



University District Development Association (UDDA) Board of Directors' Annual Retreat Agenda

Wednesday, June 3, 2026, 8:30 AM – 1:30 PM

In-person only at the Swinerton Office on the fourth floor of the Scott Morris Center for Energy Innovation Building, 12 N Sheridan, Spokane, WA

Retreat Purpose: To align around a shared vision for the University District's next phase of work by grounding our strategy in community, data, and inclusive economic development. Through a combination of presentations, dialogue, and reflection, the retreat will explore the interconnected challenges and opportunities facing Spokane, particularly youth poverty, workforce pathways, and access to opportunity, while examining models such as cooperative ownership and the Maker Hub economy as scalable solutions.

The Board will also be introduced to the internally developed Joyful Cities framework, designed to integrate perspectives on belonging, cultural grounding, and economic innovation, ensuring that our future investments and initiatives are both community-informed and outcomes-driven.

- 8:30** **Welcome, Retreat Purpose, and Land Acknowledgment** – *Lois Bollenback*
- Welcome Angela Dodson
- 8:45** **Belonging Exercise** – *Jerry Crowshoe, Native American Health Sciences Program Director, WSU Health Sciences Spokane*
- 9:05** **Spokane Tech High School (Workforce Pipeline)** – *Adam Swinyard, Spokane Public Schools; and Kevin Brockbank, Spokane Colleges*
- 9:35** **Context: Spokane Generational Poverty and Urban Systems Response** – *Juliet Sinisterra*
- 10:05* *Break*
- 10:10** **Mondragon Cooperative Model** – *Joel Williamson, Spokane Workers' Cooperative*
- 10:30** **Facilitated Discussion** – *Crowshoe*
- 10:50** **Joyful Cities Framework Overview** – *Sinisterra*
- 11:05** **Facilitated Discussion** – *Crowshoe*
- 11:30* *Buffet Lunch*
- 12:00** **Maker Hub Economy Overview** – *Sinisterra*
- 12:15** **Facilitated Discussion** – *Crowshoe*
- 12:35** **Small Group Breakout Discussions**
- 12:55** **Small Group Report Out**
- 1:10** **Retreat Closing: Grounding and Reflection Exercise** – *Crowshoe*
- 1:30** **Adjourn** – *Bollenback*

Joyful Cities Framework – DRAFT (not for distribution)

A Human-Centered Approach to Regenerative Urban Development



Joyful Cities are places where urban systems support human flourishing—where infrastructure, economy, culture, and ecology work together to create communities that are healthy, inclusive, resilient, and deeply connected to place.

Overview

The Joyful Cities Framework is a strategy for transforming districts, small towns, and cities into places that actively support human well-being, ecological health, and shared prosperity. Rather than focusing only on efficiency, growth, and infrastructure performance, Joyful Cities positions **joy, health, dignity, and belonging** as measurable civic outcomes.

The Joyful Cities Framework treats the city as a **living system**, one in which social, ecological, cultural, and economic systems work together to support thriving communities. The Spokane University District (UD) is being developed as a **living laboratory** to implement and test these regenerative urban systems.

Core Idea

A city can function well on paper but still fail the people who live there. The Joyful Cities Framework responds by designing urban and place-based environments that strengthen:

- Human health and mental well-being
- Connection to nature and place
- Economic inclusion and opportunity
- Cultural identity and belonging
- Long-term ecological resilience

By embedding these outcomes directly into governance, infrastructure, and economic systems, cities can move beyond simply managing growth to **cultivating human flourishing**.

Five Pillars of the Joyful Cities Framework

1. Governance Rooted in Community, Place, and Ecology

Joyful Cities aligns policy, investment, and development decisions with ecological realities and community outcomes.

This includes:

- incorporating Indigenous knowledge and stewardship practices
- establishing transparent metrics tied to wellbeing and resource use
- creating governance structures that maintain long-term continuity

The goal is to ensure that decisions made today continue to serve both people and place over time, not just within a single administration or project cycle.

2. Natural Resource Stewardship and Collective Intelligence

The creation of the “Joy Impact Lab” will position the University District as a **continuous learning environment**. Through the “TEND Resource and Dashboard”, the district will track:

- energy and resource flows
- water systems and ecological health
- biodiversity
- public space usage
- health and community wellbeing indicators

This allows the district to understand how projects perform over time and adjust accordingly. Instead of relying on assumptions, development becomes **evidence-informed and adaptive**.

3. Living Infrastructure Systems and Energy Resilience

The Joyful Cities Framework will prioritize infrastructure systems that are:

- localized
- resilient
- and aligned with ecological limits

In the University District, this includes exploring:

- district thermal energy systems
- microgrids and distributed renewable energy
- open space that supports biodiversity and water retention
- resource-balanced infrastructure planning

These systems reduce dependence on fragile external networks while improving reliability and lowering long-term costs. They also serve an educational function, demonstrating how urban systems can meet human needs while operating within environmental constraints.

4. Learning, Health, and Civic Commons

Public spaces are treated as essential civic infrastructure. Parks, streets, and shared spaces become places where:

- people gather and connect
- ecological systems are restored and made visible
- cultural identity is expressed

- learning happens across generations and socio-economic levels

When designed intentionally, these environments support mental health, reduce isolation, and strengthen social cohesion. They are a critical part of how communities maintain stability over time.

5. Shared Prosperity and Maker Economies

Joyful Cities supports economic systems that are locally rooted and broadly accessible. Maker Hubs and cooperative enterprises:

- create pathways to living-wage employment
- strengthen regional supply chains
- support repair, remanufacturing, and circular production
- enable shared ownership and wealth-building

By linking workforce development with real local demand, these systems increase economic resilience and keep value circulating within the community.

Why This Matters

Cities across the country face rising challenges—mental and physical health disparities, climate impacts, and economic inequity. The Joyful Cities Framework addresses these challenges by integrating:

- **Economic opportunity** through cooperative enterprise
- **Public health** through nature-based infrastructure and social connection
- **Climate resilience** through regenerative energy systems and resource-balanced economy
- **Education and innovation** through institutional partnerships and lifelong learning
- **Cultural vitality** through indigenous wisdom and community design

The Spokane University District Living Laboratory

The Spokane University District is serving as the first implementation site for the Joyful Cities Framework. As a living laboratory, it brings together:

- universities and research institutions
- community organizations
- public agencies
- and private sector partners

to test and refine new approaches to:

- sustainable infrastructure
- cooperative economic development
- and human-centered urban design

The goal is not only to improve one district but also to develop a **replicable model** for how cities can support both human flourishing and ecological resilience in the decades ahead.

Closing Thoughts

The Joyful Cities initiative starts from a simple premise: The way it feels to live in a place is not incidental. It reflects how well the system is working. By designing cities that support connection, stability, and well-being, alongside economic and environmental performance, we can create places that are not only functional but also capable of sustaining communities over time.

UD Maker Hubs Initiative

June 2026

The UD Maker Hubs initiative proposes a coordinated network of specialized maker and innovation hubs within the University District designed to strengthen Spokane's regional economy, workforce pipeline, cooperative business ecosystem, and community infrastructure. The concept integrates education, entrepreneurship, workforce development, manufacturing, cultural production, and public-private partnerships into a place-based economic development strategy.

Strategic Vision

The initiative is intended to:

- Build a walkable, mixed-use maker ecosystem connected to universities, schools, tribal partners, community organizations, and industry.
- Support regional workforce development through training, apprenticeships, and cooperative business incubation.
- Advance circular economy practices, localized supply chains, repair/remanufacturing capacity, and sustainable infrastructure.
- Create civic and cultural spaces that strengthen community connection, placemaking, and economic resilience.

Four Proposed Maker Hubs

The framework identifies four interconnected hubs:

- 1. Circular Construction & Green Infrastructure Hub**
 - Focused on fabrication for stormwater systems, district energy infrastructure, deconstruction, and green infrastructure.
 - Positioned as the strongest early revenue and ROI opportunity due to anticipated public-sector demand and infrastructure investment.
- 2. Repair & Remanufacturing Hub**
 - Would localize repair and remanufacturing of electronics, medical equipment, mobility devices, and furnishings.
 - Intended to reduce dependence on outside vendors while creating workforce upskilling opportunities and circular economy benefits.
- 3. Arts, Culture, & Indigenous Creative Industries Hub**
 - Designed to support public art fabrication, tribal cultural production, tourism, and creative industries.
 - Emphasizes cultural sovereignty, placemaking, youth pathways, and regional identity infrastructure.
- 4. Food Systems & Urban Agriculture Hub**
 - Envisions a regional food systems platform integrating food production, processing, distribution, workforce development, and entrepreneurship.

- Includes opportunities for farm-to-school partnerships, shared commercial kitchens, food innovation, regenerative agriculture, and cooperative food infrastructure.

Regional Economic Opportunity – Food Systems and Urban Agriculture Hub

The recently completed feasibility study for a Food Processing Center in the Spokane UD highlights significant untapped economic potential in Spokane’s regional food and manufacturing systems, including:

- Billions in annual food spending are currently leaving the region. **If each Spokane area resident purchased \$5 of food each week directly from local farmers, this would generate \$183 million of new farm income for the region.**
- Opportunities to further localize procurement for schools, hospitals, universities, and public agencies.
- Workforce and entrepreneurial development opportunities tied to cooperative and locally owned enterprises.

The following are national and regional case studies included in the feasibility study to demonstrate viable models for integrated food systems, cooperative development, regional milling, farm-to-school coordination, and shared processing infrastructure.

1. Oneida Integrated Food Systems Initiative (Wisconsin)

The Oneida Nation developed a comprehensive tribal food systems strategy serving approximately 16,000 members that integrates agriculture, food businesses, youth engagement, nutrition education, and entrepreneurship.

Key Components

- Tribal agriculture and food enterprises
- Food distribution programs
- Community nutrition and education initiatives
- Youth agricultural training
- Support for family and small-scale food production
- Construction of an 11,000 sq. ft. food processing center

Economic Impact

- Generates an estimated \$5–6 million annually in direct food-system revenue
- Produces broader regional economic impacts estimated at \$8–12 million annually

Relevance to Spokane

- Build community wealth
- Improve public health outcomes
- Strengthen tribal partnerships
- Create youth workforce pathways
- Retain economic value locally through vertically integrated food infrastructure

2. Cairnspring Mills (Burlington, WA)

Cairnspring Mills is presented as a model for collaborative, regenerative regional grain processing infrastructure. The initiative was developed through partnerships among farmers, researchers, bakers, investors, and public infrastructure entities.

Key Components

- Regional grain milling and value-added processing
- Premium regional sourcing from 15–20 farms
- Partnerships with Washington State University Bread Lab
- Port District infrastructure financing
- Impact investment capital
- Expansion to tribal lands in Oregon for large-scale milling capacity

Economic Impact

- Current operations generate approximately \$15–25 million annually in regional economic activity
- Expansion plans significantly increase long-term scale potential

Relevance to Spokane

- Develop regional processing infrastructure tied to agriculture
- Create higher-value markets for local producers
- Leverage university and tribal partnerships
- Use public-private financing models to scale regional supply chains

3. Mission West Regional Food Processing & Cooperative Development (Montana)

Mission West is highlighted as a prototype for mid-scale food infrastructure and cooperative food systems serving institutional and local markets.

Key Components

- Shared food processing infrastructure
- Cooler/freezer storage and logistics support
- Cooperative development assistance
- Regional food hub coordination
- Product innovation and value-added manufacturing

Economic Impact

- Generates approximately \$1.8–5.8 million annually in revenue

Relevance to Spokane

- The importance of shared infrastructure for small producers
- Opportunities for cooperative ownership structures
- Scalable pathways for institutional procurement and food entrepreneurship
- How regional food hubs can support logistics, aggregation, and market access

4. ESD 101 Regional Farm-to-School Coordination (Eastern Washington)

This regional model demonstrates how school districts can become anchor institutions for local food systems through coordinated procurement and logistics partnerships.

Key Components

- Coordination across 26 Eastern Washington school districts
- Farm-to-school purchasing systems
- Logistics and transportation coordination
- Institutional procurement support
- Food systems innovation and R&D initiatives

Economic Impact

- Estimated to generate \$3–8 million annually in regional economic activity

Relevance to Spokane

- Existing regional infrastructure that Spokane can build upon
- The role of educational institutions as economic anchors
- Opportunities to scale local procurement and food distribution
- Potential integration with workforce training and food innovation systems

5. Casa Cano Farms (Valleyford, WA)

Casa Cano Farms is presented as a locally rooted example of diversified food production, aggregation, processing, and institutional partnerships within the Spokane region.

Key Components

- Regional produce production
- Greenhouse and hoop-house growing operations
- CSA and direct-market distribution
- Produce aggregation and logistics coordination
- Farm-to-school partnerships
- Expansion into produce processing infrastructure

Economic Impact

- Generates approximately \$1–3 million annually in regional economic activity

Relevance to Spokane

- Existing entrepreneurial capacity already present in the region
- Flexible, scalable food hub functions
- Informal regional coordination models that could be formalized and expanded
- Opportunities for collaborative logistics and institutional procurement

Financial and Operational Considerations

- Food processing and infrastructure development are capital-intensive.

- Long-term success will require phased growth, strong governance, market feasibility analysis, and coordinated partnerships.
- The Circular Construction & Green Infrastructure Hub appears to have the strongest near-term financial potential and could generate surplus revenue to support other hubs.

Recommended Next Steps

- UD as catalytic convener
- Support the Ag-Economy community around funding for a coordinated Ag-Economy development manager to determine value-added processing needed to improve margins
- Support further study, operating, and development cost analysis to develop a **Spokane UD Food Commons Concept** with community partners.

Spokane Food Commons Proposed Features

- Shared food processing and storage infrastructure
- Retail and community food spaces
- Shared-use commercial kitchens
- Entrepreneur incubation
- Cooperative business development
- Partnerships with Main Market Co-op, LINC Foods, Grain Shed, and Feast World Kitchen
- Developing workforce and cooperative business pipelines with educational institutions, unions, and workforce agencies.
- Launching a multi-stakeholder maker cooperative campus integrating food systems, repair, makerspaces, childcare, training, and shared logistics.

Potential Long-Term Impact

If implemented successfully, the initiative could support:

- Regional amenity destination within the UD.
- New locally owned businesses and jobs.
- Workforce and student housing development.
- Expanded entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystems.
- Stronger regional supply chains and economic resilience.
- Increased civic participation, institutional collaboration, and community wealth retention.

How the Financing Ecosystem Works

Layering Public, Philanthropic, Institutional, and Community Capital Integrated Capital Stack (\$200M - \$250M Ecosystem Launch)

Capital Source	Proposed Amount	Strategic Role
Infrastructure funding (Public and P3)	\$50M	Streets, utilities, multi-modal connections, and nature-based infrastructure
Regional Housing Production Loan Fund	\$50M	Revolving construction financing for workforce, student, and mixed-income housing
New Market Tax Credits	\$20M	Highly subsidized capital for catalytic community facilities, innovation centers, incubators spaces, food enterprise hubs, cooperative commercial space, and mixed economic development projects
Opportunity Zone Equity	\$30M	Attracts long-term patient capital into mixed-use real estate, housing, innovation infrastructure, and district-scale redevelopment projects
Public Use Developments (p3)	\$25M	Bring development expertise, balance sheet capacity, project execution, and access to institutional capital while partnering with the public sector and community investment entities
Philanthropic Capital	\$10M	Provides first-loss guarantees, catalytic grants, recoverable grants, and program-related investments (PRIs) that de-risk and improve affordability outcomes
Institutional Investors	\$25M - \$35M	Pension funds, healthcare systems, universities, banks, and mission-driven investors provide scalable, long-term debt, and investment capital
Diversified Community Investment Fund	\$10M	Enables Angel investors, local residents, and community investors to participate directly in real estate and business investments through crowdfunding and local ownership structures
Local Business Financing	\$5M	Coordinates underwriting, capital deployment, credit enhancement, cooperative finance strategies, and small business lending across the district ecosystem; 50% match from Spokane Angel Alliance
Cooperative Member Equity	\$2M	Worker-owner and entrepreneur contributions create shared ownership structures and long-term wealth creation