

2010 Progress Report



A Message from Mayor Mary B. Verner

Concentrating our Energies

A striking recession, it seems, brings great clarity of purpose. For the last 18 months, our focus has not

But the work isn't over. Our Finance Division has identified a nearly \$10 million shortfall for 2011. The balancing act will be tougher still, and we can't expect the economy to help us out.

The U.S. Conference of Mayors unveiled a report last month on the economies of the nation's 363 metropolitan areas. The report says Spokane ranks 110th among metropolitan areas with a gross metropolitan product of \$17.6 billion in 2009. That's good.

The study also says that Spokane's peak employment was in the first quarter of 2008. Since then, Spokane has lost 9,200 jobs, a decline of 4.2 percent. The report anticipates that Spokane won't return to that peak employment until the first quarter of 2012. That's still a couple of years away.

Clearly, our energies must concentrate on changing our processes, finding efficiencies, and looking for opportunities to partner on services or regionalize them. We must address transportation funding, the ever-growing costs of the criminal justice system, and ways to help those who are most vulnerable.

In this report, you'll read about the progress we've made on many regional and City priorities in the last year. We are taking steps toward a better future for the City, our region, and our citizens.

Mary B. Verner
Mayor, City of Spokane



Japanese Gardens
Photo by Eric Thompson

strayed from the City budget and local economy.

We examined how we spend each dollar and evaluated how our decisions will impact our citizens. We eliminated 10 officer positions and made a variety of smaller program reductions. We added a little revenue from a change to business license fees. And we agreed to use up to \$1.9 million from our reserves.

We also called on our employees to help. Every bargaining unit came to the table with wage reductions, benefit changes, and savings plans that closed about half of our anticipated budget shortfall for 2010.

Mayor's Priorities

Infrastructure

Public Safety

*Sustainable
Economic Growth*

*Community
Quality of Life*

*Leadership and
Administration*

Police Track Crime, Performance



The Spokane Police Department places a high priority on transparency and accountability. The Department now produces a monthly report called AIM (Accountability Information Management) that details everything from unit performance measures and crime trends to personnel management and fiscal spending.

The statistics are analyzed to identify changes in performance and the internal and external factors that may have influenced these changes. The information can then be used to make informed decisions regarding department business practices. The report also keeps citizens up to date on crime data and how the SPD is responding.

The monthly AIM reports can be found at spokanepolice.org. Select AIM under Hot Topics.

Here Comes the Judge

Actually, judges—Mary Logan, Shelley Szambelan, and Tracy Staab. This fall, City of Spokane voters cast ballots for the first time to fill the three judge positions at Spokane's stand-alone Municipal Court.

The Court opened for business just after the first of the year in 2009 with judges appointed by Mayor Mary Verner and approved by the City Council.

Since launching operations, the City's new Municipal Court has had a sharp focus on efficient use of time and resources.

The court has established a master calendaring system that's designed to speed case resolution, reduce jail

costs, and create other efficiencies. Police officers now include an arraignment date on misdemeanor citations when they are written also to speed up case resolution.

And in December, the court launched Saturday Court, providing even greater convenience for citizens. At 1:30 p.m. on the first and third Saturdays of the month, citizens can go to court to mitigate infractions, instead of having to take time off work to resolve tickets. Nearly 100 people have resolved their cases on Saturdays so far.

"Our Municipal Court is focused on providing better justice sooner and to be more attuned to the needs of our customers and our community," says Presiding Judge Mary Logan.

What about Housing & Homelessness?

The current economic crisis has forced our federal and state governments to cut back on many social and human service programs, placing additional responsibilities on local government to help our most vulnerable citizens.

Recognizing the growing need for services, the City was able to budget \$960,000 for direct Human Services grants, down only \$40,000 from 2009.

We're also working to enhance supplies of low and affordable housing. Following the work of the Regional Affordable Housing Task Force in 2008, an implementation group is meeting monthly to continue work on this issue. Regional collaboration is key as the federal government moves to a competitive model for funding for housing.

During 2009, an additional 170 affording housing units in four projects were opened through collaborative partnerships that included the City, Spokane County, financing institutions, and development organizations.

And we partnered with the community to channel federal funds for weatherizing 600 Spokane homes to reduce heating bills for our residents.

Meanwhile, we have received \$1.5 million in stimulus funds for Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing services, to help keep our citizens from becoming homeless after a job loss or other extraordinary event. We estimate that this program will serve 400 households. We've also received another \$1 million in Community Development Block Grant stimulus funds that are intended to increase housing availability in the community.

Police Ombudsman On the Job

Following an extensive search, this summer Tim Burns joined the City as its new Police Ombudsman. The job is an important one; the ombudsman is charged with providing external oversight of the Spokane Police Department and with being a resource for citizens who have concerns about the police.

Since starting work, Burns has spent much of his time getting to know the community and its citizens. He splits his time between his office in Old City Hall and meeting citizens at community centers and other outside locations. Burns has been evaluating Police statistics, listening to the concerns of citizens, and reviewing a variety of actions.

Burns, who previously was the Neighborhood Preservation Manager for the City of Visalia, Calif., was appointed to a three-year term and can be reappointed to a second three-year term. Earlier in his career, Burns was a police officer for 22 years.

The Ombudsman has the authority to:

- Take complaints directly from citizens.
- Determine whether investigations of officers are thorough, complete, and fair, and call for additional investigation when warranted.
- Recommend mediation between police and a citizen when the ombudsman deems that is the best way to resolve a complaint.

The Ombudsman also can follow trends in policing and recommend best practices and track statistics and provide reports on Police Department performance to the City's elected leaders.

The City Council approved an ordinance in the fall of 2008 to create the Office of Police

New COPS Substation Opens

Greater Spokane COPS is the City's newest COPS substation, opening last March at the corner of Main Avenue and Stevens Street downtown.



The substation combines the old TOP COPS location and the COPS Southwest location in one more centrally located site. The new location is friendlier for walk-up visitors and easily accessible for residents—as well as businesses—in this area.

The new station is a collaboration of COPS, the Spokane Police Department, and the Washington State Department of Corrections.

The new location is designed to allow for:

- More participation by business.
- A greater connection with the Downtown Security Ambassadors.
- And a more comfortable environment for citizens to engage on issues of public safety.

“Once again, we are reminded that it takes many eyes and ears to keep our community safe,” says Mayor Mary Verner. “Working together, we are making a difference.”

For information on how to volunteer at Greater Spokane COPS, go to spokanecops.org/volunteer or call 835-4592.

Ombudsman, following successful negotiations between the City and the Police Guild. The Ombudsman office is designed to feature independence, transparency, professionalism, and meaningful review.

Construction Coming Your Way

Another big year for City street and infrastructure construction is on the horizon. The City has planned about 40 projects worth about \$61.4 million for the 2010 construction season. Work is planned in all parts of the City.

Under the 10-year Street Bond Program, curb-to-curb, complete rehabilitation is planned for:

- Nevada Street from North Foothills Drive to Wellesley Avenue.
- Lincoln Street from 17th to 29th avenues.
- Hatch Road from 57th to 54th avenues.
- Northwest Boulevard from Alberta to Maple streets.
- Second Avenue from Sunset Boulevard to Division Street.
- 37th Avenue from Grand Blvd. to Perry Street.
- Wellesley Avenue from Maple to Division streets.

We'll also finish work on the Freya Street Bridge replacement and start work on a new overpass over the railroad viaduct at Havana Street north of Broadway Avenue. And, we'll break ground on the Riverside Avenue extension project in the University District.

For more information on construction, check out the City's web site at spokanecity.org.

We've Still Got Snow on Our Minds

Remember last winter? Dubbed "snowpocalypse" by Spokane TV media, we suspect you won't soon forget.

Well, following that record snowfall and a not-so-insignificant amount of snow the year before, the City of Spokane last fall rolled out a revised approach to snow removal as a pilot project for the 2009-10 snow season.



The revised approach is designed to improve safety for motorists and pedestrians, ensure emergency responders can reach citizens, and enhance movement for pedestrians, motorists, and economic activity.

"We heard from our citizens, and we responded," says Mayor Mary Verner. "We developed a program that requires both the City and its citizens to be more proactive when it snows, and we believe that everyone will be more pleased with the results."

As part of the plan, the City purchased 11 additional truck plows and committed to enhancing snow removal efforts, stepping up sidewalk snow removal around City-owned property, and enhancing communications efforts with citizens. Citizens and business owners, meanwhile, are asked to follow parking

restrictions and keep sidewalks, vehicles, hydrants, and storm drains clear of snow.

Under the plan, the City defines the snow season as Nov. 15 to March 15. During this time, the City may declare a snow emergency when weather conditions warrant.

A Stage 1 Snow Emergency is declared when 2 inches of snow are on the ground and 4 more are anticipated during the current snow event; a Stage 2 Snow Emergency is declared when 6 inches of snow are on the ground and more is anticipated in the current snow event.

A Stage 1 Snow Emergency will require citizens to move parked cars off of all arterials and bus routes, while a Stage 2 Snow Emergency will require citizens to park on

one side of the street in residential areas. The parking changes will allow plow drivers to open up streets better, allowing for easier and safer travel during heavy snows.

Removing snow from sidewalks within 24 hours of a snow storm also is critical. A committee of citizens, local school representatives, Spokane Transit Authority staff, and City employees recommended an enhanced approach to sidewalk snow removal that would eventually require tickets for those who failed to comply. This year, the City has asked for voluntary compliance.

We've been asking for comments and suggestions about the new plan since the fall, but our challenge has been an almost complete lack of snow to test the most significant changes. We'll evaluate our next steps come spring. More information can be found at spokanecity.org.

The Green Mile

Promoting and developing green and sustainable businesses is an important economic growth strategy for the City of Spokane. Throughout 2009, the City worked on projects and programs to assist with this work.

The City showcased the first recipients of our SMART business recognition program early in 2009. The Sustainable Management of Assets, Resources and Technology (SMART) program highlights businesses that have adopted sustainable and green policies and practices. More SMART businesses will be recognized this year, too.

Meanwhile, we also supported efforts to launch the Sustainable Local Investment Partnership (SLIP). SLIP works to gain investors who want their money used for loans to businesses committed to sustainable business practices.

And the City worked with its partners. As a community, we added clean technology and energy efficiency as our third priority industry cluster, joining aerospace and health care.

Tied into this clean energy cluster is promising work called the Asia Pacific Partnership, through which we are seeking international business partners to share technology and grow jobs.

We're also working with Avista on plans to offer energy audits to Spokane consumers using a portion of stimulus funds we received for energy-related work. In addition, we're spending additional stimulus dollars to assess City-owned facilities for possible energy efficiency upgrades, and we have about \$1.3 million to launch those projects.

All the while, the City has been working on ways to make the City organization more green and sustainable. The City's "Green Team," which includes employees from throughout the organization, is working on an implementation plan for ideas presented in the City's Sustainability Action Plan while we take steps forward.

Some examples from 2009:

- Community Gardens in East Central and Hillyard opened this summer on vacant Water Department property.
- Recycled glass was used in the subgrade as part of the reconstruction of Market Street. (See story on page 9.)
- A \$100 rebate was offered to citizens who agreed to remove 1,000 square feet of lawn and replace it with xeriscaping or similar water-conserving landscaping.
- Re-refined oil is now being used in City fleet vehicles.
- A Green Building Resource Center was opened in City Hall.

The lists go on of common sense actions that are good for the environment and save taxpayer dollars.



East Central Community Center
Community Garden

Bikes, Pedestrians

As we look to improve our street system, we really think about things in terms of moving people, not vehicles. In the last year, we've taken significant steps to improve bike and pedestrian facilities as part of that thinking.

In the last year, we:

- Completed the Master Bike Plan.
- Completed the second phase of work on the Fish Lake Trail. (Thanks in part to stimulus dollars)
- Added new shared bike lanes called "sharrows" on 37th Avenue and Southeast Boulevard.
- Supported some great events—including Bike to Work Week and the second annual SpokeFest.
- Organized bike and pedestrian counts that provide information that allows us to compete for grants.
- And finally added a new Bike-Ped Coordinator to look for grants and other opportunities to expand our bike and pedestrian network.

And, we already have plans in the works for this year. Striping for bike lanes is planned for Spokane Falls Boulevard, Riverside Avenue, and Fourth Avenue between Howard and Jefferson streets and Howard Street from Fourth to Buckeye avenues.

Budgeting in Tough Economic Times

Crafting a balanced budget for 2010 was a year-long challenge for the City of Spokane.

Our strong financial principles and conservative budgeting approach over the last several years served us well in a year when our local and national economies struggled mightily.

For 2010, the City produced a budget that limited additional costs for citizens while minimizing reductions in City services. We doggedly pursued a solution to an anticipated \$7 million shortfall for 2010 that included employee savings, non-personnel reductions, a small revenue increase, and modest use of reserves.

As the year proceeds, we will be ever-vigilant of the budget, watching the numbers closely and making changes as necessary throughout the year.

And... we've already begun the budgeting process for 2011, which will bring us an even greater challenge. Our Finance Division is projecting an \$10 million shortfall for the next year in the City's General Fund. We will need to implement programmatic changes and new ways of doing business to achieve the savings we need to balance the budget.

City Puts Stimulus Dollars to Work

The City of Spokane is putting American Reinvestment and Recovery Act dollars to work for Spokane and its citizens.

At the direction of Mayor Mary Verner and the City Council, the City is investing these funds in projects that are creating and saving jobs, promoting economic recovery and growth, and creating a framework for clean, efficient American energy.

In addition, City staff members are investigating additional stimulus funding sources and how they might be put to work for our community.

So far, the City is working on programs and projects totaling \$19 million in stimulus funding. Transportation projects, law enforcement funding, employment assistance, and projects that help low-income families and neighborhoods are tops among these programs. The City is also working with other partners on projects totaling another \$4 million that will improve internet connectivity to libraries and allow for home weatherization projects.

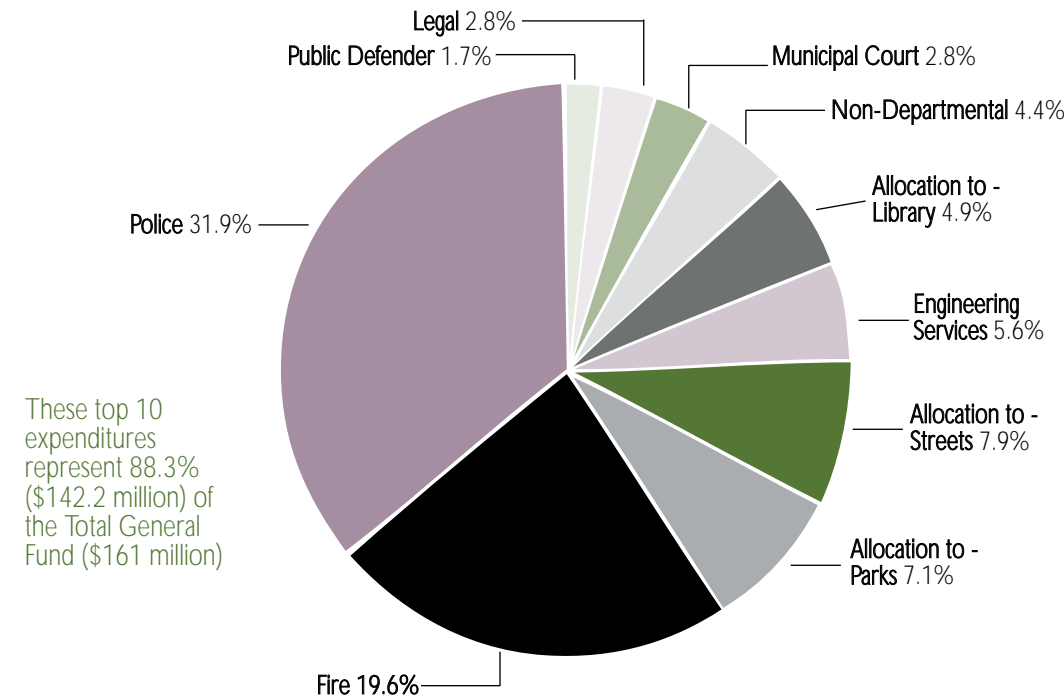
A table of the City's economic stimulus funds and projects is found by clicking on "Stimulus Funds" on the front page of the City's web site at spokanecity.org.

Stimulus funding comes from a number of sources and covers a host of topics. More information on stimulus funding at the state level is available at recovery.wa.gov.

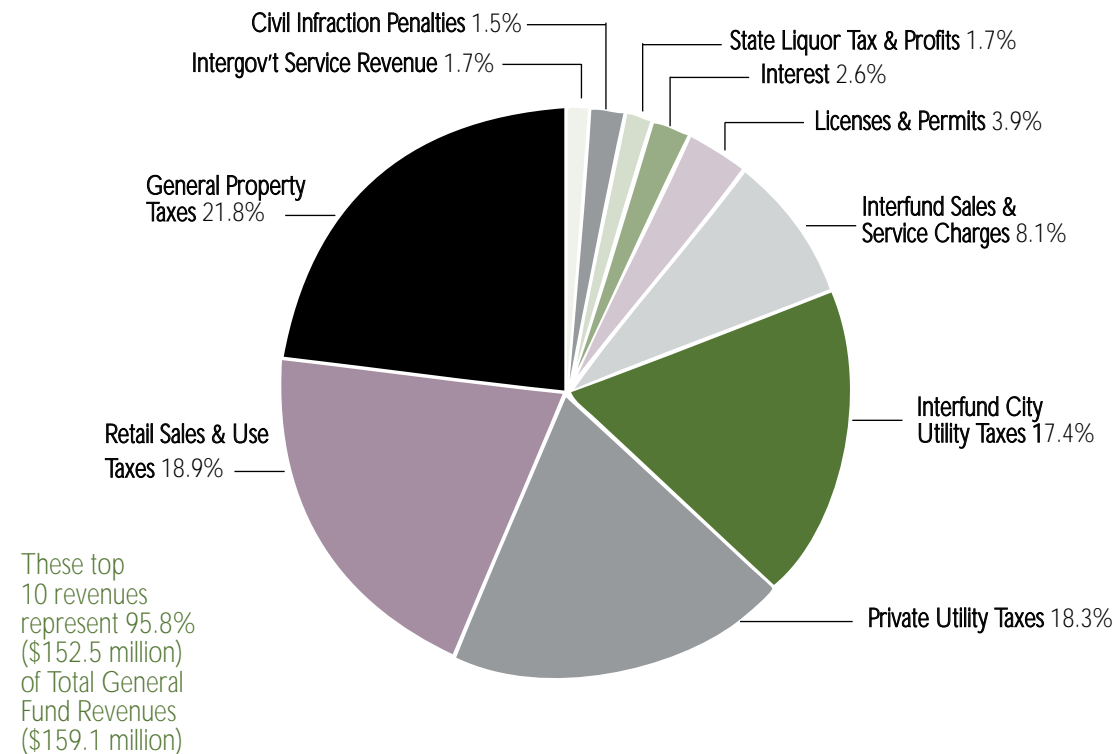
For information on stimulus funding at the federal level, please go to recovery.gov.

2010 Budget Story

Top 10 General Fund Expenditures



Top 10 General Fund Revenues



Budget Basics

The City's Total Budget

For 2010, the City's budget totals \$604 million. The overall budget includes the General Fund; the Water, Wastewater, and Garbage utilities; a variety of special dedicated funds; capital projects; and debt service.

The General Fund

For 2010, the City's General Fund totals \$161 million. When people talk about the City's budget, they usually mean the General Fund. The General Fund includes revenues from property, sales, and utility taxes, and pays for basic City services, including police, fire, libraries, parks, streets, and planning.

Reserves

The City still has strong reserve funds totaling about 15 percent of the General Fund. Those funds include an expenditure reserve for unanticipated expenses, a revenue stabilization account to weather short-term drops in revenue, and operating cash reserves to manage cash flow needs. The City built these reserves during the early 2000s, when revenues were strong. To balance the 2010 budget, the City will use up to \$1.9 million from the revenue stabilization account.

Fiscal Year

Unlike the state of Washington, the City of Spokane operates on a calendar-year basis. Each year, the City spends months preparing the annual budget. The Mayor must present her proposed budget to the City Council by Nov. 1, and the City Council must adopt a balanced budget prior to Dec. 31.

Bond Rating Boost

The City of Spokane got a bond rating boost last month. Standard & Poor's, a major U.S. bond-rating agency, upgraded the City's rating to "AA" from "AA-".

"Our careful and deliberate financial management and strong focus on healthy reserves has paid off one more time," says Mayor Mary Verner.

"Interest costs for future debt issuances definitely will be lower as a result of the improved bond rating," Chief Financial Officer Gavin Cooley added.

The City will next issue bonds later this year as part of the \$117 million, 10-year Street Bond that was passed by Spokane voters in 2004. This will be the third bond sale related to the 10-Year Street Bond, and the new rating likely will lead to an interest rate that's 20 to 40 basis points lower than it would have been, Cooley says.

The changes follow an S&P upgrade in the City's outlook in June of 2008 and a similar move in November 2006. S&P said, "The rating revision reflects the city's maintenance of what we consider very strong available general fund balances and management's efforts to reduce expenditures to ensure continued compliance with the City's formal reserves policy."



Targeting Development

The City's Business & Development Services Department has rolled out a new strategy called Targeted Area Development that focuses resources based on location to get bigger bang for our buck.

Targeted Area Development essentially works like this: The City identifies a geographic area with potential for growth and expansion, such as the Spokane University District. We then partner with other government agencies to develop infrastructure projects and incentive programs that grow business and bring career opportunities to our community.

We're leveraging the tools of government to spur private investment, and that's how we'll raise our dollars. We're using this approach in Hillyard, East Sprague, the North Bank, and the West Spokane Energy District, among other places, and we're already seeing results.

University District Is on the Move

The University District just east of downtown is on the move. Through a strong, community-wide collaboration, we are creating an area that is and will be an economic driver, a hub of research and academic achievement, an incubator for health sciences and other businesses, and simply, a hip place to "Live, Learn, Work & Play."

Our collaboration includes the Downtown Spokane Partnership, Greater Spokane Incorporated, Avista, SIRT, WSU, EWU, Whitworth, Gonzaga, and the Community Colleges of Spokane, along with the many businesses within the district. These partners established a formal leadership organizational structure this year, called the University District Development Alliance.

The University District is built around a base of strong academics, with some 11,400 students now attending school on this site. From there, private-sector businesses, especially in the areas of research and technology, are investing and growing in the District. This investment contributes to the University

District push to build a stronger medical industry presence.

And all the while as a City, we're working to enhance the infrastructure to make the University District work.

This summer, we put together a University District Revitalization Area—a funding mechanism that will allow us to invest in public infrastructure improvements including improvements to the Division Street Gateway and the pedestrian/bicycle bridge envisioned to go across the railroad viaduct. These are our first two priority projects.

In the spring, we will break ground on what's commonly known as the Riverside Extension project, which will move traffic away from the middle of the Riverpoint campus.

The Spokane City Council in September approved a request to name this new street: Martin Luther King Jr. Way. Dr. King stood for education and enlightenment, and this is a great way to honor his legacy.

Construction Activity Down in 2009

As we all knew, 2009 was a tough year for construction in Spokane, and really, the nation. Total valuation for all permits within the City was \$242.6 million for 2009, down from \$310.9 million in 2008.

Here's a look at permits granted for the year:

Type of permit	2008	2009
Construction permits	4,148	4,004
Commercial permits issued over the counter	112	110
Single Family Residences	181	170
Total Permits (includes the above categories & more)	14,285	13,370

Water Stewardship



The City of Spokane spent the summer encouraging residents to “Slow the Flow” of water as part of a public awareness campaign to promote water stewardship.

Protecting and preserving our water resources is a long-term goal of the City and is part of our sustainability efforts. The city’s Water Department also must meet water conservation goals as part of regulatory requirements. The most challenging of the goals is to reduce outdoor water use in the summer by 10 percent by 2011 and 20 percent by 2017.

The “Slow the Flow” campaign centered around “water-wise practices” and making choices to use less water. Here are some great ways to do just that:

- Don’t sprinkle between noon and 6 p.m. Some experts estimate that 50% of your water evaporates when sprinkling in the heat of the day. Early morning watering is best.

- Don’t let your hose run. While washing your car, use a nozzle or shut off the faucet until you spray. Running a 5/8-inch hose for 30 minutes wastes up to 150 gallons of water.
- Don’t water streets and sidewalks. Adjust your sprinkler to avoid the pavement; otherwise, evaporation will claim all the water that doesn’t end up on your lawn.

Additionally, the City offered its residential water utility customers a \$100 water bill credit to remove 1,000 square feet of lawn and replace it with non-irrigated, drought-tolerant landscaping.

The City also worked with partner, Spokane County, to encourage a reduction in indoor water use, too. The program included incentives to install certain toilets and clothes washers that use significantly less water than other models.

Watch for ongoing efforts this year to continue to help “Slow the Flow.”



Boulevards of Broken Glass

Jelly jars. Pickle jars. Beer bottles, too. Spokane residents and businesses load up their blue recycling bins with glass. Some 6,000 tons of glass was collected in Spokane in 2008 alone in curbside bins and at recycling centers.

But what to do with all that used glass? Markets for used glass are few and far away. Locally, we can include it in trash processed at the Waste to Energy plant, but glass doesn’t burn; instead it actually uses energy as it melts. And the resulting debris still must be disposed.

Enter an innovative idea to use the glass as part of the reconstruction of Market Street from Garland to Francis avenues. Creating a pilot project required collaboration from a variety of partners, including the City Street, Solid Waste, and Engineering Services departments; the Spokane Regional Solid Waste System; Pacific Steel & Recycling; Spokane Recycling Products Inc.; SA Gonzales Construction Inc.; and Inland Asphalt.

Ultimately, 1,500 tons of crushed glass was combined with crushed rock to create an aggregate that was used for a 9-inch thick roadbed. Inland Asphalt construction crews then put down an 8-inch layer of asphalt to complete the surface of the 1.25-mile-long project.

“The pilot project is now being evaluated,” says Rich Hanson, senior engineer for the City of Spokane’s Solid Waste Management Department. “It’s a good process, and we’ve had good feedback from everybody. Preliminary tests have been positive, and we hope to be able to use it again this construction season.”





Planning Downtown

The original Downtown Plan led to \$3.7 billion invested in more than 800 successful development projects. Now, we've updated that plan to continue the revitalization.

Fast Forward Spokane:

Downtown Plan Update was adopted as part of the City's Comprehensive Plan. And this December, the City Council adopted new development regulations for downtown that will help keep things moving.

More information can be found at spokaneplanning.org.

Annexation Collaboration

In an unprecedented fashion, the City of Airway Heights, the City of Spokane, and Spokane County got together for a joint meeting on a Thursday night in early December to discuss annexation on the West Plains.

By the end of the meeting all of the jurisdictions had approved an interlocal agreement that will allow the annexation of 6,400 acres between the cities of Spokane and Airway Heights to move forward.

The area is part of a designated Urban Growth Area under the state's Growth Management Act. Under the agreement, a portion of the area will become part of the City of Airway Heights and the rest would become part of the City of Spokane.

The agreement is significant because it's the first one under a new law that allows annexation to proceed through a negotiated agreement approved by all affected governments in an area. The agreement took a little less than a year to develop and lots of discussion.



"I'm delighted that year of difficult and arduous efforts among our jurisdictions culminated in an unprecedented agreement," Spokane Mayor Mary Verner said.

The annexation will take effect in January 2012.

Employee-Led Innovation

While our budget challenges may restrict our ability to add or expand programs as citizens may desire, they don't limit our ability to be creative and solution-oriented. Enter Employee-Led Innovation (ELI).

Our new ELI program is designed to find efficiencies and cost-savings throughout the organization, using Lean Six Sigma techniques and other tools. This change initiative is enabling us to be more nimble and to focus on "value-added" activities for our citizens.

The ideas for making us better and more efficient are coming from our employees—those who know the work best. And, they are delivering results.

Employees in the Police Department brought forward a variety of changes that have resulted in overtime savings of \$485,000 in 2009. We saved \$15,000 in the cost of recycling our

used glass, trying employees' ideas to crush the glass into aggregate for paving streets. And, another \$5,000 a year came from recycling the refrigerant, Freon, captured at our Fleet Services Department.

We expect significant overtime cost savings at Solid Waste Transfer Stations by re-configuring extended hours to a standardized schedule across the system that better fits those customers' needs.

And at the Library, we've reduced the turnaround time in the bindery area significantly, which means more books are on the shelves and ready to be checked out. And, we're changing other processes to eliminate steps, like small contracts processing.

We're headed to other projects now, including the re-routing of garbage trucks to save time and fuel. Every day, we're working to make the City better.

Pools Open to Record Crowds

The City of Spokane built six new pools in 2009, four of which were ready in time to host swimmers for at least part of the summer. (Construction was delayed some because of the dramatic snowfall during the 2008-09 winter.)

The first two pools—at AM Cannon and Shadle parks—opened just after the 4th of July, followed in August by the pools at Comstock Park and in Hillyard.

With slides, fountains, play equipment, and colorful umbrellas, the pools attracted kids and families in droves. Despite the abbreviated season, the City's Parks & Recreation Department

recorded attendance of 114,741, up from an attendance figure of 96,456 in 2008.

High attendance numbers are expected again for the summer of 2010, and the Parks & Recreation Department is gearing up for a big season.

Parks currently is working to hire more than 100 employees to staff the pools for summer. Needed are lifeguards, swim coaches, water safety instructors, and managers. More information is available at spokaneparks.org/jobs.



What's Up at the Library?

Everything from circulation to numbers of computers to hours.

The Spokane Public Library is a happening place these days. The Library posted a record number for library checkouts (circulation) in 2009, with more than 2 million items borrowed from the libraries during the year.

This was the first time the Spokane Public Library has ever broken the 2 million mark. The number represents an increase of 5.6 percent over 2008, which saw 1.9 million checkouts.

Library usage has been steadily increasing in the last two years and the library attributes this to a number of factors. Library usage tends to increase during poor economic times as citizens choose to use free resources at the libraries instead of purchasing books and renting movies.

Library staff have also heard customers remark that they've cancelled their home Internet connections in favor of using the Library's free wireless or the Internet computers in the branches. Library administration also attributes the high usage to an increase of popular materials including DVD and CD book collections, more computers, and greater awareness of the library's offerings.

Additional computers for customers were made possible with a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation which added 50 computers system-wide last year. Another 50 computers will be added in 2010, thanks to the successful 10-Spot for Technology campaign that raised the matching funds needed to accept the computers.

The Library also is garnering business because of its Renew Washington grant from the Washington State Library. The grant is designed to help individuals affected by the economic downturn. We've been able to use the funding to open our computer lab in the Downtown Library as a WorkSource Connection site, assisting those looking for work.

Meanwhile, at the end of January, the Library's Downtown branch restored open hours on Mondays. The branch now is open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Mondays. Monday hours haven't been offered since the end of 2004 when severe budget cuts caused reductions in hours throughout the Library system.

The Library was able to again be open on Mondays downtown with no additional funding. Reallocation of staff and greater use of self-service options by customers made the change possible.

Help Kids Swim

Last year, nearly 400 Spokane kids received free summer passes to our new City pools as a result of generous donations from businesses and individuals.

The Spokane Parks Foundation already has a fund established to make swimming accessible for all our kids in the summer of 2010.

If you're interested in helping the kids stay cool this summer, go to spokaneparksfoundation.org. Donations will buy swimwear, pay for swimming lessons, and provide pool passes for kids who can't afford it.

EMS Levy Coming Up

The City of Spokane's critical Emergency Medical Service (EMS) levy will come up for a public vote in 2010.

The current EMS levy will expire on Dec. 31, 2010, and City voters will be asked to approve the continuation of the levy for the next six years.



The revenue generated by the EMS levy (approximately \$8 million annually for the next six years) would assist in paying for:

- First Response basic and advanced life support response.
- Firefighter/Emergency Medical Technicians and Firefighter/Paramedics.
- Medical supplies and equipment plus general operating costs.
- Vehicle and equipment maintenance.
- EMS training.
- EMS management and quality improvement programs.

The EMS levy would be at the same rate as approved in 2004. It cannot exceed 50 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value; that's \$50 a year for a property worth \$100,000 or \$100 a year on a property worth \$200,000.

The Fire Department has been involved with EMS for more than 50 years and EMS levies have been voted on and approved by voters every six years since they began in 1980.

In 2009, the Fire Department responded to more than 23,000 EMS incidents.



We work for you!

City of Spokane Elected Officials

Mayor

Mary Verner

Council President

Joe Shogan

Council Members

Bob Apple

Steve Corker

Nancy McLaughlin

Richard Rush

John Snyder

Amber Waldref

More information on the City of Spokane can be found at spokanecity.org. To ask a question or find a resource, you can also call **755-CITY**.

February 2010

Get Involved

The City of Spokane wants you to get the information you need about your City, and then get involved. Here are a few tools to assist you:

- You don't have to move to live in a better neighborhood. The City is divided into 27 neighborhoods. Go to spokaneneighborhoods.org to find out what neighborhood you live in, when your Neighborhood Council meets, and other information.
- The City is continually recruiting to fill vacancies on a variety of citizen boards and commissions that make decision and provide advice to elected officials. Find out about vacancies at spokanecity.org/government/bcc.
- Check out the CityCable 5 video archive on the City's web site featuring more than a year of archived City Council meetings and other informational programming at spokanecity.org/services/citycable5/streamingmedia.

Follow the City on Twitter for lots of up-to-date information: [Twitter/SpokaneCity](https://twitter.com/SpokaneCity).