

"The life instinct of the city  
turns its energy to the pursuit  
and realization of opportuni-  
ties for the citizens to thrive  
and prosper."

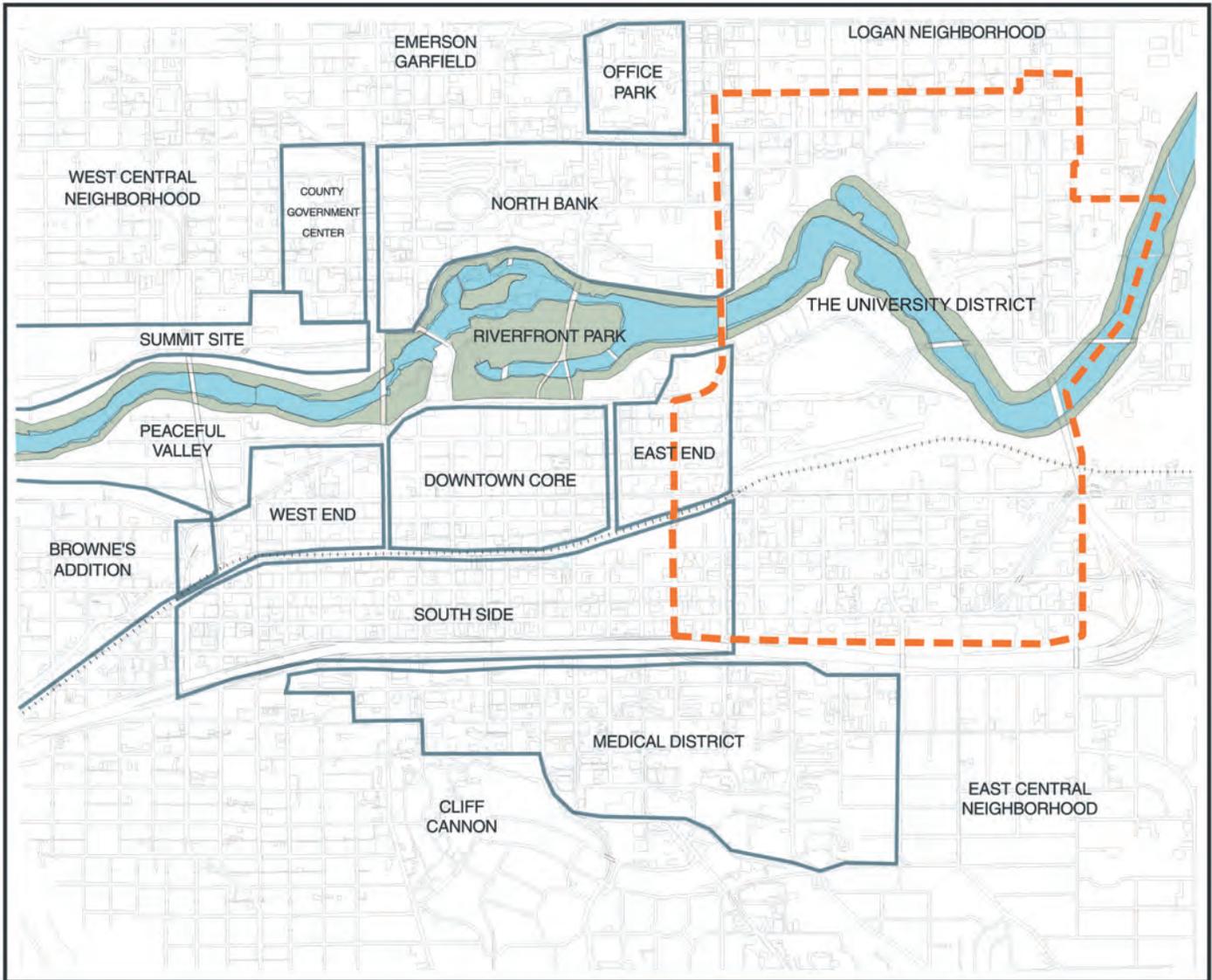
-Daniel Kemmis, 1995.

SPOKANE  
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executive summary  
vol. 1.5

# THE UNIVERSITY DISTRICT





# the university district strategic masterplan

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executive summary



for more information contact: the city of spokane office of economic development  
[www.spokaneuniversitydistrict.info](http://www.spokaneuniversitydistrict.info) : (509) 625-6282



executive summary

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## 1.0: introduction

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### momentum

The City of Spokane is key to the economic growth of both the State of Washington and the Inland Empire region, which extends north to Canada, east to the Continental Divide and western Montana, south to Oregon, and west to the Cascades. It is the second largest city in Washington State and its signature features include a vibrant downtown



Photo by Peter Hassel Photography, courtesy of Steamplant Square

and the 100-acre Riverfront Park; the Spokane River and Gorge; a regional medical cluster; world class universities; beautiful, historic neighborhoods; and a true entrepreneurial spirit, making it a premier destination for visitors and businesses alike. Spokane has received considerable national recognition of these attributes and character including the 2004 All-American City Award; the Top US Intelligent Community Award; the only U.S. city named to the top seven Intelligent Communities of the World for 2004; and significant media attention for such creative initiatives as our downtown wireless SpokaneHotZone.

Perhaps our two biggest place-based assets are the natural environment of the city and the region, and the magnificent legacy of historic buildings throughout our city.

In fact our Historic Preservation office was recently recognized for facilitating over \$27.3 million in redevelopment and restoration of Spokane's historic properties in one year. To put this achievement in perspective, the combined total for the rest of the state that year was \$30.3 million. Revitalization projects in the downtown area have included retro-fitting a former steam plant into a world class restaurant and state-of-the-art office facility, restoring a turn-of-the-century luxury hotel, restoring an Art Deco theatre,



Photo courtesy of Jim Woodworth



Land-Use  
Technical  
Workgroup:

Regional  
Context

and rehabilitation of historic building inventories that have created new housing, shopping and entertainment venues. These projects have been catalysts for additional public and private investments, creating a vibrant environment that is making news regionally and nationally.

Additionally, citizen involvement on key projects such as the Spokane River Gorge project, which aims to complete the protection, restoration and recreational development of the gorge that runs through the west end of the downtown, as well as participating enthusiastically in the development of the University District illustrate the can do spirit embodied here.

**the transition**

Spokane is now uniquely positioned to reclaim an area adjoining downtown plagued by decades of decay. It is at the core of a higher education and health care cluster spanning the area from Division Street on the west, Hamilton on the east, Interstate 90 on the south, and Sharp Avenue on the north.

The University District Project’s focus on creating, attracting and retaining new economy workers and businesses represents a fundamental shift in the pursuit of economic development for the City of Spokane and the region.

Quality of life for the new economy workers means, diversity, authenticity of place, a healthy natural environment, access to recreation, arts and cultural

venues, a compelling music scene, a vibrant downtown, and perhaps most of all a place that rewards creativity and opportunity-making, while removing barriers to innovation. The result will be the creation of a strong economic engine for the new century.



Photo courtesy of Riverpark Square

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### the university district

The University District strategic masterplan addresses economic development issues, urban growth, environmental restoration, transportation and affordable housing needs.

- > Location. Its proximity to Downtown, the Spokane River, and historic residential neighborhoods.
- > Education. Higher education institutions, whose student enrollment is expected to grow to more than 11,000 students by 2010.
- > Health Care. Its proximity to the medical district whose growth is predicted to exceed \$420 million in payroll by 2010.

- > Recreation. The Centennial Trail that bisects the District and provides an excellent resource for alternative transportation and recreation.
- > Authenticity. Several historic buildings that could be renovated.
- > Diversity. The district's population is twice as diverse as the rest of the city or county.
- > Opportunity. A vast amount of underdeveloped land.

### key issues

- > Connectivity. The one mandate that came out of the public workshops, was to seek improvements for the pedestrian and bicyclist environment.
- > Vehicular Traffic. As the University District grows and redevelops, the impact will stress the existing road infrastructure.
- > Real or Perceived Barriers. Due to historic land use, there is a high probability of Brownfields issues, which must be mitigated in order for economic redevelopment to occur.
- > Regulatory Environment Changes. Mixed-Use development has not been prevalent within Spokane until recently and local building and lending officials are unfamiliar with certain aspects of this type of development.

To address these concerns and leverage the assets, the community and University District team has developed a strategic plan for the University District. Fundamentally it is comprised of the following.

### the university district concept:

- > Is based on key design principles that support pedestrian/bicycle-based populations, and mitigate

the current traffic issues around the campus area. Retail corridors, that include professional services, cottage industries and entertainment venues, will be pedestrian and bicycle friendly. A major element of this will be the construction of a pedestrian/ bicycle bridge that will cross the existing Burlington Northern/ Santa Fe railroad tracks at Grant Street. This bold concept will facilitate pedestrian and bicycle traffic directly to the south end of the Riverpoint Campus and provide a link to the underdeveloped commercial district around Sprague Avenue.

- > Focuses on creating a vibrant mixed-use environment with housing, campus facilities, amenities, shopping, dining and gathering places. As envisioned, not only will housing units be constructed, but also permanent employment will be created through collateral businesses to support a growing student population. Retail diversity will be one of the primary objectives, attracting students, faculty and out-of-district visitors. This will provide economic stability to the people of the region and contribute significant revenues to the City of Spokane through increased property values and sales tax revenues. While all communities are looking for the catalyst to spur economic development and reinvigorate downtown cores, Spokane has a very unique opportunity to create an authentic environment that is distinct in its vision, impact and setting.



Illustration by Tony Janson

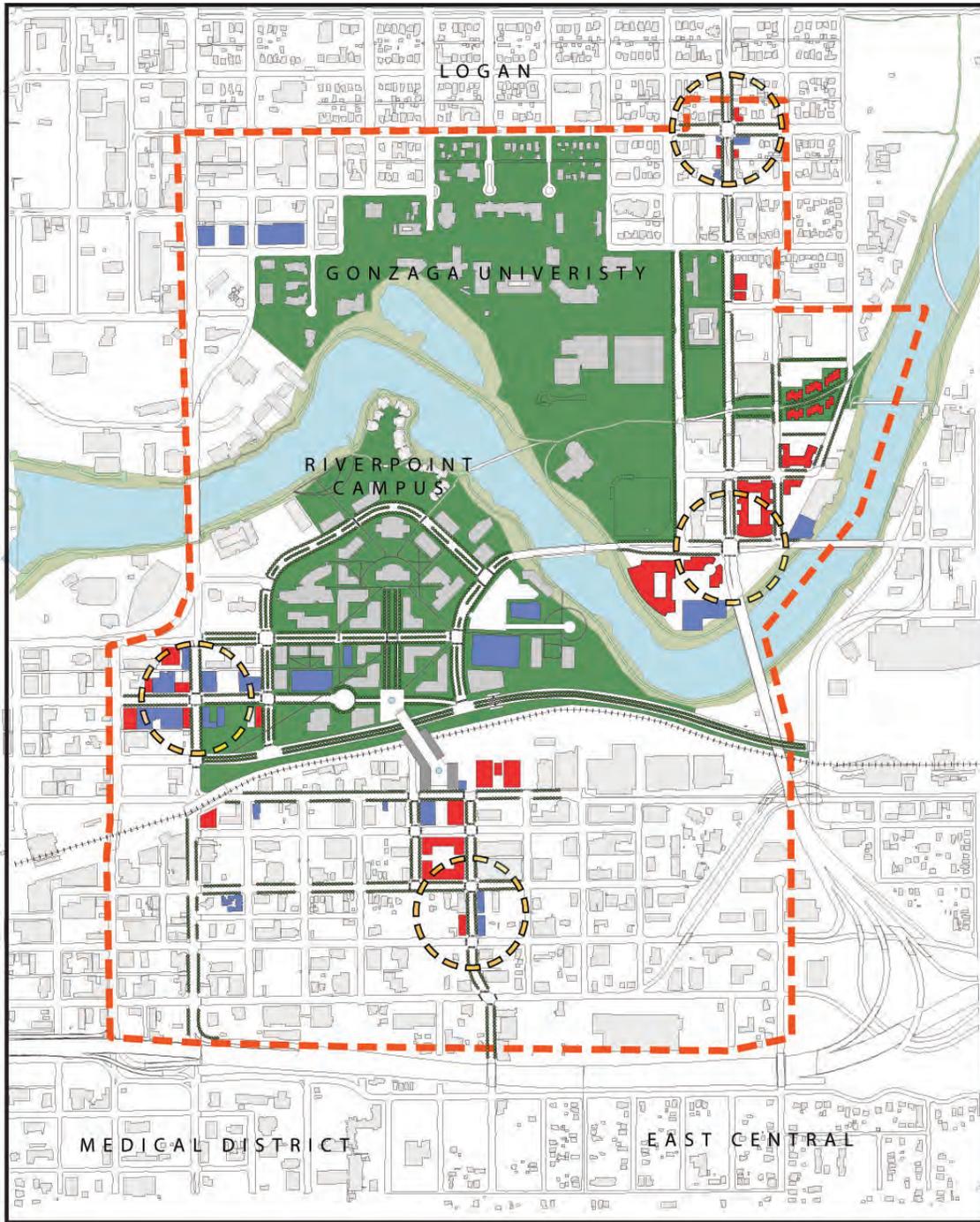
- > Incorporates sustainable design as a core principle. Sustainability is addressed in every aspect of the plan -- through the proposed pedestrian and bicycle improvements, the restoration of the Spokane River, maximizing existing infrastructure, utilizing 'green designs' for new infrastructure and the expectation that new buildings will strive for LEED certification.
- > Creates public meeting and gathering places that promote festivals, community gatherings, ceremonies and public performances.

In summary, The University District is a bold vision and plan to attract a critical mass of top students, staff and faculty, cutting-edge researchers, and creative entrepreneurs – all of which are the catalysts for increased commercialization of technology, growth in our health care industry, and overall economic prosperity for the region.



Illustration by Tony Janson

It builds upon and incorporates existing plans, activities and assets — leveraging them into a strong economic engine that lays the foundation for Spokane’s growth in the next century. It is time to forge Spokane’s new destiny.



Highlighted activity centers include Sherman & Pacific, Main & Division, Trent & Hamilton, and Sharp & Hamilton.



**Highlighted activity centers include Sherman & Pacific, Main & Division, Trent & Hamilton, and Sharp & Hamilton.**

## 2.0: context

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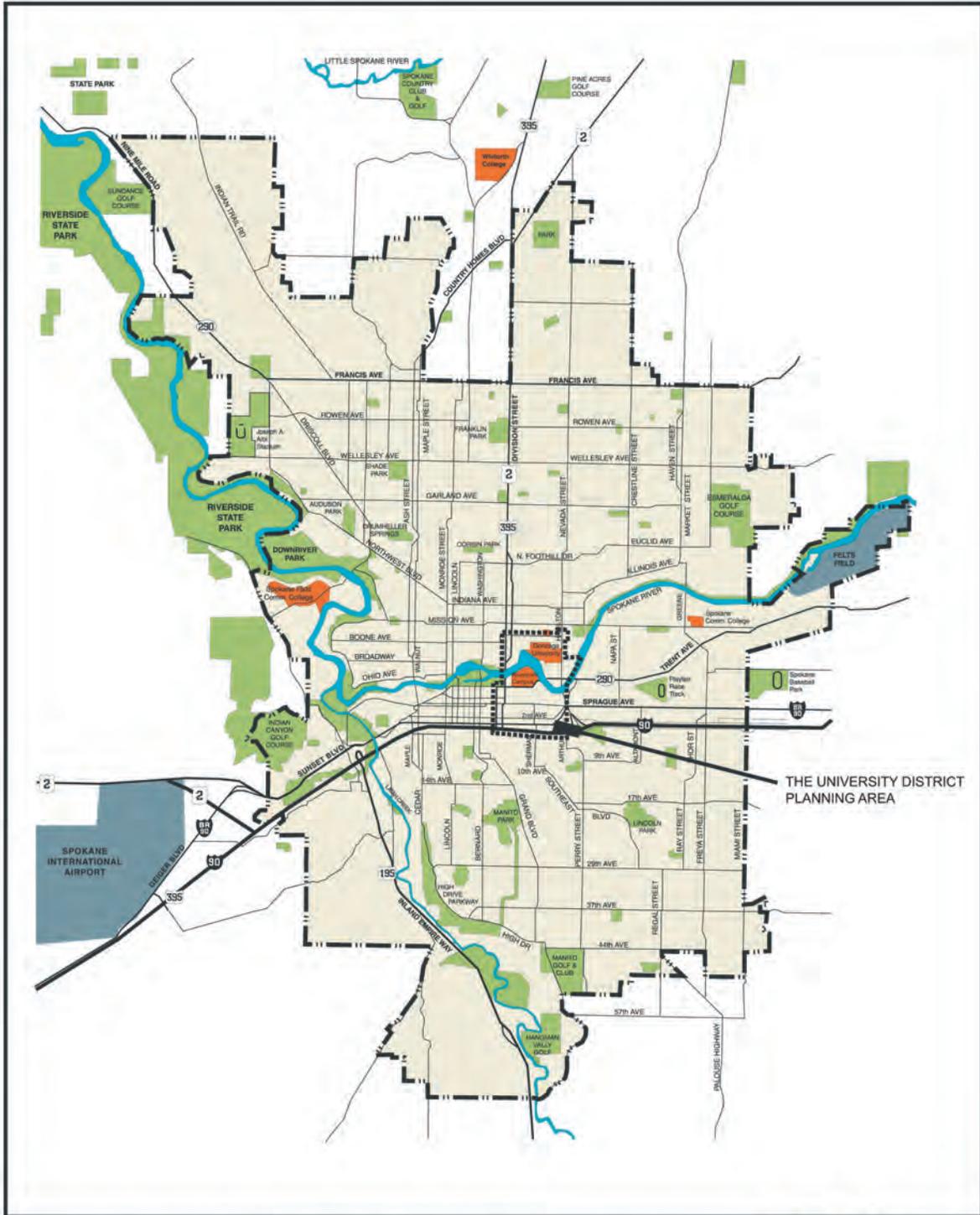
### **the university district context**

The University District is home to an eclectic mix of history, uses, and demographics. The District is located on both sides of the Spokane River directly east of Spokane's Central Business District and downtown, the regional destination for business, entertainment, shopping, and dining. At the heart of the District, located on the south bank of the River, is the Riverpoint Campus comprised of the Spokane campuses of Washington State University and Eastern Washington University. Immediately to the north across the river is Gonzaga University. While Gonzaga University was founded in 1887, the Eastern Washington University and Washington State University presence on Riverpoint began in 1995. Community Colleges of Spokane located their administration offices to the Riverpoint Campus in 2000.

South of the Riverpoint Campus is Spokane's medical district which includes Sacred Heart and Deaconess Hospitals and numerous clinics and support services to the health care industry. To the immediate south and east is the East Central neighborhood, an area historically residential in nature but subsequently zoned and developed as industrial. To the north and adjacent to the Gonzaga University Campus are the primarily residential areas of the Logan neighborhood. Along Division Street and the western periphery of The University District is a variety of mostly auto-oriented commercial development, while on the easterly edge at Hamilton Street and Trent Avenue are several manufacturing and industrial businesses. Further north along Hamilton, in the vicinity of Sharp Avenue, the area has developed as a neighborhood retail and commercial center. Lastly, the District also is adjacent to and includes significant access to transportation options – the railroad, Interstate 90, State Highway 395 (Division Street), Trent Avenue, and Hamilton Street - as well as the pedestrian and bicycle-oriented Centennial Trail along the river.

### **general geography**

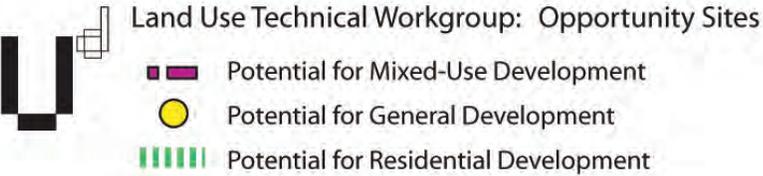
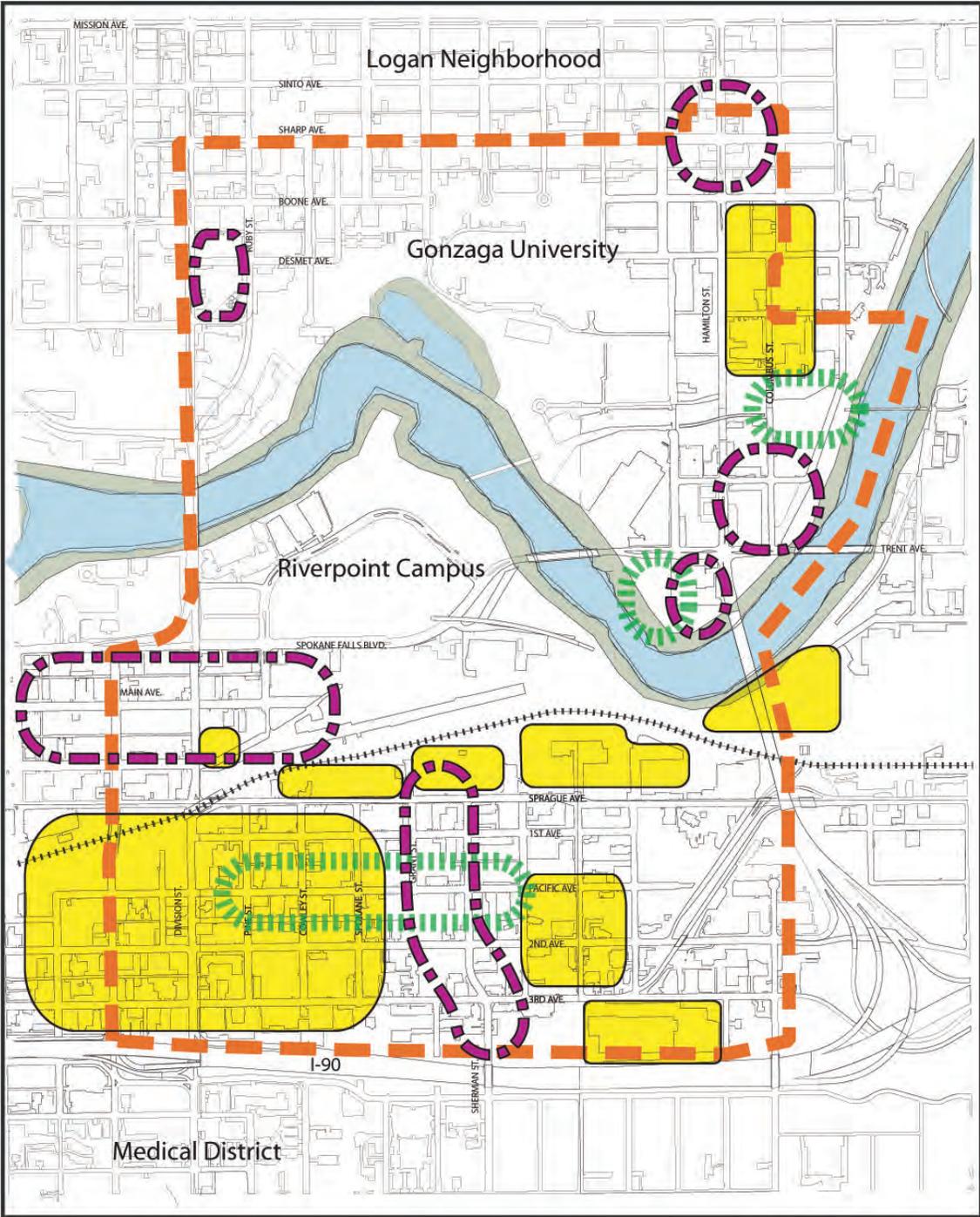
Based upon existing, logical defining elements, the boundaries of The University District can be established for certain issues, such as prioritization of projects, tax incentives, etc. For these purposes, the physical boundaries of the District are considered as Division Street on the west, Hamilton on the east, Interstate 90 on the south, and Sharp Avenue on the north. However, because of the far reaching economic impacts and potential of a higher education-based economic development strategy focused at the Riverpoint Campus, the "sphere of influence" for the District incorporates a very large – and necessarily undefined – area as it creates and disperses catalytic economic energy to the surrounding areas.

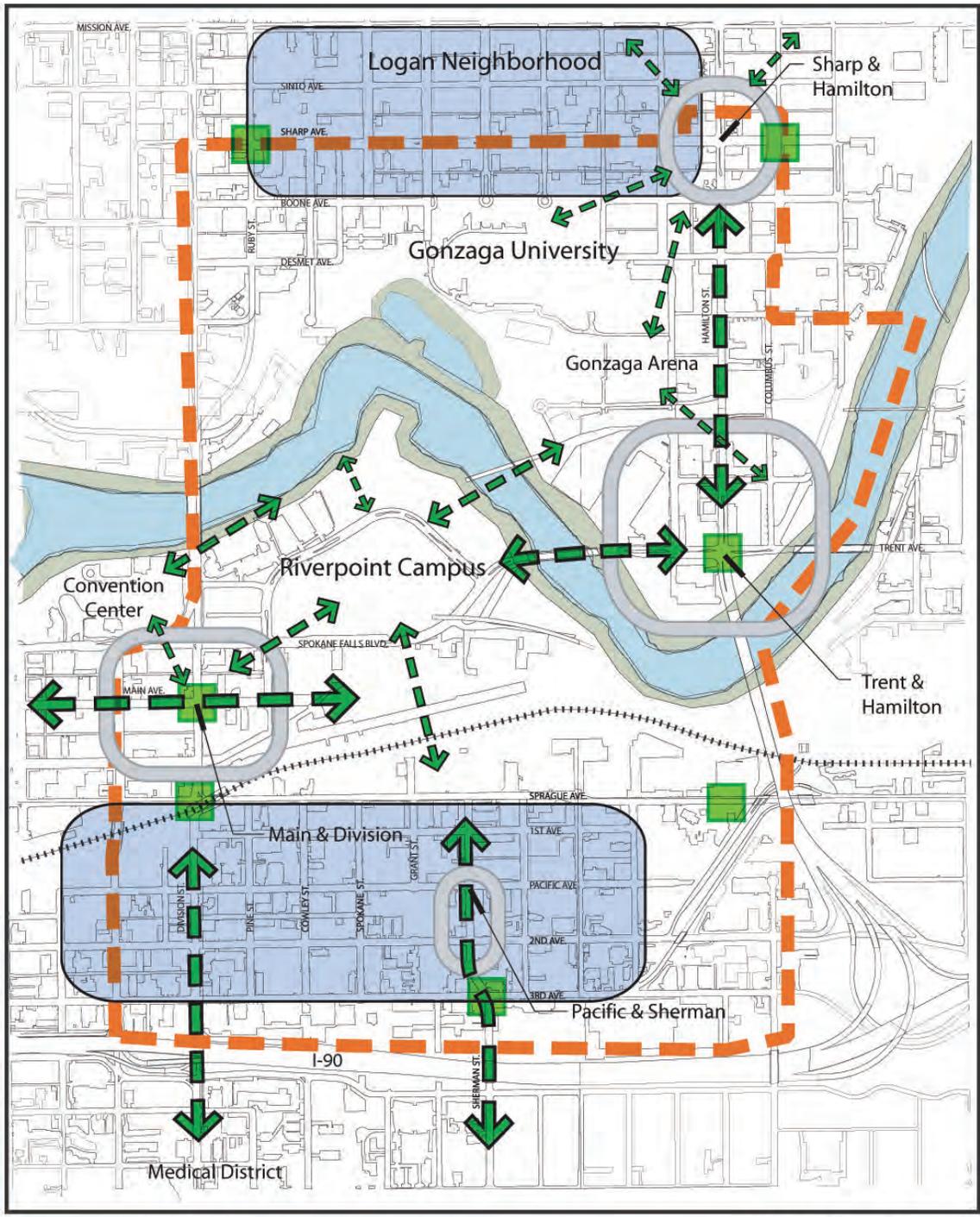


The University District is ideally located in the center of the city.



Spokane's urban fabric is woven with the higher education and health care industries.

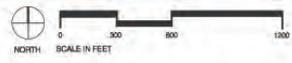




Good grid systems contribute to pedestrian friendly environments and enhanced connectivity.

Land Use Technical Workgroup: Connections

- Important Connections
- Gateway Point
- Good Grid System



This central location along the Spokane River, in close proximity to the region's medical cluster, adjacent to downtown and adjoining industrial, residential, and commercial developments, is a strategic – and functional – attribute. This location provides a unique opportunity to tightly weave Spokane's urban fabric with the higher education and health care industries into a diverse and powerful economic engine of the 21st century.

### **north bank**

The north bank of The University District contains portions of the Logan neighborhood, the Gonzaga University Campus and the Hamilton Street corridor. Presently, there is a significant diversity of housing, businesses, and institutional uses in the area. The neighborhood retail area is concentrated around the intersection of Sharp Avenue and Hamilton and is an identified Neighborhood Center in the City of Spokane's Comprehensive Plan.

Along the east side of Hamilton, between Sharp Avenue and Trent, the area is relatively lightly developed with several undeveloped parcels and one large developed parcel. The west side of Hamilton is primarily owned and/or occupied by Gonzaga University, the major institutional presence in this area of the District. Located further south towards Trent, and on both sides of Hamilton, is E-Z Loader Corporation, a major local manufacturing business. In this area, the Spokane River and the Centennial Trail bisect the District providing excellent pedestrian and bicycle connectivity to downtown.

### **riverpoint campus**

The Riverpoint Campus is considered the heart of The University District. The campus is located on the south side of the Spokane River, bordered on the south by the Burlington Northern/Santa Fe Rail line

and on the west by downtown Spokane. To the north and east is Gonzaga University, Trent Avenue and the Hamilton activity areas. Riverpoint is home to the Spokane campuses of Washington State University, Eastern Washington University, Spokane Intercollegiate Research and Technology Institute (SIRTI), and the administrative offices of Community Colleges of Spokane.

The area also includes several hotel/motel establishments, local businesses, and some residential development adjacent to the river. There is a substantial inventory of undeveloped land in the area to accommodate future build out of the campus, with most of the parcels being held by Washington State University or affiliated foundations.

### **east sprague area**

The East Sprague area is defined as the area between Browne on the west and Hamilton on the east, the Burlington Northern/Santa Fe Rail line to the north and Interstate 90 to the south. Included in the East Central Community Development Neighborhood, the area is uniquely positioned to facilitate and benefit from the growth of The University District. This is due to its close proximity to the Riverpoint Campus and Gonzaga University to the north, the Central Business District and downtown Spokane to the west, and the medical district to the south. Included in and to the immediate east is the former Playfair Race Track, 120 acres of highly developable land currently owned by the City of Spokane. The area also contains many industrial, commercial, and retail businesses – with some residential remaining – holding immense opportunities for infill and adaptive reuse development.



## 3.0: public process

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### overview

The University District Strategic Masterplan process was convened with participation of leaders from throughout the community. The objectives of the masterplan process was to strategize on the planning process, orchestrate public workshops, provide leadership and support to sub-committee workgroups and synthesize public input into the Strategic Masterplan.

Mayor James West challenged the leadership group to produce an expedited plan in six months rather than the normal 18 months. The leadership group added critical membership and a consultant team to its group in order to achieve the Mayor's request and developed the community workshops around the core principles of soliciting wide, diverse, and continuous community input that would produce a plan of the people; and develop a strategic plan grounded in economic reality.



image courtesy of Avista, photograph by Latisha Hill

To this end, four community workshops were held beginning in March 31, 2004 and ending with the final presentation on November 11, 2004. Over a thousand citizens participated in the workshops or were involved in numerous outreach and community organization presentations. By running the workshops as charrettes, it allowed lively, energetic and overwhelmingly positive participation by all of the attendees.

### background

The University District strategic planning process was a natural result of activity and efforts that were occurring in the spring of 2003. Many community leaders were coalescing around the idea of the economic development value of focusing on further development of the Riverpoint and Gonzaga campuses, and adjacent areas. This development would tie into the medical complex on the South Hill and include major redevelopment of the surrounding neighborhoods extending into linkages with the renaissance occurring in the downtown core. This idea had germinated years before when various leaders worked on and were successful in bringing and consolidating

a higher education campus at Riverpoint. Activities were increasing in all arenas, pointing to this being a tipping point in the community's quest for moving toward a technology-led economic development strategy based on its major assets of medical and educational infrastructure.

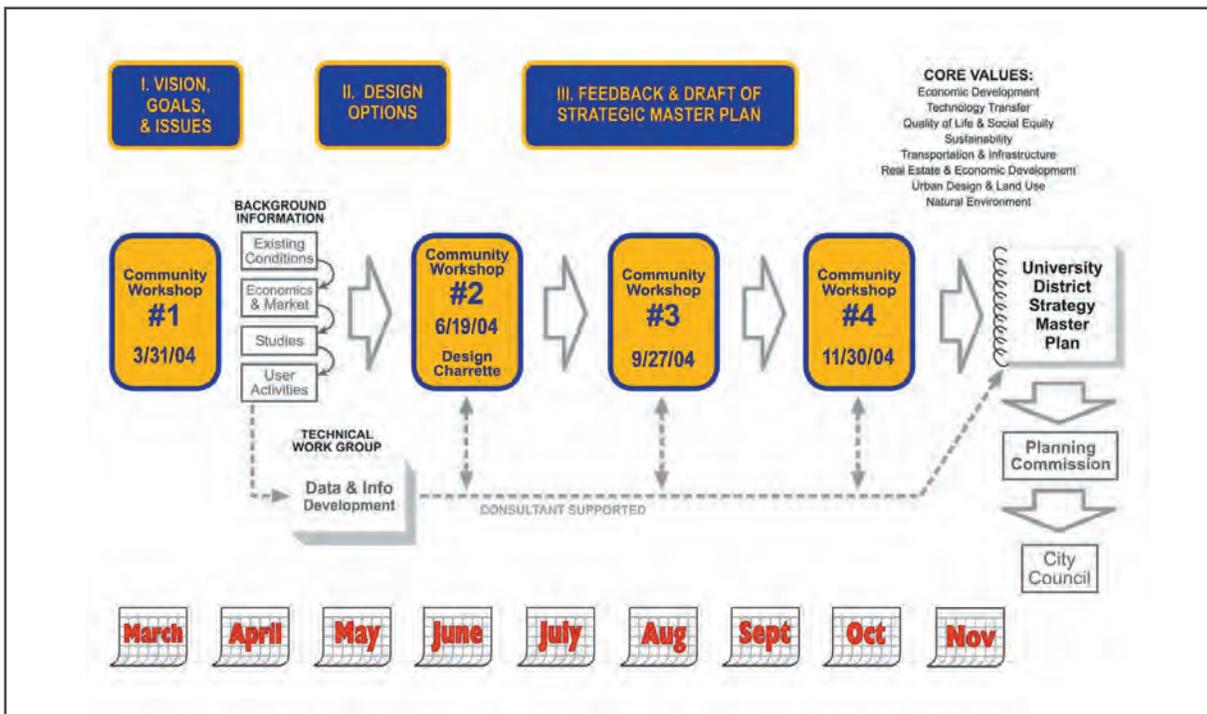
### the planning and organizing group (POG)

Very early on it was recognized that the strategic masterplanning process would necessarily be broad and inclusive while addressing the constraints of time and resources. To address these challenges, the Planning and Organizing Group (POG), consisting of leaders from throughout the community who were dedicated to the successful creation of The University District Strategic Masterplan, was founded and convened. Led by the City of Spokane Mayor's Office of Economic Development, in partnership with co-chair Avista, this group was charged with overseeing the creation of a dynamic, visionary, and robust strategic plan.

The objectives of the POG were to strategize on the planning process, orchestrate public workshops, provide leadership and support to sub-committee Workgroups and synthesize public input into the Strategic Masterplan.

Additionally, in order to facilitate a robust discovery and community dialogue, this group worked diligently to ensure the opportunities for public input throughout this expeditious and efficient process, and adopted a set of core ideals that would be embedded throughout the project including:

- > Solicit wide, diverse, and continuous community input that would produce a plan of the people;
- > Develop a strategic plan based on physical reality;
- > Identify, inventory, and synthesize existing conditions into issues and opportunities;
- > Develop a strategic plan grounded in economic reality; and
- > Develop a strategic plan with clearly articulated actions and steps for realizing the vision.



## 4.0: activity centers

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Recognizing a limit on resources and the overall market in the area, the development of The University District focuses its energy on specific priority projects or sub-areas for implementation. These areas were identified through the community process as consistently having the highest potential to activate The University District, as well as provide catalytic energy to the surrounding areas.

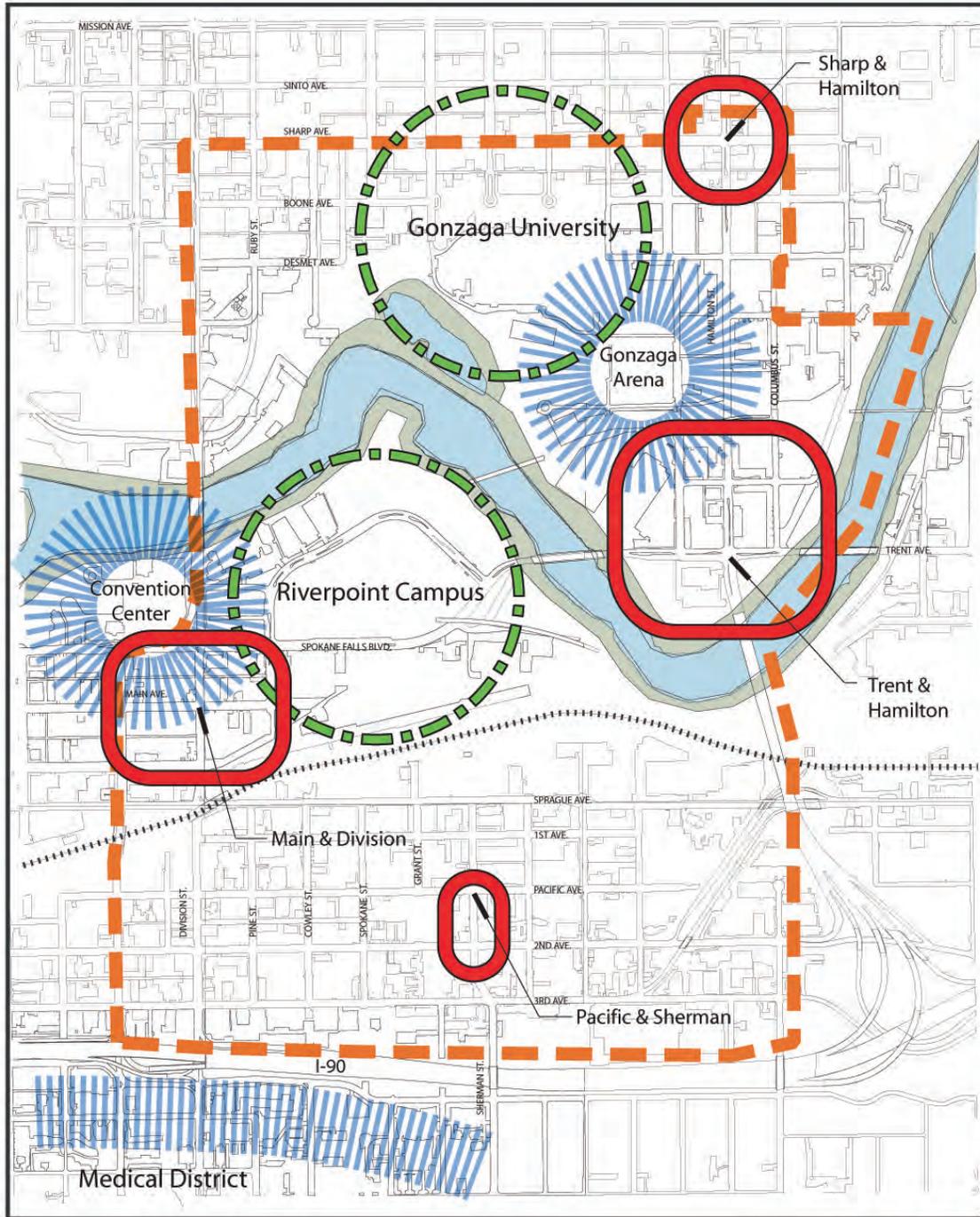
priority areas:

- > Main St. and Division
- > The East Sprague Area
- > The Hamilton Street Corridor
  - > Hamilton and Trent
  - > Hamilton and Sharp
- > The Spokane River

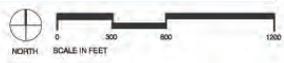
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While there is tremendous potential within The University District, it is also recognized that we must be purposeful and cognizant regarding the potential impacts to adjoining areas, as well as leveraging planned growth. One of the core principles identified is to activate the periphery of The University District - not to cannibalize economic activity from the downtown or adjacent neighborhood districts, but to utilize the catalytic nature of the District to strengthen and stimulate these areas. Additionally, this approach serves to focus any negative impacts associated with the growth in a purposeful manner.

“Opportunity sites” or projects within each of these Activity Centers are sites with high potential to be leveraged – that is to stimulate subsequent investment, infill or development due to their location or key role in the District implementation. An additional objective is to recognize the individual characteristics of these activity nodes and create distinct and unique centers within the District. In this way, the overall strength of The University District is dispersed to the periphery and downtown, revitalizing surrounding neighborhoods by facilitating planned growth and easing pressures on existing residential areas, and beginning the reclamation process of the river in order to make it a focal point and asset for the area.



Dynamic opportunities emerge from the overlapping impacts of catalyst areas.



**main and division**

The Main and Division center at the edge of Downtown, is in close proximity to the Convention Center expansion, and will be the connection between downtown and the Riverpoint campus. The completion of the convention center should provide investment in the area as development seeks to capitalize on the activities that will be held there.



Photo by Darrin Griechen, City of Spokane

**Issues**

Pedestrian safety is a critical issue for this area. This will become increasingly important as the Riverpoint Campus is built out and the bridge to Sprague Ave. is completed. The major crossing issues will be at Main Ave. and Riverside Ave. An additional issue focuses on returning Main Ave. between Pine and Brown into a two-way arterial.

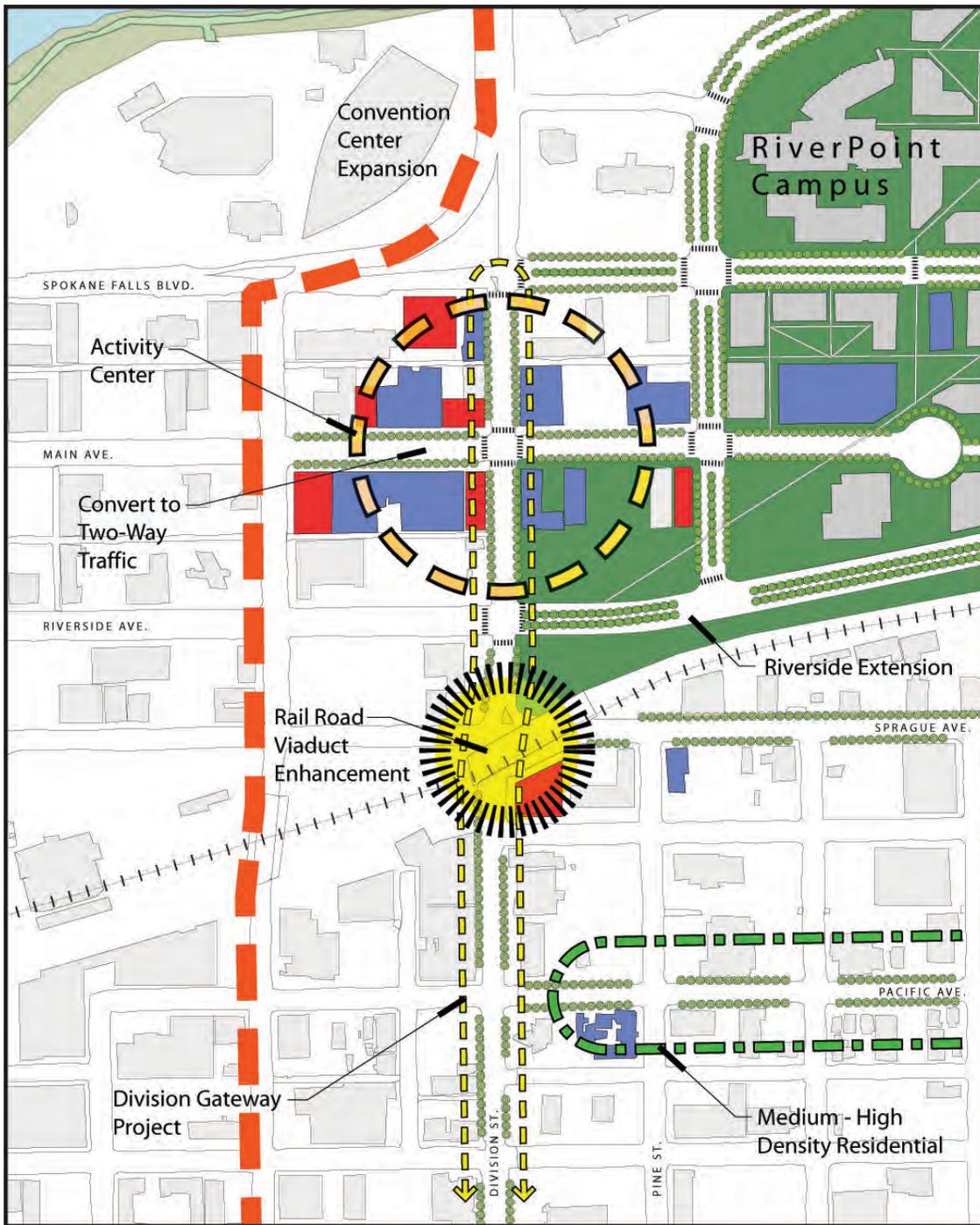
**Opportunities**

The area on Main Ave. has experienced significant reinvestment including an eclectic range of businesses, some housing, and a number of non-profit organizations. In addition, there is further potential for redevelopment of the several underutilized parcels in this area.

**Projects**

- > Pedestrian Crossing at Division: An enhanced pedestrian crossing at Division and Main street will provide a safer and more inviting crossing to and from the Riverpoint Campus and Downtown and blend with the streetscape improvements along Main Ave.
- > Streetscape Improvements: The character of the area will be enhanced by providing pedestrian amenities along Main Ave. between Pine and Brown. Subsequently, it is advisable to partner with the Downtown Spokane Partnership to extend improvements further into downtown to create an inviting pedestrian corridor that will provide a vital link between Downtown and the University District.
- > Main Ave. converted to two-way: Initially this switch will occur between Pine and Brown, but in the future it would be advisable to consider extending the two-way designation further into Downtown. Two-way streets are less confusing to visitors in the area and offer better access to the businesses in the area.
- > Encourage development of housing: The energy and sense of ownership that housing provides has been shown throughout the country to add stability and lower crime in urban areas. Several opportunities sites exist to renovate the upper floors of existing buildings into housing. Additionally, new buildings are encouraged to include housing into their programs.
- > Develop a unique marketing identity for the area: The businesses in the area are encouraged to develop a unique marketing identity for their center. This will allow the City of Spokane and partner organizations to direct customers seeking their niche of goods, services and development to that area.

Contributing buildings are ones that add to the character of the area.



### Sprague Area

Development of the area is anticipated to come from several sources including: expansion of the medical services sector on the southern edge of the University District, completion of the bridge connecting the area to the Riverpoint Campus, and the build out and expansion of the research programs on the campus.

#### Issues

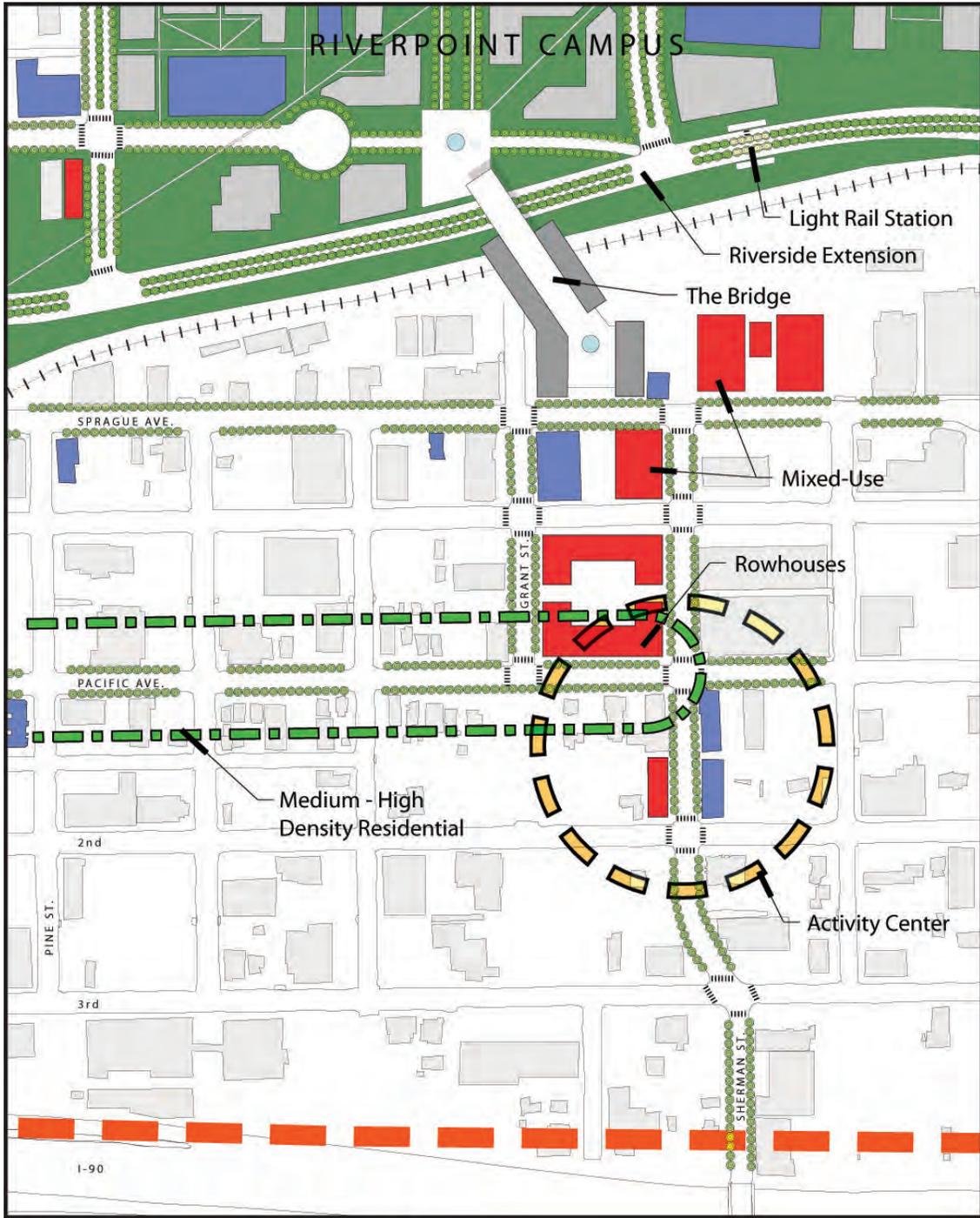
- > Public safety is a major concern for the area. After dark the area is sparsely populated and is frequented by transitioning populations.
- > The lack of pedestrian amenities and inviting streetscape presents a challenge for the area.
- > The railroad tracks and Interstate 90 have cut off the north south connections to and from the area. This lack of connection is a detriment to further development.
- > There is a lack of concentrated development to act as an anchor to the area. Pockmarked with vacant land and buildings in need of renovation, its momentum has been diluted.
- > Although the University District plan is committed to creating a diverse and dynamic environment, as the area redevelops and transitions from industrial to more commercial and mixed-uses, there is the potential for the displacement of some businesses. Plans must be established to facilitate the relocation of existing businesses within the City of Spokane and for property owners to capitalize on these changes.



Photo by Darrin Griechen, City of Spokane

#### Opportunities

- > The most important asset to the area is its close relation to Downtown, the medical district, higher education campuses, and the Terabyte Triangle. It is also located near the traditional residential neighborhood of East Central just to the South.



The Pacific and Sherman area has the potential for a small scale neighborhood center.

- > Within the roughly 54 square blocks of the Sprague area there is a significant amount of undeveloped and under-developed properties.
- > In addition to the many opportunity sites available, the infrastructure is already built and functional. This applies to the utility and communications infrastructures as has been detailed earlier in this document.



Photo by Darrin Griechen, City of Spokane

- > Because of its initial development as a residential neighborhood, the street grid and block size are ideal for compact and walkable residential and mixed-use development.
- > There are some streets in this area with large right of ways that will accommodate creative streetscapes facilitating pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular traffic.
- > At the corner of Sherman and Pacific, there is a small nucleus of business and buildings that have an inviting character and could anchor the development of the area as a small-scale neighborhood center.

**Projects**

- > A project of the University District is the Sprague Avenue Pedestrian Bridge. This is a key catalyst project of this plan. The bridge will create a fundamental north-south link from the higher education campuses to the north and the Sprague area and medical district to the south. With the completion of the nursing school on the Riverpoint campus, it is intended that the bridge will facilitate pedestrian traffic between the campus and the medical district. Additionally, the bridge will facilitate mixed use development in the Sprague area.
- > Development of diverse residential mix: The development of a diverse range of housing in this area includes: rowhouses and townhomes, apartments, lofts and studios to meet a range of housing prices. The goal is to accommodate a mix of students, young professionals, empty nesters and others needed to create a strong and diverse community.
- > Develop neighborhood services in the area: A present challenge in the redevelopment of housing in the area is to provide for necessary services to accommodate living in a compact and walkable community.



Illustration by Tony Janson



Illustration by Tony Janson

- > Develop a unique marketing identity for the area: The businesses in the area are encouraged to develop a unique marketing identity for their center. This will allow the City of Spokane and partner organization to direct customers seeking their niche of goods, services and development to that area.
- > Streetscape improvements along Sherman: Sherman is a designated bicycle route off the South Hill one of the crossings over Interstate 90 to the Medical District. It is uniquely positioned to facilitate pedestrian and bicycle traffic into the Riverpoint Campus as well as downtown. To enhance this connectivity it will be necessary to make improvements to the streetscape from the crossing over I-90 to Sprague Ave. These will include safety improvements and amenities for bicyclists and pedestrians.
- > Streetscape improvements along Sprague Ave: Sprague Ave will require improvements to address safety as well as improve the streetscape without impacting traffic flows. Issues will include increased pedestrian and bicycle use, parking and vehicular volume.
- > Streetscape improvements along Pacific Ave.: This includes improvements to the character of the street and provisions for increased pedestrian and bicycle usage. Vehicular traffic is currently minimal on this street.
- > Streetscape improvements along Grant St.: Grant St. will be a direct route to the Sprague Avenue Pedestrian Bridge. As the area develops, streetscape improvements between Sprague and Pacific will be necessary.

### Hamilton and Sharp

Sharp and Hamilton currently serves as a neighborhood center for the surrounding residents as well as students, faculty, and staff of Gonzaga University. While significant growth in the area is not expected there are opportunities for design guidelines and select improvements to public right of ways and public services provided in the area.

#### Issues:

- > The overall enhancement of the pedestrian environment is necessary. Sidewalks in the area are narrow and have no buffer from traffic on the street. Facilities for bicycles are limited. Pedestrian crossings are also necessary.

#### Opportunities:

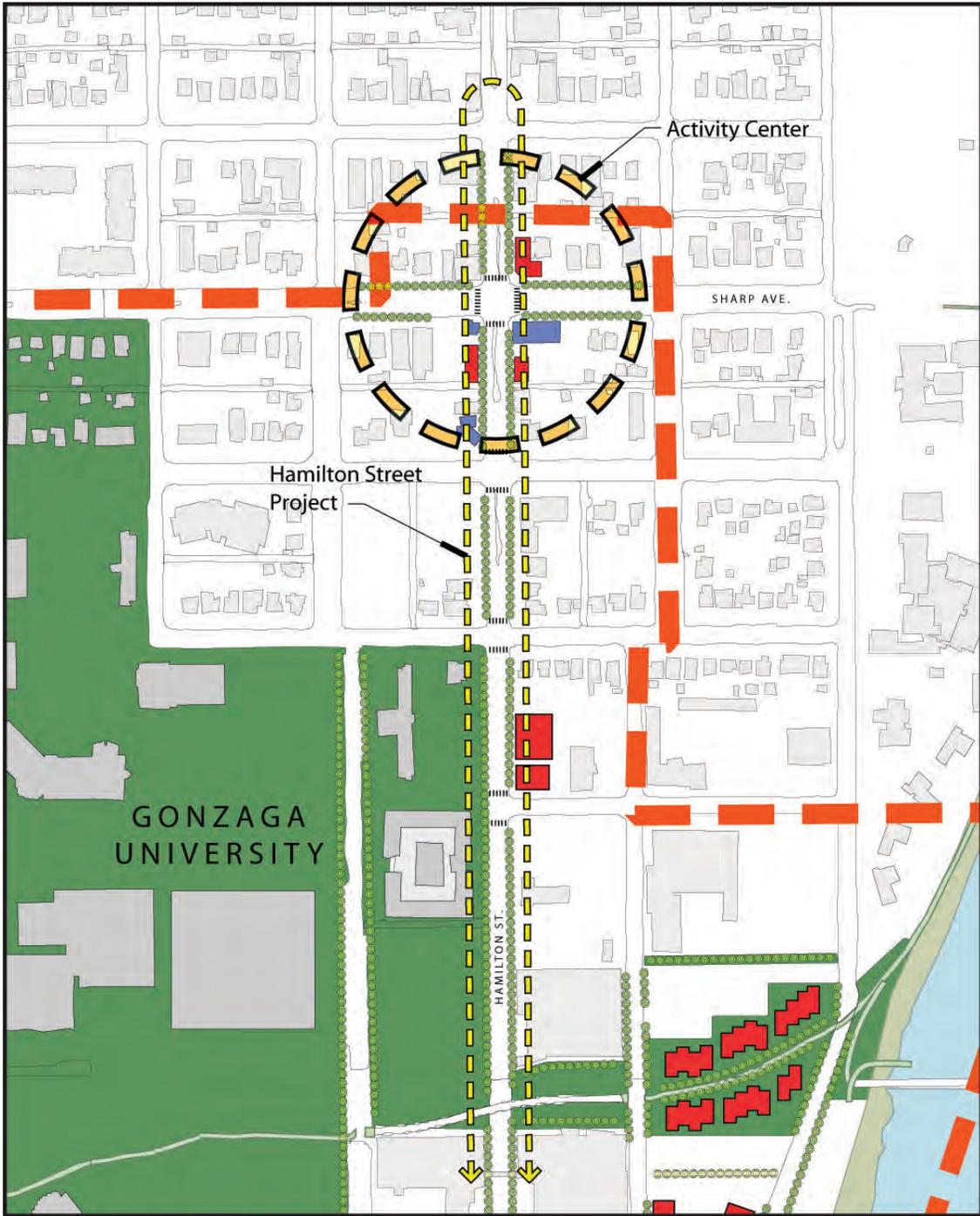
- > Proximity to Gonzaga and the Logan neighborhood.
- > An existing offbeat nature should be retained and encouraged.



image courtesy of Awista, photograph by Latisha Hill

#### Projects:

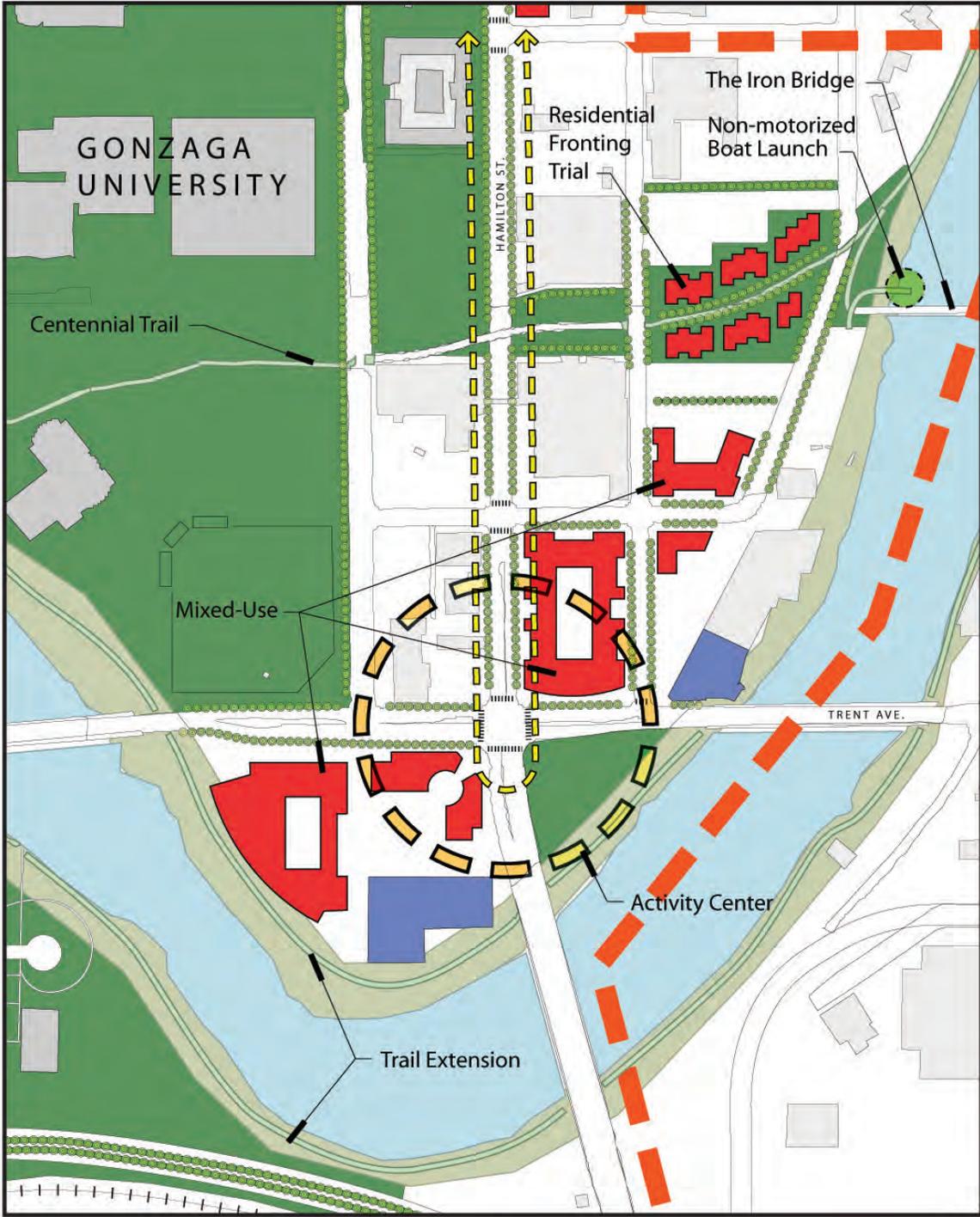
- > Guidelines for new development should contribute to the spirit of the area. Key aspects should focus on building to the street, having entrances on the principle street, pedestrian and bicycle amenities and relegating parking to the rear of projects. Buildings with unique architectural character should be encouraged.
- > Streetscape improvements for the Sharp and Hamilton intersection: Focus in this area should be on providing amenities, increasing safety at street crossings, and re-landscaping the traffic circle on Sharp.
- > Develop a unique marketing identity for the area: The businesses in the area are encouraged to develop a unique marketing identity for their center. This will allow the City of Spokane and partner organization to direct customers seeking their niche of goods, services and development to that area.



The beautification of Hamilton Street will serve as a gateway to this activity center.



Proximity to three universities provides opportunities for mixed-use development in this activity center.



## Trent and Hamilton

The Trent and Hamilton activity center is uniquely positioned because its equidistance to both campuses and its location at a bend in the Spokane River that cradles the area on three sides. Today it is home to several light industrial businesses and a small retail development. Ongoing development in the area such as Gonzaga's new arena and their proposed construction of a baseball field in the area offers some opportunities for local businesses to capitalize on the traffic generated by such activity. Therefore, strong pedestrian links will need to be created between those activity centers on the Gonzaga campus and subsequent development in the area.

### Issues

- > Connections within this area and to other parts of the University District will be critical for growth.

These connections for the most part will be for the pedestrian and bicycle realm since the existing vehicular infrastructure is currently built out, but is very inhospitable to pedestrians. In particular, along Hamilton to Sharp and strengthening connections to the Gonzaga campus and arena. In the long-term as development continues on the other side of the river pedestrian connections to the south and east will be needed.

- > There are profitable existing businesses in the area that are critical for the City of Spokane to retain. As the area redevelops and transitions from industrial to more commercial and mixed-uses, design solutions for accommodating both increased pedestrian traffic and aesthetically pleasing streetscapes will have to be balanced with maintaining a functionality for businesses.
- > The intersection of Trent and Hamilton has potential air quality issues, resulting from traffic generated by new development. A proactive solution is needed in the near future to prevent triggering mitigation of the intersection at great cost.
- > Because of the areas history as an industrial area, the river's neglect has led to pollution and a concentration of transient activity along its shores. Solving these problems and reclaiming the river as an aesthetic and recreational resource will be key to the redevelopment.

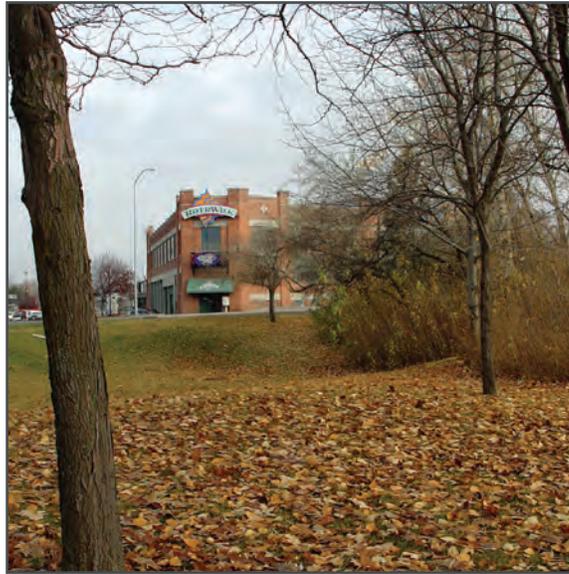


Photo by Darrin Griechen, City of Spokane

**Opportunities**

- > There are several sites with the potential for redevelopment. These include the northeast corner of Trent and Hamilton and the properties on the southwest corner of Trent and Hamilton and along the river among others.
- > The Centennial Trail is a crucial asset for pedestrian and bicycle transportation, linking this area to the rest of the University District and Downtown as well as areas further east and west. The pedestrian bridge over Hamilton allows for safe passage from retail developments to the Gonzaga campus.



Photo by Darrin Griechen, City of Spokane

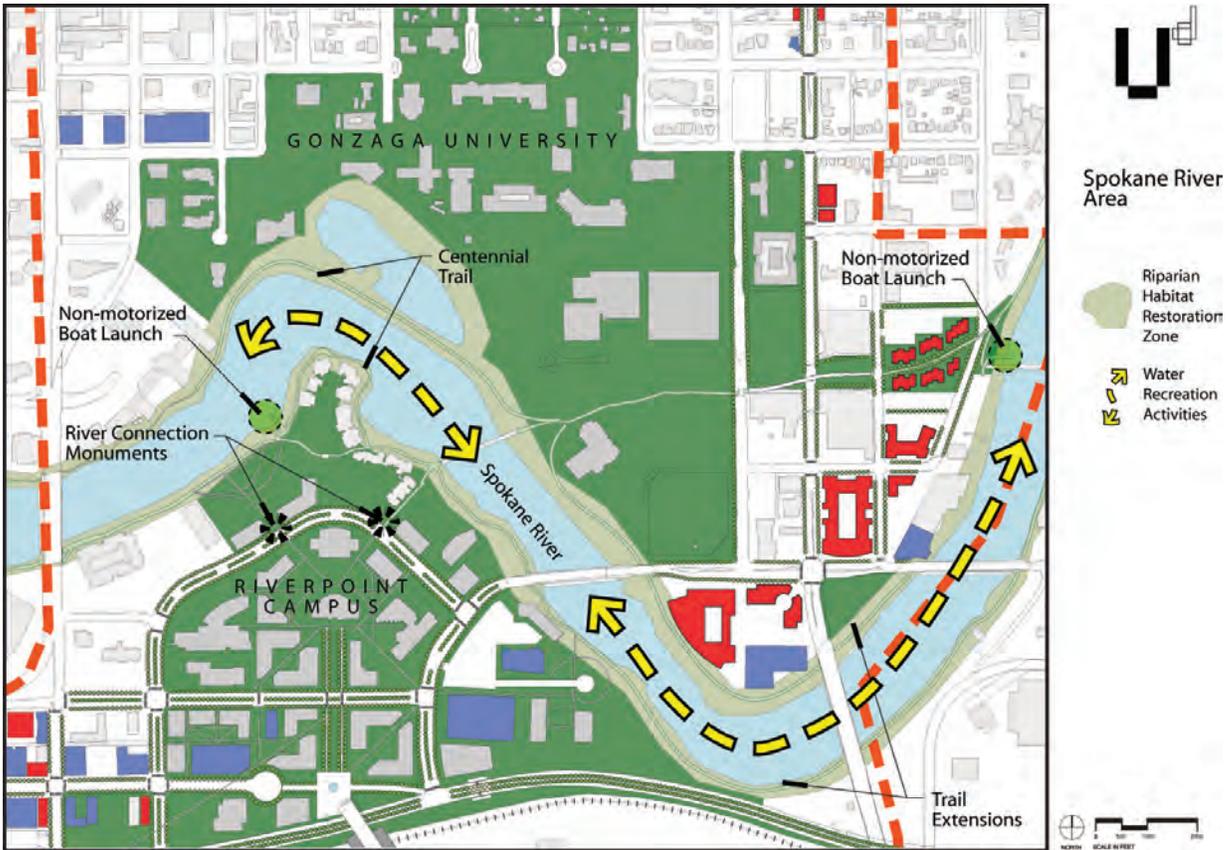
- > The proximity to the river gives this area a distinct advantage in redevelopment. Projects can take advantage of the aesthetic and recreational qualities that a river represents. However, this development must balance private and public access to allow the river to remain a community resource and amenity.
- > Proximity to both campuses represents an opportunity for the private sector to serve faculty, staff, and students, but also allows for the university to enhance its outreach to the community.
- > “The Iron Bridge”, a historic railroad trestle, is a significant icon for the community. Its restoration will provide connections across the river.

## Projects

- > Mixed-Use Development: This form of development will provide housing and retail opportunities. Screening parking through its strategic placement and design will help in building the character of this activity center.
- > Streetscape improvements on Hamilton: Through enhancements to the pedestrian environment and balancing access needs with existing business, this project will focus on creating an inviting gateway to the eastern part of the University District .
- > Streetscape improvements for secondary streets: Secondary streets particularly around the Riverwalk development, will also need pedestrian improvements.
- > Infill retail: Redevelopment of properties near Riverwalk will reinforce the corner of Springfield and Columbus into an active neighborhood center catering to faculty, students, fans attending events at the Gonzaga sport facilities and local residents and businesses in the area.
- > Residential development: Proximity to the river and the Centennial Trail can be leveraged as amenities to increase housing in the area.
- > Refurbishment of The Iron Bridge: Work is steadily progressing on the developments on the east side of the river in the Trent and Hamilton area. Pedestrian and bicycle connections would allow businesses and residents on both sides of the river to take advantage of the area's growth.
- > Develop a unique marketing identity: The businesses in the area are encouraged to develop a unique marketing identity for their center. This will allow the City of Spokane and partner organization to direct customers seeking their niche of goods, services and development to that area.



Illustration by Tony Janson



**The River**

The very first workshop made it clear that the citizens felt the Spokane River should be an important focal point of the University District. The river is a wonderful natural amenity for the city and this plan calls for the Spokane River to be revealed, restored and celebrated. Already efforts have been made within the campus plans of Gonzaga and the Riverpoint campus to facilitate the enjoyment of the river. As the University District develops, ongoing effort will be made to ensure the health of the river and surrounding habitat as well as increase access to it for the recreation of citizens.

**Opportunities**

- > Significant Resource: Clearly, the river is a cultural and natural asset. Archaeological investigation reveals the presence of human life along the Spokane River corridor dating back some 11,400 years. The river has served as a vital source of food, transport, power, irrigation and religious significance to people representing numerous American Indian tribes and generations of settlers.
- > Precedents: Expo '74 provided not only the mentality of river restoration, but also the vehicle to clean up much of the downtown river corridor since bridges and buildings had given way to openness and access as part of preparations for the fair.

- > Centennial Trail: Today, the Centennial Trail, a recreational link between Idaho and Washington, provides an opportunity for citizens to connect with nature throughout the city.
- > River Renewal: The community has called for the restoration of the river. While the waters are not as degraded as in days past, work still remains to be done. Community input in The University District planning process stressed the need to address water quality, and quantity issues, restore the shoreline to a more natural grade and improve the riparian areas so they better serve wildlife habitat

**Issues**

- > Neglect: The Spokane River has not always been as appreciated as it is now by the community members who envision it as the future centerpiece of The University District. At one time, people in Spokane had almost forgotten about the river and the falls, so obscured were they by the railroads, bridges and industries lining the banks. Few ventured into the Gorge to enjoy the falls; the dirt, filth and garbage that filled the waters kept visitors to a minimum elsewhere along the shoreline.
- > Pollution: For most of Spokane’s early history, the river was a dumping ground. Pollution levels had become critical and the City considered building a reservoir to be filled by a water source other than the Spokane River. By 1909, fewer than 30 years after Spokane was incorporated, - the State Health Department issued a “cease and desist” order, forbidding the City from dumping sewage into the river. In 1938, a state list of problem waterways ranked the Spokane River as the foulest waterway in Washington. It would take many years, a heightened national environmental awareness and Expo '74 to cause Spokane to look anew at its river.

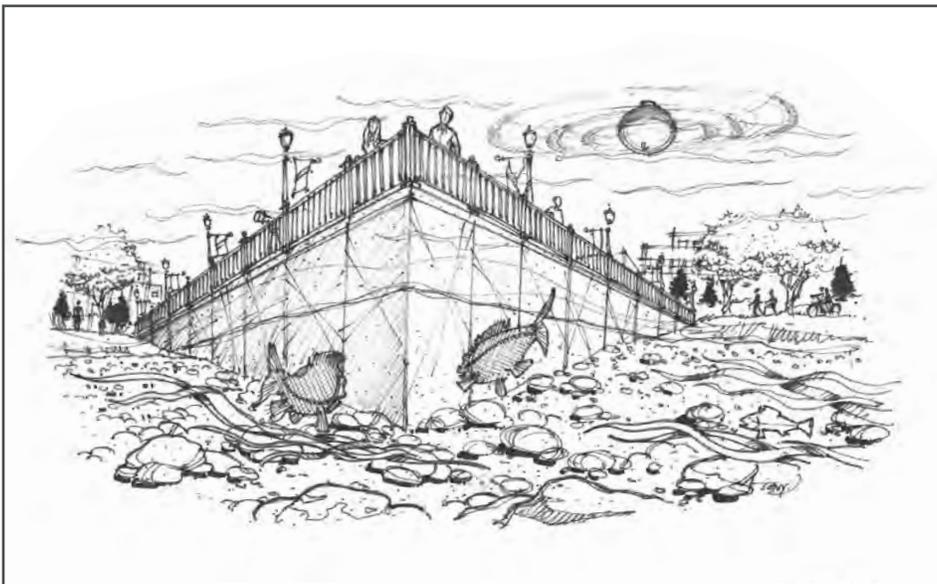


Illustration by Tony Janson

- > Overlooked: Today, the river is not actively used. While water skiing championships were held at one time near the Convention Center's current location and a small marina once existed, fill materials have rendered most of the shoreline too steep for boat access now. The Centennial Trail provides for visual access and is frequented by walkers, joggers and bicyclists.
- > Access : The river is not generally obvious from surrounding land uses due in part to building locations and the river sitting below the line of sight. A few pathways do link the river to both campuses, but signage is lacking to assist in identifying appropriate links for accessing specific destinations.



Photo by Darrin Griechen, City of Spokane

### Major development sites

The river currently hosts several intense development sites, including the Convention Center, the Gonzaga and Riverpoint Campuses, and the housing development near SIRTl. However, some members of the community feel there is room for more, especially additional civic buildings and residential uses.

The development proposal currently slated for the Brown's Building Supply property under the south end of the O'Keefe Bridge must be reconciled with river access and habitat issues, as well as the proposed easterly extension of Riverside Ave. In fact, some of the community input on the future of The University District questioned whether it was an optimum use of shoreline to locate a major arterial right next to the river's shoreline, and suggested that perhaps the road extension should fall south of any future shoreline development.

### Projects

- > Develop multiple non-motorized boat launches: Community input on The University District was rich in ideas for how to increase boating use of the river. Boat launches for small non-motorized vessels were proposed for both the Gonzaga side of the river near Cincinnati Street and the west shore further upstream near the old Iron Bridge. Others suggested sitting a community boat center along the river where people could rent kayaks, canoes, and rowing sculls.
- > Rehabilitation of riparian habitat areas: Participants in The University District planning

process have expressed a desire for the river's shoreline to be restored to its original natural state; to make it a better teaching tool for observing water quality and wildlife. However, the shoreline should also be maintained with an eye toward maintaining river views as well as public safety.

- > Developing clear access points to the Spokane River and Centennial Trail would require private developments along the river to provide the public with bicycle and pedestrian access along the shoreline through their property.
- > Signage is needed along the trail to help direct people to specific buildings on the Gonzaga and Riverpoint Campuses. There is also a need for signage throughout the campus areas to show people how to get to the Centennial Trail. All of this would be designed to coordinate with additional water-level access points, including observation posts overlooking the river.
- > There is a need to provide activities and services for people utilizing the Centennial Trail, such as restaurants, resting areas, outlooks, and other unique uses. For example, the sculpture walk could be extended to include additional sculpture along the rest of the river between the campuses and downtown.
- > Trail extensions: Some unique access challenges present themselves where the river interfaces

with nearby bridges. Currently, bicycle and pedestrian traffic is not allowed along the O'Keefe Bridge at Hamilton Street. However, plans are underway to extend the Ben Burr Trail from Liberty Park, running along the east side of this overpass, heading westward underneath the bridge and then following the south side of the river to connect with the Centennial Trail and the Kardong Bridge. Directly across the river to the north on the Gonzaga Campus, the trail could one day be extended east to Hamilton St. as well. It is suggested that a bike/pedestrian only bridge be built to cross the river to provide access that the Hamilton Bridge does not.

- > Use the river as a learning tool : A final piece of the public's vision for the river's role in The University District is to use the river as a learning tool, offering programming for all ages regarding natural resources, wildlife, and the connection between river health and human health. These programs could also be tied to related programs at the Science Center.



Photo by Darrin Griechen, City of Spokane

## 5.0: incentive programs

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A variety of incentives are available within The University District. Usage and attainment of these incentives depends on specifics of each project and adherence to the program requirements.

### **multi-family tax credit**

Designated “residential target areas” (including The University District area) are eligible to apply for the property tax exemption under the provisions of the program. The program applies to construction or rehabilitation of four or more multifamily dwelling units. It can also be used for rehabilitation of existing units that are in “non-compliance” with one or more standards of the building or housing codes and have been vacant for at least 12 months. The incentive exempts property taxes and begins at the first of the year following completion of the improvements and lasts a maximum of ten years.

### **community empowerment zone**

The Community Empowerment Zone (CEZ) program is intended to stimulate economic development by offering businesses that locate or expand within the designated geographic area and/or hire employees who are residents of the zone.

The CEZ offers the following tax incentives:

- > Sales and Use Tax Deferral/Exemption on new equipment and construction costs for new or remodeled buildings used in manufacturing, research and development activities, or computer-related activities.
- > Business and Occupation New Job Tax Credit of \$2,000 (wages and benefits \$40k or less) or \$4,000 (wages and benefits more than \$40k) per new job created by manufacturing, research and development, and software development firms.
- > Business and Occupation International Business Tax Credit of \$3,000 (up to five years) per new job created by firms providing certain international business services.
- > Business and Occupation Training Tax Credit of 20 percent of the amount spent on employer-provided job training that is designed to enhance employee performance. Up to \$5,000 annually per firm.

### **brownfield cleanup program**

The City of Spokane has received three Brownfields grants from U.S. EPA, one brownfields assessment pilot grant directly and two revolving loan fund grants via a cooperative agreement with CTED. The assessment pilot grant and one of the revolving loan fund grants were launched in October 2002. These grants were to be used primarily

for the pilot Centers and Corridors projects. The second brownfield revolving loan fund was written specifically for The University District and was approved by Spokane City Council in September 2004. In November 2004, the City applied for an assessment grant for The University District.

The assessment grants allow the City to pay for Phase I/Phase II Environmental Site Assessments for pre-approved properties. The City has hired an environmental consultant who is currently working on two projects under the assessment grant project. The University District brownfield revolving loan fund has about \$500,000 specifically to be available to eligible landowners or prospective purchasers that have a redevelopment plan for a specific property. The loan is generally very low interest, with minimal loan processing fees. Payback options are flexible as well.

The brownfields program is managed out of the City's Economic Development Department, which is responsible for all phases of the program including project review and management, site inventory and identification, consultant hiring and marketing and outreach.

#### **tax increment financing (TIF)**

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) allows financing for public improvements such as roads, power, water, sewer, drainage, sidewalks, lighting, parking, parks, recreational facilities, and entertainment, etc., for business ventures that would otherwise have up-front costs that can become expensive. The idea of tax increment financing, also sometimes referenced as "community revitalization financing", is based on the concept that public improvements can be financed by increased property tax revenues generated from such improvements. This program will encourage public-private partnerships, enable multiple financing options, benefits the community, and provides many other opportunities.

The city, county, port or any entity that levies taxes in the proposed area sets project boundaries, then issues bonds to pay for the needed work. Such projects tend to increase local property values, which in turn increases property tax. That increase in property tax pays for the bond.

The law requires that the project backers hold a public hearing. Entities imposing tax levies often include small agencies such as fire districts, library districts, cemetery districts, etc. However, the approval power lies with the entities that hold 75% of property taxes in the proposed area, but the fire district is exempt from that criterion.

Basic criteria:

- > Obtain approvals
- > Provide public hearings
- > Adopt Ordinance

After the local government designates the Area and authorizes TIF, it may issue General Obligation bonds to finance the public improvements. This general indebtedness is payable from the tax revenues and is guaranteed by a "full faith and credit" of local government.

The success of this program is shared when the County Assessor allocates the first 25% of any increase in real property value to all taxing districts. The remaining 75% of the increase go to pay the bond debt service.

#### **community renewal area**

This new law allows a city with a population of over 100,000 to use the difference (incremental increase) in local sales and use tax revenues generated from certain designated business and commercial areas from one year to the next to finance "community revitalization" projects to improve such areas. Such a designated commercial and business area could be established in The University District.

**community economic revitalization board**

CERB provides low-cost financing for public facilities improvements that are required for private development in areas of high unemployment.

**neighborhood redevelopment fund**

The Neighborhood Redevelopment Fund provides funding for the acquisition and/or renovation of commercial, residential, or mixed-use properties in Spokane County. Funding is available through Northwest Business Development Association and is available for these business types: industrial, manufacturing, distribution, retail, commercial, wholesalers and recreational.

**tax benefits**

Washington does not have a corporate income tax. Spokane does not have a local B & O Tax and requires a business license only. The difference is that this license is a flat fee, somewhat increased by number of employees, whereas a general B & O tax is based on a percentage of gross receipts earned by the business.

In Washington State, there is no personal income tax, no inventory tax, no unitary tax and no tax on interest, dividends or capital gains

**historic preservation tax credits**

Tax credits are provided as a means for state funding for historical preservation projects. These expire in 2007. The limit of funding is 33% of the total project cost.

Certain regulatory and tax benefits to a property owner may flow from historic preservation laws. For example, in the Spokane Municipal Code SMC 11.02.0175 Reasonable Use Exception, the historic preservation officer is one of the designated municipal officials who may grant reasonable use exceptions when necessary to avoid an unreasonable restriction on use of private property. A reasonable use exception is a minor deviation from the prescrip-

tive standards of the code to relieve an unnecessary burden on an applicant.

Credits are provided for a special valuation program, which can be adopted by local option. Under this program, for a 10 year-period, applicants may deduct rehabilitation costs of a qualified property (usually National Register or locally designated) from the new assessed valuation after rehabilitation. During this time property taxes are based on that "special valuation" instead of the full assessed value.

**high technology sales and use tax deferral/exemption**

Businesses that start new research and development or pilot scale manufacturing operations, or expand or diversify a current operation, may be eligible for sales and use tax deferral/exemption.

**high technology business and occupation tax credit**

An annual credit of up to \$2 million is allowed for businesses that perform research and development in specified high technology categories and meet minimum expense requirements.

**worksource spokane**

WorkSource Spokane saves a company time and money during the employee recruitment process. WorkSource can assist you with screening applicants, conducting local and statewide recruitment efforts, scheduling interviews, providing interview and conference rooms, and collecting resumes or employee applications.

**job skills program**

The Job Skill Program (JSP) awards grants to education and training institutions to subsidize the cost of developing customized training materials or adapting a company's training program for the training of local employees.

**economic development lending consortium**

A consortium of 14 lending institutions is committed to providing shared financing for projects viewed as contributing to the economic development of the Spokane region.

**economic development revenue bonds**

Tax-exempt revenue bond financing for credit-worthy industrial/manufacturing projects, solid waste disposal and others categorized as “exempt facilities” in the IRS code can also be financed. These bonds are managed by Washington Economic Development Authority and Industrial Development Corp. of Spokane County. This financing is available to industrial and manufacturing businesses for acquisition of land and buildings, construction, expansion, modernization, renovation, acquisition of machinery and equipment, and leasehold improvements.

**washington economic development finance authority (WEDFA)**

WEDFA is the state-level issuing authority for tax-exempt and taxable industrial revenue and exempt facilities bonds. WEDFA is the predominant bond issuing authority in the state; issuing more than \$94 million in bonds for 22 projects with 1,800 jobs created or retained in the last four years.

**spokane small loan program**

Funds may be used for expansion of existing businesses or start-up of new businesses. Eligible uses of funds include equipment, inventory, and/or working capital. Loans are approved by local banks with SBA providing an 85% guarantee on each loan. These loans are managed by Northwest Business Development Association and the Small Business Administration, and are available to industrial, manufacturing, distribution, retail, commercial, wholesalers, recreational, and startups.

**small business administration 504 loan program**

Funds may be used for purchase of real estate, expansion or remodeling of existing buildings or equipment purchases. The program is available to both existing and start-up businesses. These loans are managed by Northwest Business Development Association and the Small Business Administration, and are available to industrial, manufacturing, distribution, retail, commercial, wholesalers, recreational, and startups.

**small business administration 7A loan program**

Provides short and long term loans to eligible, creditworthy start-ups and existing businesses that cannot obtain financing through normal lending channels. These loans are managed by the Small Business Administration and are available to eligible small businesses in the industrial, manufacturing, distribution, retail, commercial, wholesalers, recreational, and startup industries.

**small business administration technical assistance**

Program is designed to assist/reach the following target groups: women and minorities, veterans, rural business, and exporters. This program is provided by the Small Business Administration, and is available to eligible small business groups targeted at industrial, manufacturing, distribution, retail, commercial, wholesalers, recreational, and startups.

**washington state federal and state technology partnership program (WaFAST)**

WaFAST helps small businesses and entrepreneurs compete for federal funding provided by the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and the Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs. Visit their web site at [www.wafast.org](http://www.wafast.org).

**Property Assemblage and Pre-Development Assistance**

The City of Spokane facilitates redevelopment through partnerships with other private or public-sector partners by negotiating property assemblage, site preparation and technical assistance through the permitting process.

“The life instinct of the city turns its energy to the pursuit and realization of opportunities for the citizens to thrive and prosper.”

-Daniel Kemmis, 1995.

This concept forms the essence of what the University District is: A vision that seeks to transform our community, to catalyze Spokane’s core assets into energy that will drive a robust and innovative new economy upon which prosperity for all our citizens can be realized.

## 6.0: acknowledgements

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The University District  
Planning & Organizing Group  
Co-Chairs  
Tom Reese, City of Spokane  
Kim Pearman-Gillman, Avista Corp.

Members:

Neil Beaver, Sen. Lisa Brown's Office  
Bill Bell, City of Spokane  
Marc Berg, Spokane Police Department  
Kerry Brooks, WSU  
Bruce Butterworth, CDA Interiors and ESBA  
Karen Byrd, City of Spokane Plan Commission  
Barb Chamberlain, WSU Spokane  
Dave Clack, East Spokane Business District  
Susanne Croft, City of Spokane  
Larry Davis, EWU  
Mike Edwards, Downtown Spokane Partnership  
Dave Enos, GeoEngineers  
Darrin Griechen, City of Spokane  
Latisha Hill, Avista Utilities  
Wendy Hise, City of Spokane  
Dr. Dennis Horn, Gonzaga University  
Shannon Iaci, WSU Spokane Intern  
Dr. Patrick Jones, EWU  
Donna McKereghan, Logan Neighborhood Council  
Dave Kliewer, JUB Engineers  
Patrick Link, SFCC-COPC Coordinator  
Marsha Moore, Sen. Maria Cantwell's Office  
Chuck Murphy, Gonzaga University  
Dr. Forster Ndubisi, WSU Spokane  
Jerry Numbers, East Central Neighborhood Council  
Tom Reese, City of Spokane  
Marcus Ricelli, City of Spokane Plan Commission  
Dr. Bob Scarfo, WSU  
Bruce Thompson, WSU Spokane  
JoAnn Thompson, WSU Spokane  
Robin Toth, City of Spokane  
Anne Tucker, Community Colleges of Spokane  
Jeff Warner, ALSC Architects  
Jim Wavada, Department of Ecology  
Dr. Dick Winchell, EWU

Technical Work Groups

Communications Committee Co-Chairs:

Barb Chamberlain, WSU Spokane

Robin Toth, City of Spokane

Members:

Kim Pearman-Gillman, Avista Development

Michelle Hege, Desautel Hege

Latisha Hill, Avista Utilities

Tom Reese, City of Spokane

Barb Richey, EWU

Anne Tucker, Community Colleges of Spokane

Economic Development

Co-Chairs

Kim Pearman-Gillman, Avista Development

Patrick Jones, EWU

Tom Reese, City of Spokane

Members:

Barb Chamberlain

Larry Davis

Latisha Hill

Wendy Hise

Marsha Moore

Dr. Dick Winchell

Environmental

Co-Chairs

Dave Enos, GeoEngineers

Robin Toth, City of Spokane

Members:

Vince Barthels

Jim Harakas

Wendy Hise

Bill Irving

Doug Jayne

Dave Kliewer

Jim Kolva

Nancy Lucas

Bill Rickard

Jim Wavada

Land Use and Planning:

Co-Chairs :

Darrin Griechen, City of Spokane

Jeff Warner, ALSC Architects

Dr. Dick Winchell, EWU

Members:

John Abell

Catherine Bicknell

Nancy Blossom

Kerry Brooks

Nancy Brown

Bruce Butterworth

Karen Byrd

Dave Clack

Matt Cohen

Susanne Croft

Larry Davis

Spencer Grainger

Wendy Hise

Dale Hokanson

Gary Kuhn

Matt Melcher

Keith Diaz-Moore

Louis Mueller

Dr. Forster Ndubisi

Elizabeth Payne

Dr. Bob Scarfco

Darlene Septelka

Susie Snowden

Judy Theodorson

Joann Thompson

Dave Wang

Melissa Wittstruck

Transportation and Infrastructure:

Co-Chairs:

Dave Kliewer, JUB Engineers

Dick Raymond, City of Spokane

Members:

Susanne Croft, City of Spokane

Pat Ehrbar, Avista Utilities

Kim Pearman-Gillman, Avista Development

Darrin Griechen, City of Spokane

Wendy Hise, City of Spokane

Sam McKee

Andy Schenk

KC Traver

Bob Westby

Jerry Wright, Avista Utilities

Consultant Team:

Moore Iacofano Goltsman, Inc. -

Daniel Iacofano and Paul Tuttle

EWU Policy Institute

Larry Davis, Dr. Patrick Jones, Dr. Dick Winchell

Magner Sanborn Renouard

Ed Renouard, Jeff Sanborn, Clint Batte

ILF Media-

Brianne Cronkhite, Richard Katz,

Jim Swoboda, Daro Walker

Desautel Hege

Michelle Hege

ALSC Architects-

Jeff Warner, Tony Janson

Community Planning Team:

Community Participants: Thanks to everyone in the community who pitched in to develop this strategic masterplan. If you participated and signed in at any of the workshops you can find your name below

Lori Alins

Wayne Allert

Lori Aluna

Susie Amundson

Greg Anderson

Katie Anderson

Bob Apple

Dale Arneson

Bonnie Aspen

Brooke Balcom

Becky Barnhart

Chris Batten

Tim Bauer

David Bauermeister

Brian Baysinger

Neil Beaver

Wilma Beddow

Meaghan Beever

Bill Bell

Max Benson

Marc Berg

Maggie Bergin

Mike Beus

Sandi Beus

Sara Biesen

Bruce Blackmer

Matt Blankenship

Vanessa Bleistein

Shirlee Bonifield

Garry Borders

Don Bott

Ginny Bott

Paul Brandenburger

Tom Brassier

Sean Bresvarian

Phil Brooke

Kerry Brooks

Tom Brooks

Eric Brown

Ron Brown

Dick Brown

Barb Bumann

Max Bunting

Bruce Butterworth  
Karen Byrd  
Ben Cabildo  
Joyce Cabildo  
Bert Caldwell  
Peg Camp  
Mike Casey  
Susan Cerutti-Jensen  
Stephen Cervantes  
Susan Ceshe  
Barb Chamberlain  
Cheryl Churchill  
Dave Clack  
Owen Clarke  
Pam Clemens  
Matt Cohen  
Anastasia Cohen  
Judy Cole  
Sheila Collins  
Spencer Corn Jr  
Stacey Cowles  
Susanne Croft  
Brian Cronin  
Brian Crowninshield  
Tim Cunningham  
George Dahl  
Kevin Daniels  
Larry Davis  
Hugh Denning  
Austin DePaulo  
Pat DeVries  
Dennis Dickens  
Laurie Dolan  
Loren Dudley  
Andy Dunau  
Jim Dunn  
George Durrie  
Mike Edwards  
Scott Egger  
Jon Eliassen  
Kristi Ellefson  
Dave Enos

Ivan Epishkin  
Jenny Fechter  
Mike Fettig  
Bridget Fettig  
Mike Fettig  
JoAnn Ficca  
Heather Fields  
Speed Fitzhugh  
Monne Forsi  
Kat Fossett  
Steve Franks  
Al French  
Miwa Fukumoto  
Andryn Gaffney  
Steve George  
Greta Gillman  
Cyonna Goold  
Darrin Griechen  
Erin Gurtel  
Rich Hadley  
Mary Joan Hahn  
Jim Hanley  
Steve Hansch  
Joe Harewood  
Tom Hargreaves  
Jeanette Harras  
Gus Harrass  
Jeff Hart  
Joe Harwood  
Jeff Herman  
Dennis Hession  
Latisha Hill  
Eric Hill  
Mike Hinnen  
Christie Hinnen  
Wendy Hise  
Larry Hoffman  
Suzi Hokonson  
Matt Holbert  
Dr. Dennis Horn  
Ron Horton  
Myah Houghten

Bruce Howard  
Kent Hull  
Linda Hull  
Eileen Hyatt  
Shannon Iaci  
Frank Ide  
Bill Irving  
John Jamiel  
Kristin Janson  
Nikki Jenkins  
Brian Jennings  
Greg Johnson  
Dr. Patrick Jones  
Terry Jordahl  
Bill Kalivas  
Charlene Kay  
Nicole Kelln  
Chris Kelly  
Angie King  
Ronn King  
Katie King  
Dave Kliewer  
Jim Kolva  
Richard Kuhling  
Carol Landa-McVicker  
Renee LaRocca  
Sue LaRue  
Terry Lawhead  
Licia Legrant  
Billy Leighty  
Andy Leiju  
Lucy Lennox  
Kelly Lerner  
Brian Levin-Stanivich  
Barbara Lien  
Patrick Link  
Ro Lisk  
John Lisk  
Melodie Little  
Gary Livingston  
J. Lockhart  
Sally Lodato

Nick Lovrich  
Bonnie Mager  
Helen Malone  
Elena Manley  
Clark Mather  
Jason McBride  
Mac McCandless  
Linda McDermott  
Rob McDonald  
Mick McDowell  
Louise McGrudy  
Donna McKereghan  
Max McNett  
Mike Meagher  
Joan Menzies  
Doug Menzies  
Louis Meuler  
Kristine Meyer  
Amy Michelson  
Jennifer Miller  
Rod Minarik  
Kara Miotke  
Lori Mitchell  
Nan Mogensen  
Einar Mogensen  
Kay Mohr  
Ronda Mohr  
Nicole Montgomery  
Pat Montgomery  
Marsha Moore  
Scott Morgan  
Emily Moses  
Dee Mueller  
Joanne Murcar  
Chuck Murphy  
Brian Murray  
Molly Myers  
Doug Nadvornik  
Dr. Forster Ndubisi  
Julie Neff  
Russ Nobbs  
Mike Nocher

Mike Noder  
Gene Nolin  
Terry Novak  
Jerry Numbers  
Marla Nunberg  
Paul Oleniacz  
Matthew Olson  
Judy Olson  
Cartie Orr-James  
Chrys Ostrander  
Tom Paine  
Mark Palek  
Evan Pardini  
Lee Pardini  
Ruta Patil  
Cherie Peacock  
Kim Pearman-Gillman  
Timothy Pellow  
Helen Peng  
Jim Perez  
Gayle Peterson  
Jon Phillips  
Jennie Pirtle  
Vic Plese  
Julie Prafke  
Dan Pratt  
Tom Pratt  
Bob Pringle  
Dianna Quast  
Jan Quintrall  
Timothy Rabey  
Richard Raymond  
Trudy Raymond  
Tom Reese  
Pat Reese  
Diane Reuter  
Rhosetta Rhodes  
Leylan Richards  
Mark Richards  
Lewis Rumpler  
Lindsey Runyon  
Ken Sammons

Terry Sanchez  
Dave Sanders  
Brian Sayrs  
Dr. Bob Scarfo  
Andy Schenk  
Mike Schmitz  
Amy Schruth  
Kathy Schutthers  
Larry Sheahan  
Vicki Signer  
Steve Signer  
Kere Simmons  
Juliet Sinistena  
Bob Smith  
Terry Smith  
Doug Smith  
Darrell Smith  
Steve Smoot  
Dustin Snipes  
Amanda Sparr  
Brad Stark  
Jared Stevens  
Mindy Stewart  
Vanessa Strange  
Quientin Sutter  
Lesley Sutton  
Greg Sweeney  
Patrick Tam  
Savannah Taylor  
Mike Terrell  
Art Thayer  
Jen Thomas  
Mickey Thompson  
JoAnn Thompson  
Bruce Thompson  
Terry Tombari  
Robin Toth  
Mike Toth  
KC Traver  
Albert Tripp  
Tutomu Tsurumaki  
Anne Tucker

Mary Ann Ulik  
Asnath Van Avermaele  
Ken VanVoorhis  
Nicole Verkist  
Mary Verner  
Adriann Wade  
John Wagtaleazcz  
Jeff Walker  
David Wang  
Jeff Warner  
Joe Warren  
Margaret Watson  
Jim Wavada  
Paul Weile  
Aaron Welling  
Ron Wendle  
Jim West  
Tim White  
Ty Wick  
Diane Wick  
Willow Williams  
Bob Wilson  
Duane Wilson  
Dr. Dick Winchell  
Melissa Wittstruck  
John Wojtulewicz  
Roger Woodworth  
Frank Yuse  
Kim Zentz

Local Spokane Bands:  
10 Minutes Down  
Burns Like Hellfire  
Chinese Sky Candy  
Jupiter Effect  
Locke  
Lucia's Grey Dot  
Mang  
Mulligan  
Sittser  
The Side Project  
Trailer Park Girls

CD Team

the cut :: vol.1

Black Coffee Recording  
– Robert Hartwig  
The Shop  
The University District  
Planning & Organizing Group

