can see the Pavilion light shows and people cozying up with hot cocoa at the Skate Ribbon's outdoor fire pits.

Of course, it's not just long-standing companies that want to be downtown. It's attracting plenty of new businesses too, like Treasury4, a fast-growing enterprise fintech.

Founded remotely in 2020, Treasury4's partners had a vision to grow their company and to do it in downtown Spokane.

Steve Helmbrecht, president and CEO said, "We wanted to be embedded in the community, to be part of what's going on in the heart of our city."

They were attracted to the Wonder Building, the old bread factory on Spokane's scenic North Bank because of its location (especially with the second-order impact of The Podium, ONE Spokane Stadium, and Spokane Arena creating vibrancy on that side of the river), ease of parking, and amenities and atmosphere of downtown.

"As a software startup, we wanted to have that right kind of vibe," said Helmbrecht.

Occupying the entire third floor of the building, their terraces overlook Riverfront Park, and with the new footbridge, it's a 10-minute walk through the park to the downtown core. Employees love walking in the park, and out-of-towners staying at hotels in the core can easily access their location and all the best that downtown offers.

"We are proud of being from Spokane and we want people to see this beautiful area we have," said Helmbrecht.

While he doesn't have anything against remote work, Helmbrecht said most staff are from Spokane and in the office five days a week. The benefit of being together – collaborating, sharing and learning – gets people up to speed much faster. (One new employee said he had more interaction in a week and a half than he'd had in the prior two years working remotely!)

"They're thriving being back, even if it's hybrid. They feel included and like part of a team," said Helmbrecht.

There have been so many improvements over the past year to make downtown more vibrant, especially all the work the DSP Clean Team has done to maintain the area's green spaces and public sidewalks.

This commitment to downtown continues to attract new businesses and invites the folks who moved out during COVID to come back because it's a fantastic place to be.

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# INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

## objectives & focus for 2024

By Ben Krauss, Greater Spokane Incorporated

In collaboration with the Washington Employers for Racial Equity, the Inclusive Development Council (IDC), whose Project Director and Inclusive Business Strategist are housed by Greater Spokane Inc. (GSI), honors the commitment to implement a vision for equitable economic growth and wealth creation opportunities. The IDC's three primary focus areas include:

- Supporting and guiding a focus on Supplier Diversity, Access to Capital, and Talent Development
- A collaborative fellowship with community members, diverse businesses, and corporate partners
- Investing in and building long-term sustainability

The top project for 2023 was the Inclusive Development Council (IDC) Supplier Diversity Platform Pilot. The Partners for Inclusive Growth & Prosperity and the Inclusive Development Council (IDC) pilot project aimed to foster equitable and inclusive regional economic growth by enhancing supplier diversity and facilitating connections between large corporations, community partners, and underrepresented, diverse, women-owned, veteran-owned, and economically disadvantaged businesses. To achieve this objective, the pilot project focused on testing and refining a minimum viable product (MVP) consisting of a Supplier Diversity Playbook and a web-based technology platform designed to support increased transparency, buyer-seller relationships, and performance tracking of supplier diversity initiatives.

During the pilot testing of the Supplier Diversity Web Platform, over \$5,200,000 of spending was tracked.

In 2024, the focus of the IDC is increasing the utilization of, and developing a sustainable model for, the Supplier Diversity Web Platform. A primary objective is to double the number of corporate Buyers and triple the number of Suppliers in the Supplier Diversity Web Platform. As of May 2024, the number of Buyers and Suppliers in the system has been doubled. Sourcing diverse suppliers supports business and community resilience and strength and positively impacts businesses at all levels. Increasing the numbers of Buyers and Suppliers in the system increases business connections and contracting opportunities.

A key next step is a partnership with Whitworth University MBA program faculty and students to use a design thinking process to empathetically understand and prioritize the needs of the Buyers, Sellers, and Community Partners that use the Supplier Diversity Web Platform. This will guide investments and needed enhancements to the Supplier Diversity Web Platform, with key objectives being increased connections, visibility of opportunities, and equitable business growth.

In addition, the IDC is developing a multi-year strategic plan that is in alignment with the vision of enhancing equitable economic growth and wealth creation opportunities that celebrate diversity and inclusion across the entire region.

**please contact ben krauss, idc project director, at [bkrauss@greaterspokane.org](mailto:bkrauss@greaterspokane.org) to discuss any of the idc's work.**



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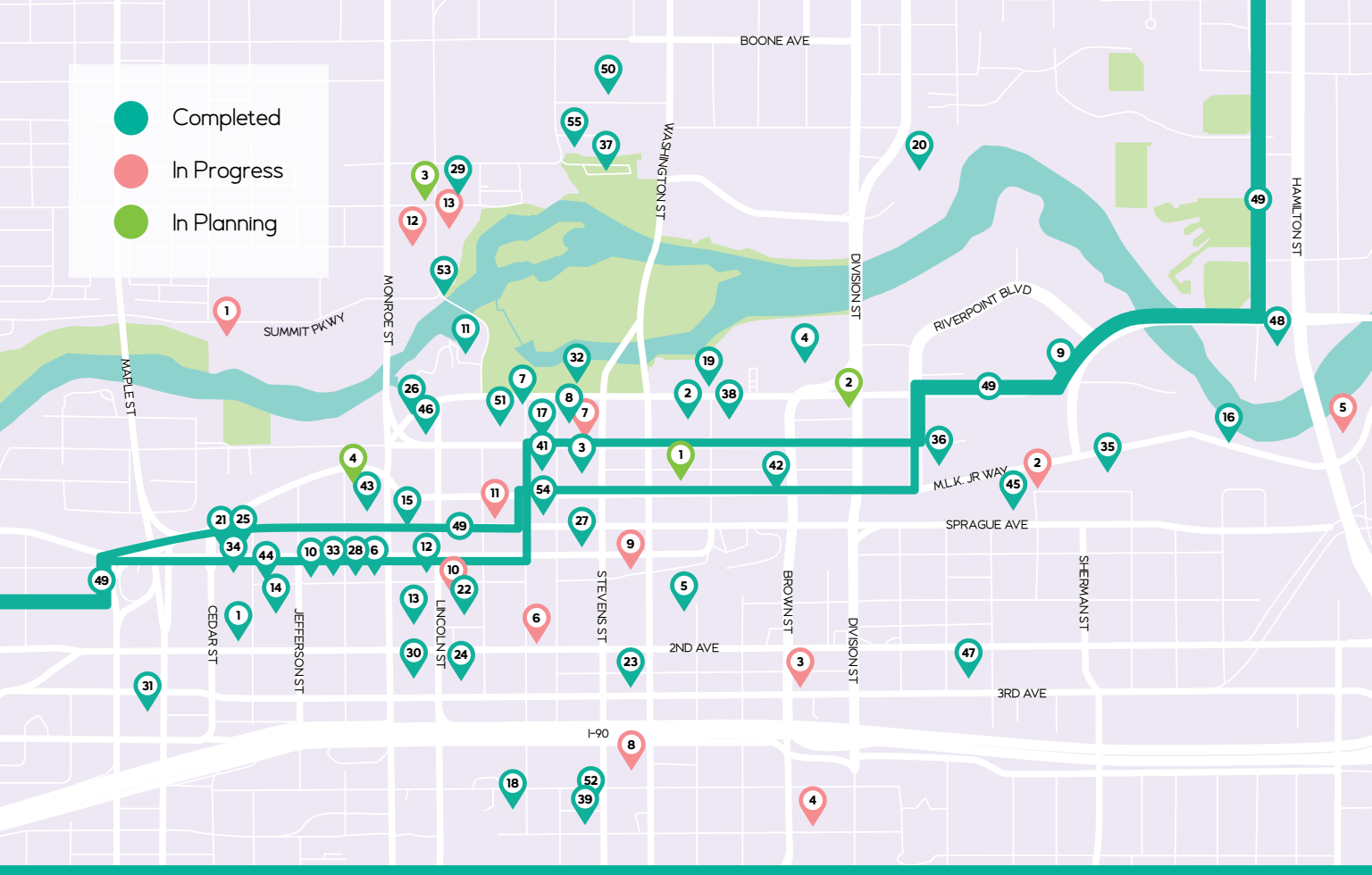
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# SPOKANE DEVELOPMENT MAP

\$1.3 billion in completed public/private investment since 2015

## COMPLETED:

- (1) IRON GOAT BREWING COMPANY**  
1302 W 2nd Ave  
Goat Works LLC  
\$900k | 2015
- (2) THE DAVENPORT GRAND HOTEL**  
333 W Spokane Falls Blvd  
Worthy Hotels  
\$143M | 2015
- (3) CUTTER TOWER**  
510 W Riverside Ave  
Sure Would LLC  
\$2M | 2015
- (4) CONVENTION CENTER EXPANSION**  
334 W Spokane Falls Blvd  
Public Facilities District  
\$45M | 2016
- (5) WASHINGTON CRACKER CO. BUILDING**  
304 W Pacific Ave  
Cracker Box LLC  
\$600k | 2016
- (6) MONTVALE HOTEL AND MONTVALE HALL**  
1005 W 1st Ave  
GVD Commercial Properties  
\$1M | 2016
- (7) WALL STREET REDEVELOPMENT**  
500 N Wall St  
City of Spokane  
\$800k | 2016
- (8) URBAN OUTFITTERS**  
211 N Wall St  
Centennial Properties  
\$2M | 2016
- (9) WSU SPOKANE TEACHING HEALTH CLINIC**  
527 E Spokane Falls Blvd  
Washington State University  
\$16.25M | 2016
- (10) WEST END LOFTS**  
115 S Jefferson St  
Dantech LLC  
\$2M | 2016
- (11) MOBIUS SCIENCE CENTER**  
331 N Post St  
Avista Utilities  
\$1.3M | 2016
- (12) DEMPSEY BUILDING**  
909 W 1st Ave  
GVD Commercial Properties  
\$1.5M | 2017
- (13) MONROE/LINCOLN CORRIDOR STREET REPLACEMENT**  
City of Spokane  
\$8.7M | 2017
- (14) BARRISTER WINERY**  
1213 W Railroad Ave  
Hobson LLC  
\$35000 | 2017
- (15) CHRONICLE**  
926 W Sprague Ave  
Centennial Properties  
\$4.8M | 2018
- (16) UNIVERSITY DISTRICT GATEWAY BRIDGE**  
700 E MLK Jr Way  
City of Spokane  
\$10.6M | 2018
- (17) THE M**  
612 W Main Ave  
Centennial Properties  
\$67M | 2018
- (18) COOPER GEORGE APARTMENTS**  
707 W 5th Ave  
Larry Simon and David Schneider  
\$7.5M | 2018
- (19) FIRST INTERSTATE CENTER FOR THE ARTS RENOVATION**  
334 W Spokane Falls Blvd  
Lydig Construction  
\$19.25M | 2018
- (20) 940 NORTH STUDENT HOUSING**  
940 N Ruby  
Fourth Avenue Capital  
\$15M | 2018
- (21) WEST END PLAZA & CSO TANK**  
1310 W 1st Ave  
City of Spokane  
\$24M | 2018

- (22) THE STEAM PLANT**  
159 S Lincoln St  
Avista  
\$4M | 2019
- (23) THE SODO APARTMENTS**  
410 W 3rd Ave  
RenCorp Realty  
\$1.25M | 2019
- (24) COLORMATICS**  
410 W 3rd Ave  
RenCorp Realty  
\$550k | 2022
- (25) WATTS BUILDING**  
1318 W 1st Ave  
4 Degrees  
\$4M | 2019
- (26) SPOKANE FALLS PLAZA & CSO TANK**  
906 W Spokane Falls Blvd  
City of Spokane  
\$25M | 2019
- (27) THE RIDPATH**  
515 W 1st Ave  
Ridpath Owners LLC  
\$22M | 2019
- (28) MUSIC CITY**  
1011 W 1st Ave  
GVD Hospitality Management Services Inc.  
\$1.5M | 2019
- (29) WONDER BUILDING**  
835 N Post St  
Wonder Spokane  
\$15M | 2019
- (30) 4 DEGREES**  
915 W 2nd Ave  
HDG Architecture  
\$1.4M | 2019
- (31) GLOBAL CREDIT UNION NORTH**  
1507 W 3rd Ave  
Wolfe Architectural Group  
\$585k | 2019
- (32) RIVERFRONT PARK**  
507 N Howard St  
City of Spokane Parks & Recreation  
\$64.3M | 2020
- (33) HOTEL INDIGO**  
110 S Madison St  
Madison Realty LLC  
\$15M | 2020
- (34) PARKVIEW WEST**  
1309 W 1st Ave  
4 Degrees  
\$10M | 2020
- (35) CATALYST BUILDING AND SCOTT MORRIS CENTER FOR ENERGY INNOVATION**  
601 E Riverside Ave  
Avista, McKinstry, Katerra, EWU  
\$57M | 2020
- (36) PACIFIC FRUIT & PRODUCE BUILDING**  
102 E Main Ave  
HDG Architecture  
\$500k | 2020
- (37) THE PODIUM**  
832 N Howard St  
Public Facilities District  
\$41M | 2021
- (38) FRUCI BUILDING**  
218 N Bernard St  
Fruci Family LLC  
\$2.9M | 2021
- (39) THE508WEST**  
508 W 6th Ave  
Brumback Construction  
\$16M | 2021
- (41) THE ROXY**  
120 N Wall St  
4 Degrees  
\$2.25M | 2021
- (42) THE WARREN**  
206 W Riverside Ave  
Spokane Riverside Partners LLC  
\$22M | 2022
- (43) SPOKESMAN REVIEW PRODUCTION BUILDING**  
1 N Monroe St  
Cowles Real Estate  
\$3.1M | 2022
- (44) LOLO LOFTS**  
1229 W 1st Ave  
4 Degrees  
\$5.25M | 2022
- (45) BOXCAR APARTMENTS**  
15 N Grant St  
Project PDX  
\$20M | 2022
- (46) DOWNTOWN SPOKANE PUBLIC LIBRARY**  
906 W Main Ave  
City of Spokane  
\$33M | 2022
- (47) THIRD DRAFT LLC**  
213 and 217 E 3rd Ave  
Copeland Architecture & Construction Inc.  
\$930k | 2023
- (48) UWSOM-GU HEALTH PARTNERSHIP BUILDING**  
840 E Spokane Falls Blvd  
McKinstry  
\$60M | 2023
- (49) CITY LINE**  
Public Transportation  
Spokane Transit Authority  
\$72M | 2023
- (50) ONE SPOKANE STADIUM**  
501 W Gardner Ave  
Spokane Public Schools  
\$38M | 2023
- (51) OLD CITY HALL**  
221 N Wall St  
Wall St LLC  
\$6.45M | 2023
- (52) QUALMED PLAZA**  
508 W 6th Ave  
6th Avenue Partners LLC, Nick Brumback, David Squire  
\$16M | 2023
- (53) POST STREET BRIDGE**  
500 N Post St  
City of Spokane  
\$18.5M | 2024
- (54) BANK OF AMERICA TOWER**  
601 W Riverside Ave  
Redstone Group  
\$1.75M | 2024
- (55) PAPILLION SOUTH**  
908 N Howard  
Selkirk  
\$15M | Mixed Use Residential
- (7) HOWARD APARTMENTS**  
218 N Howard  
Howard Partners LLC, Gerry's Trees & Nursery Inc.  
\$2M | Mixed Use Residential
- (8) KOZ ON WEST 4TH AVENUE**  
307 W 4th Ave  
Developer: Koz Development  
\$16.3M | New Residential
- (9) THE WHARTON LOFTS**  
411 W 1st Ave  
Urban Development - RenCorp Realty/Olson Projects  
\$3.25M | Historic Residential Renovation
- (10) THE SNEVA BUILDING**  
827 W 1st Ave  
RenCorp Realty/RenCorp Building Services  
\$850k | Historic Commercial Renovation
- (11) PEYTON BUILDING**  
10 N Post St  
Peyton Project LLC  
\$18M | Residential Redevelopment
- (12) LINC LOFTS**  
714 N Monroe  
Urban Development  
\$3.5M | Residential
- (13) THE FALLS**  
829 W Broadway Ave  
L.B. Stone Properties Group LLC  
\$53.2M | Mixed Use Residential

## IN PROGRESS

- (1) KENDALL YARDS**  
1335 W Summit Pkwy  
Greenstone Properties  
\$150M | Mixed Use PUD Development
- (2) STUDIO 24 APARTMENTS**  
201 E Riverside Ave  
RenCorp Realty  
\$1.65M | Mixed Use Residential
- (3) THE IMPERIAL**  
128 W 3rd Ave  
Fortify Holdings  
\$880k | Residential Conversion
- (4) 44 W SIXTH**  
44 W 6th Ave  
1st Ave Chelan LLC, Scott Isaak, Jordan Tampien  
\$2M | Residential Conversion
- (5) THE DISTRICT APARTMENTS**  
1055 E Martin Luther King Jr. Way  
Sagamore Spokane LLC  
\$62M | New Residential
- (6) AVISTA SUBSTATION**  
700 W 2nd Ave  
Avista  
\$4.5M | Utility
- (1) JENSEN-BYRD HARDWARE BUILDING - CULTURAL HUB**  
314 and 320 W Riverside Ave  
Dan Spalding  
\$50M | Mixed Use Residential Redevelopment
- (2) 1 W SPOKANE FALLS BLVD**  
1 W Spokane Falls Blvd  
Great Expectations  
\$40M | Mixed Use Residential
- (3) WONDERGROUND INDOOR SPORTS FACILITY**  
815 N Lincoln St  
Peter Mounsey  
\$3.3M | New Commercial
- (4) CHANCERY BUILDING**  
1023 W Riverside Ave  
Cowles Real Estate  
New Residential

## IN PLANNING

- (1) JENSEN-BYRD HARDWARE BUILDING - CULTURAL HUB**  
314 and 320 W Riverside Ave  
Dan Spalding  
\$50M | Mixed Use Residential Redevelopment
- (2) 1 W SPOKANE FALLS BLVD**  
1 W Spokane Falls Blvd  
Great Expectations  
\$40M | Mixed Use Residential
- (3) WONDERGROUND INDOOR SPORTS FACILITY**  
815 N Lincoln St  
Peter Mounsey  
\$3.3M | New Commercial
- (4) CHANCERY BUILDING**  
1023 W Riverside Ave  
Cowles Real Estate  
New Residential

# INNOVATING TOGETHER



Photo Credit: Greater Spokane Inc.

## spokane's tech-forward economic resilience

By Joey Gunning, Strategic Growth Manager, Greater Spokane Inc.

In 2021, Greater Spokane Inc. (GSI) initiated the efforts to create a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for Spokane County. Why? Because GSI is the Spokane region's business development organization focused on building our economy and creating a thriving Spokane region.

Like many efforts and initiatives curated from and housed within GSI, we know that several entities coming together makes for a greater impact. GSI, in collaboration with community partners such as Public Development Authorities, K-12 and higher education institutions, downtown associations, chambers, transportation councils, and residents, created and launched a five-year (2022-

2027) unifying vision to foster an inclusive, equitable, and thriving economy. The CEDS planning framework, guiding principles, and action plan for our region is known as THRIVE Spokane.

THRIVE Spokane envisions the greater Spokane community as a naturally creative and embracing region that is connected and highlights its competitive advantages to ensure the resilient growth and economic opportunity for all. This community roadmap is meant to guide economic development efforts across the County.

(Continued on page 24)

## SPOKANE COUNTY LABOR FORCE

### top posted industries:

- 1) Health care and social assistance
- 2) Administrative and support services
- 3) Retail trade
- 4) Professional, scientific, and technical services
- 5) Education

**\$61,041**

Average annual wage

**265,800**

Total labor force (March 2024)

**14,574**

Total unemployed (March 2024)

**5.5%**

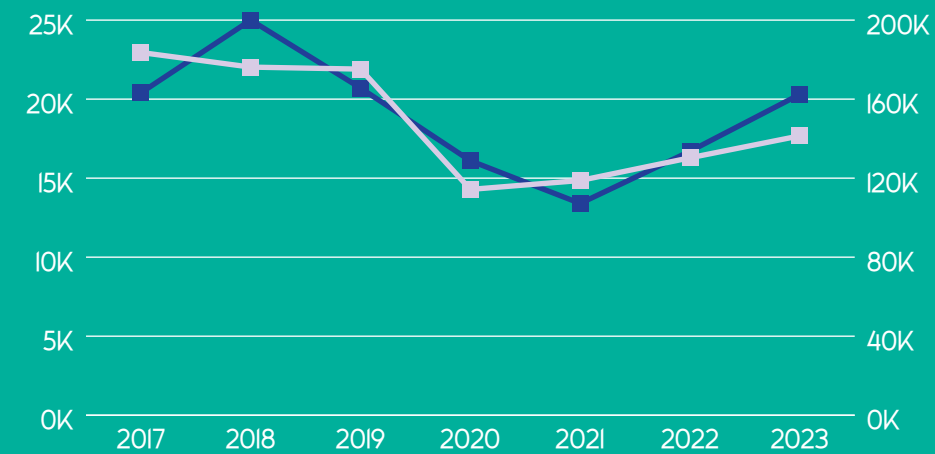
Unemployment rate (March 2024)

**79,112**

May 2023–April 2024 unique job postings

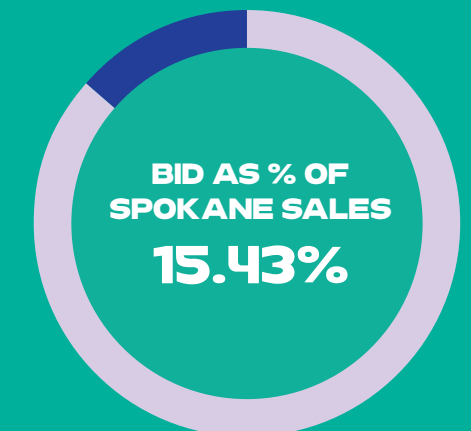
Source: Spokane Workforce Council

### BID EMPLOYEES



Source: Placer.ai

### CITY OF SPOKANE TAXABLE SALES



● Total Taxable Sales (\$7,109,181,085)  
● Downtown BID Taxable Sales (\$1,096,992,999)

### CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT OFFICE REAL ESTATE DATA

Q2 2024	RBA SF	Vacancy Rate	Market Asking Rent / SF	Availability Rate	Net Absorption SF
4 & 5 Star	1,656,124	21.1%	\$24.30	24.6%	1,039
3 Star	1,792,316	10.0%	\$21.04	9.8%	-21,815
1 & 2 star	2,735,175	8.7%	\$22.49	7.4%	-2,517
<b>Submarket</b>	<b>6,183,615</b>	<b>12.4%</b>	<b>\$22.56</b>	<b>12.7%</b>	<b>-23,293</b>

Source: CoStar



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The four guiding principles are the pillars of work and were developed as a direct response to some of the region's most complex challenges. These guiding principles embody the goals and objectives identified throughout the planning process with many having intentional intersections.



### 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 partnership to align efforts that advance economic opportunity for all.

(Continued from page 22)

Whether it be deploying community wealth-building strategies for driving resilience or strengthening business retention and expansion efforts to making the region a stronger economic competitor, collaboration and coordination across sectors are essential to the successful implementation of THRIVE Spokane.

According to Carmine Di Sibio, Global Chairman and Chief Executive Officer for EY, referenced in Competition vs collaboration: rethinking how businesses innovate and grow | The World Economic Forum: "The urgency around collaboration will only grow in the coming years, as technological innovation continues to march forward in a context of growing economic and social complexity."

In Spokane County, many organizations are contributing to the economic development of the region with over 60, in fact, directly involved with the implementation of THRIVE Spokane. By collaborating and engaging these organizations in ways where people feel comfortable learning, growing, and sharing their thoughts on the future of our community, we can move the region toward greater alignment, improved communication, and enhanced cooperation. We can learn from one another to strengthen the development ecosystem and address needs and priorities at all levels.

Downtown Spokane and the surrounding area (Zip Code 99201) is home to 50% more millennials than the national average for an area this size (per Lightcast Q1 2024 Data Set). This is significant because according

to Indeed's 10 Common Characteristics of the Millennial Generation: "[Millennials] tend to place importance on working within a team environment. Collaborating on projects, problem-solving with different points of view and creating innovative approaches to their work fields may be cooperative endeavors that millennials undertake while working on a team."

In addition, the largest industry (by number of jobs) in the downtown Spokane area is Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (also known as the "Tech" industry). This just so happens to be the fastest-growing industry in the United States (2018-2023 change in jobs, Lightcast Q1 2024 Data Set). Also mentioned in the Indeed article, Millennials are the first generation to possess "an intuitive knowledge of technology."

In summary, our downtown Spokane has adopted a CEDS built on the foundation of collaboration and cooperation, has a concentration of the fastest-growing industry in the nation, and a population in the heart of the city of Spokane that is inherently drawn to collective action and technology advancements. It seems clear to me that this community is perfectly positioned to pursue strategic economic development opportunities that embrace the region's competitive advantages.

Spokane is primed not just to succeed, but to thrive.

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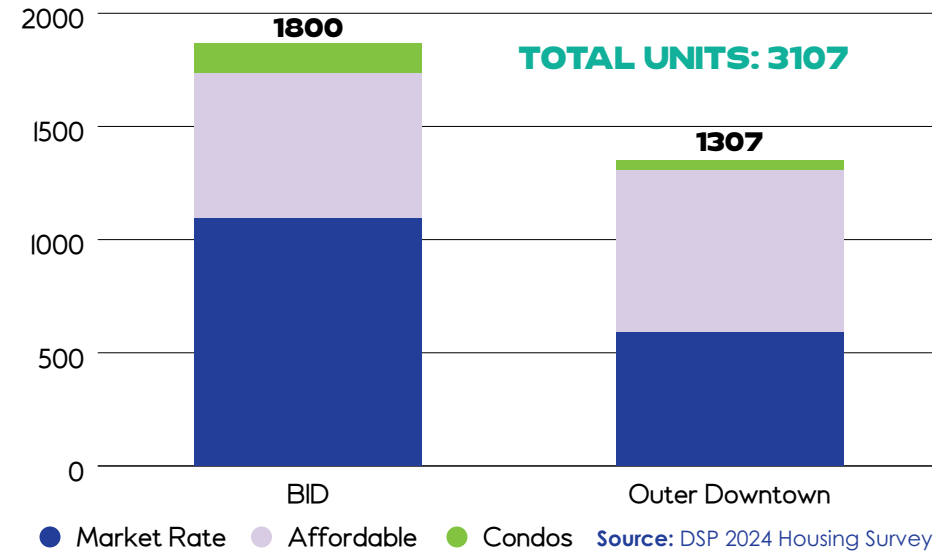
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Photo Credit: City of Spokane

## DOWNTOWN RESIDENTIAL UNITS



# HISTORIC PRESERVATION

## a catalyst for new housing units in downtown spokane

By Megan Duvall, Historic Preservation Officer, City/County of Spokane

Housing is in high demand, especially in Spokane. The vacancy rate is low, rents have gone up more than any city in the country, and home-value growth has far outpaced the nationwide average. Yet in downtown Spokane, the majority of new housing units have come from existing historic buildings transitioning from office space to residential units. Why? Historic buildings were built at a time when natural light and windows were given, making them prime candidates for adaptive reuse.

Since 2020, 451 new units of housing in downtown Spokane have been created in buildings listed on the Spokane Register of Historic Places. These were not existing housing units that were rehabbed, but rather they were buildings that were all previously vacant or had a different use before they were converted to housing. All these projects took advantage of historic preservation incentives like Special Valuation and the Federal Historic Tax Credit (HTC), which helped make the projects viable.

The Ridpath Hotel located at 515 West Sprague Avenue is the largest of these rehab projects. The international style building, constructed in 1952, closed its doors to hotel customers in 2008. The Ridpath remained mostly vacant for the next ten years, frustrated by multiple failed attempts to give the twelve-story building new life. By the end of 2020, the obstacles were finally overcome, and the 20-million-dollar rehabilitation project reached the finish line. New residents quickly filled the building's 206 units of housing, 184 of which are affordable units.

Two additional projects that were recently completed also deserve mention. The six-story Columbia Building at 107 South Howard Street was recently rehabilitated and converted from office space to fifty new units known as the Marjorie Apartments. The \$5 million project took advantage of Special Valuation as well as the Multi-Family Tax Exemption program (MFTE). The U.S. Rubber Building at 1011 West 1st Ave was recently transformed

from a four-story warehouse into a mixed-use building with two businesses on the street level and fourteen apartments above. The \$6.3 million project used both Special Valuation and the Federal HTC. More housing units are coming in the Peyton Building and Annex conversion as well as the Wharton Building at 411 West 1st Ave. Preservation incentives are actively creating housing!

Two additional large housing projects were completed in historic buildings that are not listed on the Spokane Register: the Bon Marche and the Chronicle Buildings. Those, along with a few other projects in historic non-listed properties, amount to another 217 new units of housing. Including the projects in historic buildings that are not on the register, a total of 668 new units of housing have been created in historic buildings in downtown since 2020. That is nearly twice as many units as the number of units created in new construction projects during the same time period.

Although many of the historic buildings that were easiest to convert to new housing have been completed, there are still a lot of opportunities downtown. Over twenty-five percent of historic buildings in downtown Spokane are currently used as office space and may be good opportunities for conversion to housing, and they may also be eligible for historic preservation incentives to help make the project financially viable. Approximately one-third

of all currently eligible buildings in downtown have been listed on the Spokane Register of Historic Places. This means there are about 200 buildings that meet the age requirements for listing on the Spokane Register but are not yet listed. (Looking for project ideas? Give the DSP office a call!)

Many in Spokane have been asking for increased density in our urban core, which includes our most walkable neighborhoods. Yet there remains 216 vacant parcels and 149 surface parking parcels in downtown Spokane, which means that 40% of downtown lots have no structure at all.

City council has passed ordinances to discourage surface parking in the core; the Plan Commission approved a new downtown planning document focused on housing; and the federal government created opportunity zones that included our downtown. The City of Spokane created "Parking to People" to incentivize the construction of housing on surface parking lots. Even so, no single policy or development incentive in the past decade has been more effective at creating new housing units in downtown Spokane than historic preservation and the incentives Spokane's program can offer to developers. Although new construction will continue in downtown (hopefully on vacant or surface parking lots and not at the expense of historic buildings), historic preservation will continue to be a catalyst for new housing units in Spokane's core.

# DOWNTOWN SPOKANE'S RESIDENTIAL RENAISSANCE

a vision for vibrant urban living

By Andrew Rolwes, Vice President of the Downtown Spokane Partnership

Fostering market-rate residential development in downtown has been a key objective of the Downtown Spokane Partnership since it was established, and the Board of the DSP is undertaking an initiative to accelerate its growth. Before getting into the how, the question of why needs to be answered.



Downtown and the wider community benefit from a strong residential sector because residents are a 24-hour presence. They are a strong group of stakeholders for downtown, a group who cares as much about what goes on in this neighborhood as suburban residents do in their neighborhoods. Downtown residents are also drivers of economic growth as businesses respond to their growing population. A strong residential sector downtown is a positive market response to growing office vacancy rates and meets market demand that would otherwise be met in other neighborhoods.

From the perspective of maintaining a healthy municipal budget and funding services, a downtown with a strong market-rate residential presence means more tax revenue. It strengthens the tax base and makes the most of existing infrastructure: new housing in downtown does not need new streets and utilities. Thriving, high-density urban cores help their cities weather economic ups and downs more than the alternative.

While commercial development tends to be more visible, downtown has had a strong run of residential developments, both of new developments and office-to-residential conversions. A full list would take the rest of the column space, but the most prominent ones include all the historic renovations accomplished by Wells & Company, as well Cowles Real Estate: the 809 Building, the Chronicle Building, and The M. RenCorp Realty has

made notable renovations to the Hale, the Rainside, and Madison Apartments. Meanwhile, 4 Degrees has made strides with Blue Chip Lofts in the West End neighborhood, along with other previous and current residential developments in the downtown core. The most recent residential addition to downtown is the 139-unit Warren Apartments on Riverside, and in the pipeline is The Falls Tower Condominiums on the North Bank, among others.

While these projects have fostered incremental growth, market conditions in downtown have shifted, as with other urban cores across the western U.S. Office vacancy has climbed, and property owners and investors are bringing creative solutions to the region's intense demand for housing by converting office and commercial space to residential. To help support this shift in the market, the DSP has set the goal of building 1,000 units of market-rate housing in downtown by 2028. To accomplish this goal, the DSP is focusing on the following objectives:

## CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT RESIDENTIAL UNIT DATA

Q2 2024	Units	Vacancy Rate	Asking Rent
4 & 5 star	680	5.5%	\$1,824
3 star	3596	8.2%	\$1,352
1 & 2 star	5671	5.4%	\$958
Submarket	9947	6.4%	\$1,289

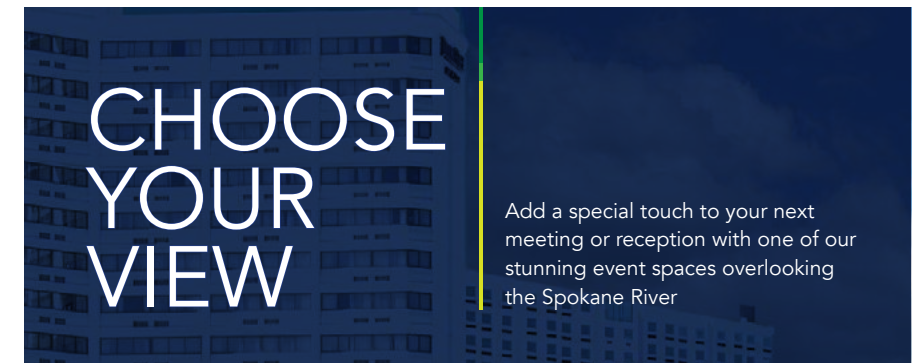
Annual Trends	12 Month (April 2024)
Vacancy Change (YoY)	0.4%
Absorption Units	134
Delivered Units	187
Demolished Units	0
Asking Rent Growth (YoY)	-0.3%
Effective Rent Growth (YoY)	-0.7%
Sales Volume	\$37.2M

Source: CoStar

- Locally enacting the state's office-to-residential tax deferral is the best current example. We are also working with Congressmembers to enact similar policies at the federal level.
- Use and improve the incentives we have currently, like the Multi-Family Tax Exemption.
- Work to roll back regulations at the state level that are restraining development.
- Remove height restrictions on parcels on Spokane Falls Boulevard across from Riverfront Park, which would increase the developable area.
- Update the downtown housing study last completed in 2015.
- Achieve efficiencies in the City Development Services Center.

Washington's housing industry is heavily regulated, to the point that it is a major contributor to the cost of housing. Property owners, investors and developers are struggling to respond, and a strategy that identifies and rolls back and advocates against the passage of new regulations, while enacting useful incentives and enhancing existing incentives to improve effectiveness is a step in the right direction.

While the DSP and organizations across the county strive to improve public safety in downtown, we are also working closely with our local, state and federal elected officials to implement policies that build housing. Expanding the supply of housing will help contain the growth of housing costs and build a more vibrant, attractive and active downtown neighborhood.



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## DOWNTOWN is a family favorite

*Stacey Winkle, downtown visitor*

Downtown Spokane is our favorite spot to enjoy as a family and share with visiting friends. Our downtown adventures range from totally free, taking advantage of Riverfront Park and the many events going on throughout the year, to a fancy family night out at the Symphony or a Broadway show. We love to pair a trip to Auntie’s Bookstore for the kids with a visit to Mr. Mike at Barrister Winery next door. We know the wine is fantastic and he’ll ask the kids about the plot of their latest read. Happy hour options are often family-friendly as well. Our youngest devours the shrimp at Wooden City and we all enjoy the pastas at Tavolata. When the kids are left at home, Bistango or Whistle Punk is usually our go-to. The new All-Access Annual Pass to Riverfront

Park this year (a fun Christmas present) makes riding the Loeffl Carrousel a regular event and we are already looking forward to the Numerica Skate Ribbon opening. The spectacular Pavilion light shows during spring and summer are often a nighttime fieldtrip on the weekends. Many of our traditions include a visit downtown—birthday celebrations always include Red Robin and a stop at Sweet Frostings. We have our trusty favorites, like O’Doherty’s but enjoy finding new gems as well. Almost every downtown adventure (and we have a lot!) ends with a spin of the wheel on Wall Street to let us know what we will do next time. We love our downtown and we always love making new memories there.



# INDABA COFFEE

love people, love coffee

*By Bobby Enslow, Indaba Founder & CEO*



Opening Indaba Coffee in downtown Spokane was driven by a mix of personal passion and a strategic eye for opportunity. Downtown Spokane's vibrant atmosphere and potential for revitalization captivated me, inspiring a vision to contribute to its resurgence by providing more than just coffee, but a space for community connection.

The customer base at Indaba Coffee reflects the diverse fabric of downtown Spokane. From artists to professionals, each individual adds to the richness of our community. Indaba serves as a welcoming environment where conversations flow freely, fostering a sense of belonging and inclusivity.

Looking ahead, my vision for Indaba Coffee extends beyond

being a mere coffee shop. I aspire for it to serve as a platform for positive change, supporting local artisans, partnering with nonprofits, and embracing sustainable practices. Indaba is not just a business; it's a vehicle for social impact.

In the future, I envision Indaba Coffee continuing to grow while staying true to its roots. Our commitment to exceptional coffee and fostering meaningful connections will remain unwavering.

As we expand, our mission to be a force for good in the community will guide our actions, ensuring that Indaba remains a beacon of positivity in downtown Spokane's evolving landscape. Our mantra sums it up: Love People, Love Coffee.

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# PERSPECTIVES

## from a downtown resident

By Andrea Williams

Ever since I left the EWU dorms, I've been a downtown enthusiast! Recently, I've even downsized to a cozy 220-square-foot studio apartment. For me, downtown living is the epitome of accessibility and a deliberate lifestyle choice. Instead of sitting in traffic, I stroll around the corner or through the alley to get to work with a stop at a local coffee shop on the way. Forget about yard work—I'd much rather take a walk to Riverfront Park and admire the falls and beautiful river. And cleaning? Well, let's just say I've traded in scrubbing for exploring. I have spare time to walk to events, concerts, breweries, and all of the local restaurants.

This lifestyle isn't just about convenience; it's about truly living life to the fullest. I find myself with ample time to dive into community activities, lend a hand through volunteering, and show some love to our local business community aka shopping! Spokane hits the jackpot with events every single night, a mouthwatering local food scene, and all of it nestled within a mile radius of downtown—Oh, and ten minutes to a state park! What more do you need?! Every day, stepping out of my front door I can't wait to discover what's happening. The buzz and excitement are contagious—there's always something to discover downtown!



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Photo Credit: Nick James



# EXPLORING SPOKANE

## a walking tour adventure with wander spokane

If you've ever strolled through Spokane's downtown, you might have stumbled upon a group of enthusiastic walkers, led by a guide eager to share the city's rich history, vibrant art scene, and culinary delights.

This is the essence of Wander Spokane Guided Tours, a passion project turned thriving business. Founded by Alana Livingston in 2019, her vision has brought to life a unique exploration of Spokane's rich history, artistic flair, and culinary delights, all on foot.

The idea for Wander Spokane emerged from a blend of personal experiences and professional aspirations. As Livingston recounts, it all started with daily hikes with her young children, weaving tales of Spokane's landmarks, art installations, and historical sites. Coupled with a desire to re-enter the workforce in a family-friendly capacity, the concept of offering guided walking tours crystallized. Leveraging her background in fine dining and wine, she saw an opportunity to combine her passions and introduce others to the wonders of Spokane on foot.

Since its inception, Wander Spokane has been a cornerstone of downtown exploration. With the city's walkable layout and scenic riverfront, each tour offers a unique blend of urban charm and natural beauty. Participants not only learn about Spokane's past but also immerse themselves in its present, savoring local flavors and admiring architectural gems along the way.

One of the key advantages of a walkable downtown is the accessibility it offers to attractions and points of interest. Tour groups can cover significant ground on foot, ensuring that they experience the city's highlights within a reasonable timeframe. Whether it's sampling delectable treats at local eateries or marveling at public art installations, the proximity of these amenities enhances the overall tour experience.

When asked about her favorite route, Livingston's enthusiasm shines through. While she loves all her tours, she relishes the opportunity to craft custom experiences for private groups, tailoring each itinerary to their interests and preferences. This personalized touch not only keeps her engaged but also deepens her affection for Spokane with every new discovery.

### SPOKANE PARKS

87

NUMBER OF CITY PARKS

122.4

DOWNTOWN PARK ACRES

146 FT

FALLS HEIGHT

10

ATTRACTIONS IN RIVERFRONT PARK

Source: City of Spokane

### STA BUS RIDERSHIP

51

Regional transit routes on Spokane Transit Authority

8,947,157

Fixed-route rides in 2023

570,000+ RIDES

July 2023 – May 2024 (first 10 months of) City Line

Source: Spokane Transit Authority

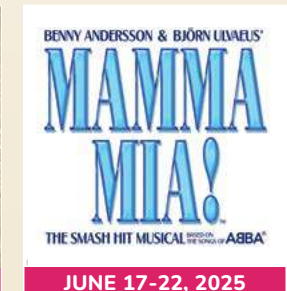
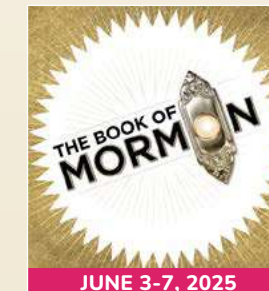
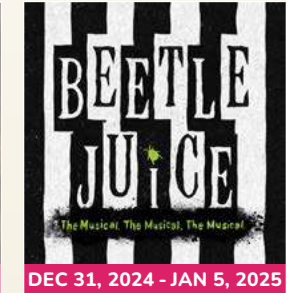
Downtown Spokane boasts unique features that set it apart from other parts of the city. From the tranquil river flowing through its core to the vast wilderness areas just minutes away, the downtown area offers a perfect blend of urban convenience and natural serenity. It's a setting that captivates both locals and visitors alike, providing a backdrop for unforgettable tour experiences.

Reflecting on memorable moments, Livingston recalls a Winter Cheer Tour that left a lasting impression. As families bonded over shared experiences and musical performances in the penthouse of the Paulsen building, friendships blossomed, exemplifying the spirit of community that defines Spokane.

Ultimately, what fuels Livingston's passion for this work is her love for Spokane and its community. Through guided walking tours, she not only showcases the city's treasures but also fosters connections and a sense of pride among residents and visitors alike. It's more than just a business... it's a labor of love aimed at showcasing Spokane's unique charm and inviting others to become a part of its story.

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# PEDALING THROUGH SPOKANE

## a conversation with sally phillips of the spokane bicycle club

In 2023, the Spokane Bicycle Club marked its 50th anniversary, a testament to its enduring commitment to cycling and community. With a membership hovering around 300, the club has become a hub for recreational riders seeking camaraderie and adventure on two wheels.

Organizing bike rides lies at the heart of the club's activities, with a focus on recreational riding intertwined with social connections. These rides often culminate in coffee breaks or restaurant stops, fostering friendships and shared experiences along the way. Additionally, the club orchestrates low-cost multi-day bike tours, providing members with opportunities to explore new routes and destinations.

Beyond leisurely rides, the Spokane Bicycle Club actively engages with the community through various initiatives. From facilitating bike corrals during events like Bloomsday to promoting Bike Everywhere Month in May, the club advocates for cycling as both a recreational activity and a viable commuting option. Members also play a pivotal role in advancing bike education programs in elementary schools and serving on the Spokane Bicycle Advisory Board, amplifying their impact on local cycling infrastructure and policy.



Source: Spokane Regional Transit Council

In downtown Spokane, creating a safe environment for cyclists is paramount. Sally Phillips, a dedicated member of the Spokane Bicycle Club, emphasizes the importance of infrastructure improvements to support biking as a viable commuting option. Protected bike lanes and enhanced access to downtown areas without heavy traffic are crucial steps toward ensuring the safety and convenience of cyclists. Moreover, initiatives such as increasing off-street parking for bikes contribute to alleviating concerns about bike theft and accessibility.

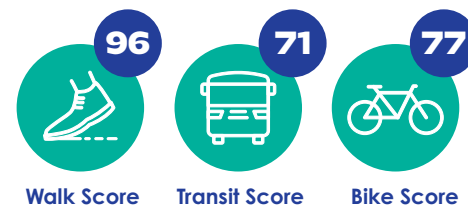
Bike Everywhere Month in May serves as a catalyst for raising awareness about biking as a sustainable mode of transportation. Phillips notes a growing interest in the event, with both participants and government leaders demonstrating increased support for cyclist-friendly initiatives. As awareness grows, so does the willingness to integrate cyclists' needs into urban planning and street improvements.

For those hesitant to embrace biking as a primary mode of transportation, Phillips offers practical advice. Starting with recreational riding to build confidence and familiarize oneself with bike safety is key. Identifying suitable routes using resources like the Spokane Regional Transportation Council's bike map and adopting a flexible approach – such as combining biking with public transit – can help ease the transition from car to bike.

The benefits of biking extend beyond mere convenience. From improved physical health to reduced environmental impact, incorporating biking into daily routines offers a multitude of advantages. Phillips emphasizes the positive impact on mental well-being and sets a good example for future generations by embracing biking as a sustainable lifestyle choice.

Looking ahead, Phillips envisions a downtown Spokane that prioritizes cyclist safety and convenience. Protected bike lanes, highly visible parking with enhanced security measures, and reevaluating intersection designs to reduce accidents are among her top priorities.

For Phillips, biking isn't just a means of transportation – it's a lifelong passion that fosters connections, promotes well-being, and empowers individuals to make a positive impact on their communities. As she continues to pedal through Spokane's streets, she remains steadfast in her commitment to promoting cycling as a sustainable and enjoyable way of life.



Source: Walkscore.com, "Riverside Spokane"

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The Downtown Spokane Partnership serves as Spokane's premier central city advocate. Established in 1995 to ensure Spokane's urban core remains a healthy regional center of business, retail trade, government, education, transportation, and living. Membership is open to any and all individuals, partnerships, firms, corporations and businesses interested in the welfare and development of downtown Spokane.

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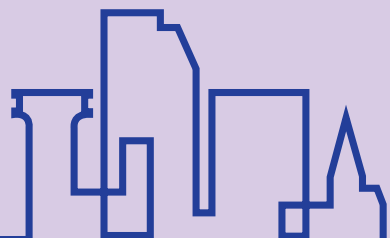
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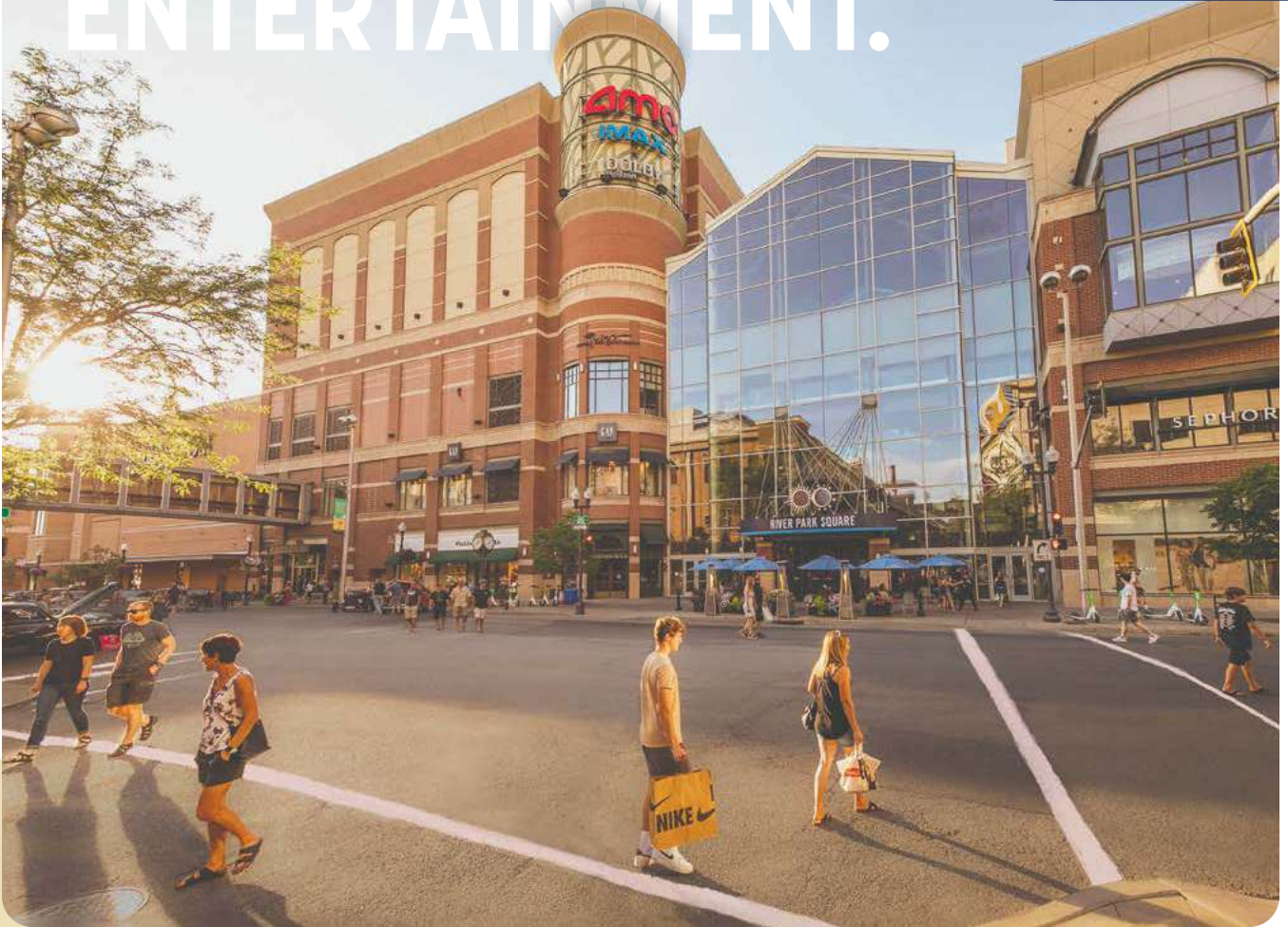
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