



JOINT STATEMENT

March 3, 2023

Collaborating for our Community

Spokane regional elected leadership announces a 90-day due diligence period to evaluate options for a regional and collaborative model to improve our collective efforts to address homelessness and its impacts on our community.

Our region's greatest strength is our ability to build community vitality through regional partnerships and collaboration, and now is the time to utilize that strength to more effectively and collaboratively address homelessness in our community. The Spokane region has a history of achieving big things when responsibility and successful outcomes are shared.

Homelessness affects communities across the country, and Eastern Washington is no exception. One of the biggest challenges communities face in addressing homelessness, is that much of the homeless response system relies on many people and organizations working effectively across jurisdictions and with a regional focus. Together, we can better coordinate our resources invested in housing and human services, to successfully and efficiently address this crisis.

As elected leaders, we know this isn't a political issue, it is a people issue, and it affects all of us in the Spokane region. We believe that working beyond political and jurisdictional boundaries may give us the best chance to build and deliver strategic and impactful solutions for our entire community for years to come.

About our Collaborative Effort

Developing an integrated strategy with shared responsibility is best achieved when all local elected officials work collaboratively.

One initiative we will be assessing, modeled after successful campaigns in Houston and Atlanta, is an effort to establish an independent authority tasked with making strategic, coordinated decisions and investments, to achieve the best outcomes. The Spokane region is ready to work to establish our own model, one that best fits our community's needs and desires.

We recognize that our many providers and other professionals throughout the homeless response system have worked diligently for many years, but often without the regional planning and support they've needed to achieve greater success. Such a collaborative effort could more effectively address

these needs by properly aligning the region around strategies, funding, and many other resources, including the areas of health and services, housing, and public safety.

Three community leaders, Gavin Cooley, Rick Romero, and Theresa Sanders have volunteered to help organize and guide this effort. Each has a variety of business and public sector experience, and together have worked on numerous successful regional collaborations.

The Next 90 Days

The first step towards developing a regional collaborative authority, is a 90-day due diligence period. During this time, community leaders and many stakeholder groups will work together as quickly as possible to identify how a regional and collaborative system could be created – a system that could be built on shared vision, finances, data, and other resources to optimize the address of homelessness and its impacts on our community. The due diligence period will focus on:

1. Reviewing **potential legal structures** for a regional effort, including pro/con evaluations, e.g. Public Development Authority (PDA), nonprofit, and others
2. Review and discussion of **initial funding, costs and other financial information** in support of a regional effort
3. Review and discussion of **data collection and use** in support of a regional effort
4. Reviewing **potential governance models** and best practices, including roles of jurisdictions, elected leaders and community stakeholders in coordination and support of a regional effort
5. Review and discussion of **initial staffing** in support of a regional effort
6. Review and discussion of how the **success of a regional effort** can be regularly quantified and evaluated

Gathering comprehensive regional stakeholder input will be key to our success. Many different stakeholder groups, providers throughout the homeless response system, people with lived experience, our local Continuum of Care Board, local, state, and federal government agencies their staff and advisory boards, as well as businesses, and residents, will be encouraged to actively participate in this process.

Throughout the due diligence period, there will be many avenues for community members to share their input and perspectives with elected and other leaders, including public forums and a website.

Following the due diligence period, legislative bodies will evaluate the information developed and the likelihood of success for a regional collaborative authority model, and give consideration as to whether and to what degree to participate in the regional authority or other envisioned regional homelessness efforts.

Together we can build a bright future for the Spokane region.

Signed,

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Spokane County



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Commission
Chair

Josh Kerns
Commission
Vice Chair

Al French
Commissioner



Amber Waldref
Commissioner

Chris Jordan
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City of Spokane Valley



Pam Haley
Mayor
On Behalf of the City Council