



2023 LEIA Program

Liberty to Edgecliff Improvements for Accessibility

A Joint Application to USDOT's 2023 Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Grant Program



September 2023

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I. Overview

Scope of Project

The Liberty to Edgecliff Improvements for Accessibility (LEIA) program proposes strategic and focused construction of sidewalks, bicycle facilities, crosswalks, lighting, traffic signals and transit stops in the East Central community, a historically disadvantaged community located across four miles of city streets between Liberty and Edgecliff Parks. The LEIA program offers multi-modal improvements to offset myriad negative impacts created by the 1950s construction of Interstate 90 (I-90). Further, the program adds tree cover, enhances greenspace accessibility, adds neighborhood entry signs, and installs interpretive signs at a historic site.

The majority of the project is located within an Area of Persistent Poverty and qualifies as an Economically Disadvantaged Community for the purposes of this grant program. (Figure 1)

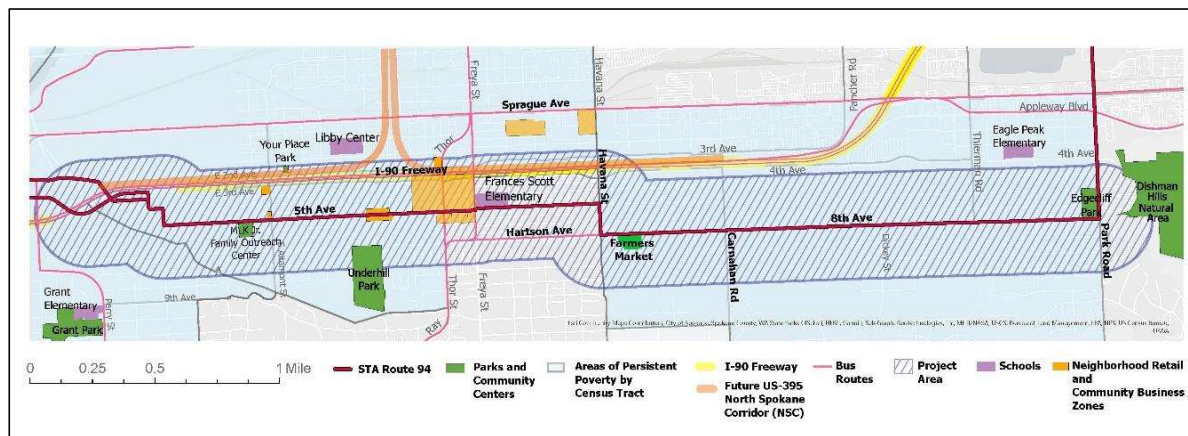


Figure 1. Project Location Map

Barriers, Harms, or Burdens Caused by Transportation Infrastructure

Construction of the I-90 freeway ruptured an historic neighborhood and created a physical barrier to local economic activity and commerce. The freeway increased traffic on the remaining north-south streets and further compounded impacts to neighborhood connectivity with sub-standard pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure on its parallel routes. Figure 2 highlights the planning efforts from the 1930s and 1940s by the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) to locate I-90 through the East Central community. In addition to isolating neighborhood commercial hubs, I-90 construction disrupted social cohesion, destroyed a popular city park (Liberty Park), and blocked local travel patterns to schools, community gathering spaces, places of worship, neighborhood services, and places of employment.

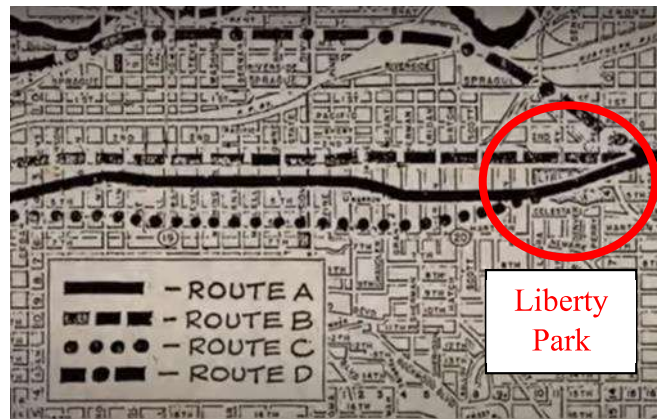


Figure 2. FHWA I-90 Route Planning

History and Character of the Impacted Community

The East Central and Edgecliff neighborhoods are among the oldest and most diverse neighborhoods in the Spokane region. Developed in the late 1800s and early 1900s as tightly knit communities of working-class and immigrant families, the neighborhoods grew in connection with industrial development east of the city's downtown core.



Figure 3. Liberty Park Wading Pool - Prior to I-90

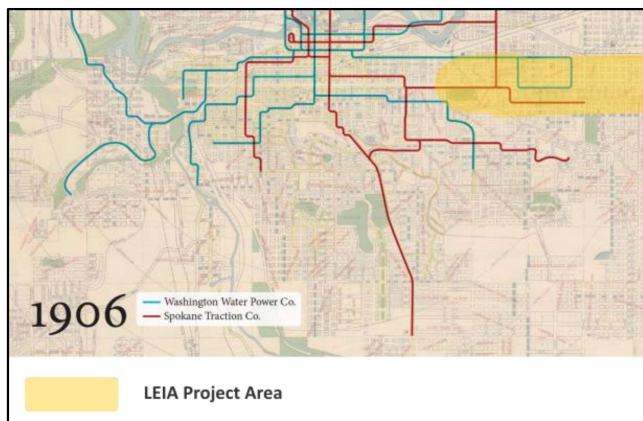


Figure 4. 1906 Streetcar Map. Source: transitmap.net

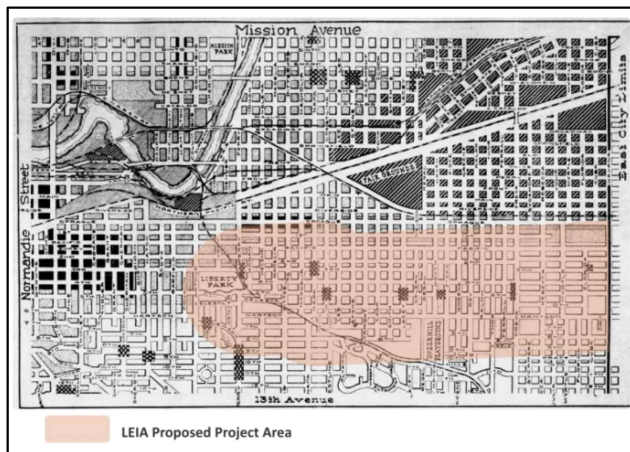


Figure 6. 1929 Neighborhood Map - Prior to I-90

Liberty Park was a 28-acre park that brought a sense of pride and community (Figure 3). It was beloved by the surrounding neighborhoods and offered opportunity for people to recreate and socialize while promoting a strong, centralized areas for locally owned businesses to prosper.

Popular streetcar lines following 3rd, 5th and Sprague Avenues, as shown in Figure 4, fostered neighborhood business nodes and corridors near busy stations. These east-west connections extended the community east into Edgecliff, marked by the 1915 Edgecliff Sanitarium for tuberculosis treatments (Figure 5). This neighborhood growth generated a mix of residential and commercial land uses and promoted a dynamic community. The business areas are identified by the black-and-white checkerboard patterns in Figure 6.



Figure 5. Edgecliff Sanitarium (1900s) and Retirement Center (present day)

Following the first World War, as core industries declined and land values in the East Central and Edgecliff neighborhoods started dropping, the Federal Housing Administration refused to insure mortgages in and near African American, low income, and immigrant neighborhoods. This policy, known as “redlining,” segregated the neighborhood and accelerated the decline of the neighborhood by preventing its citizens the opportunity to build generational equity within their community. By the 1950s, despite remaining “home” to thousands of diverse families and hundreds of businesses, the neighborhood became one of the poorest in Spokane. (Figure 7)

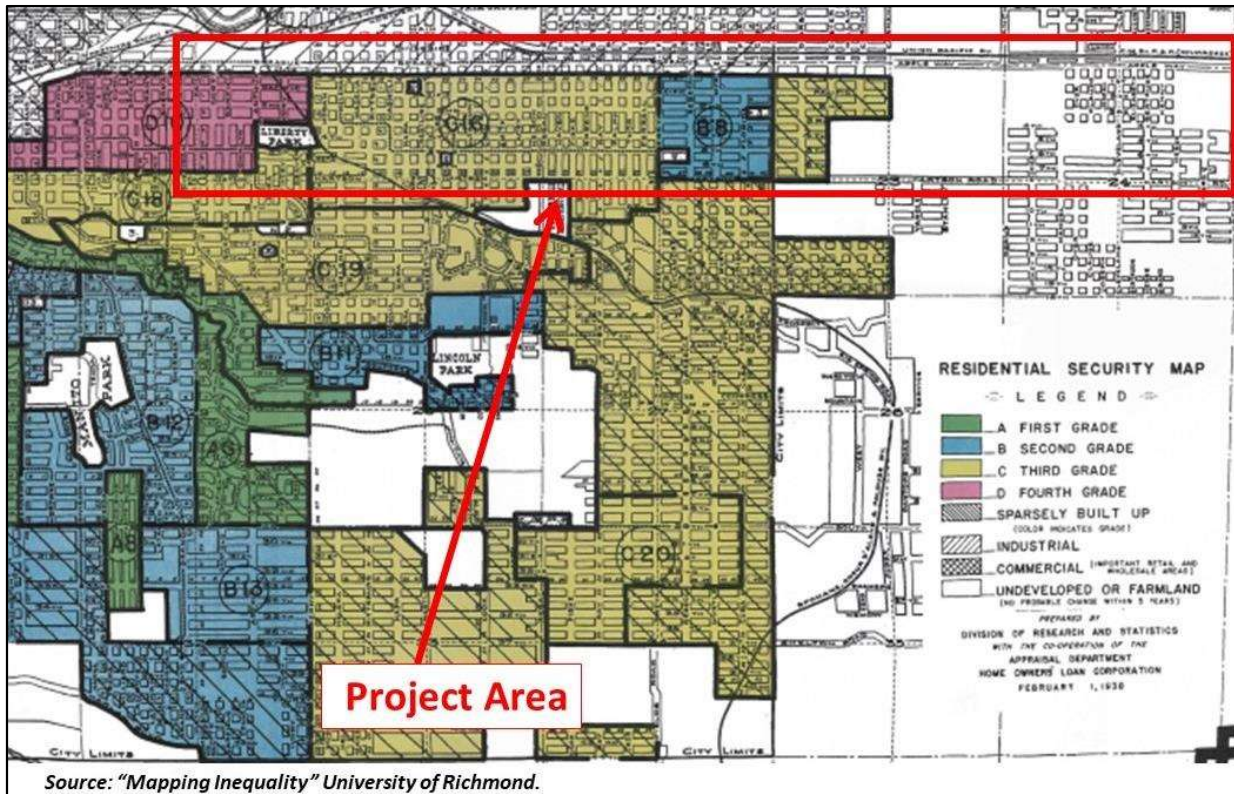


Figure 7. Federal Housing Administration "Redlining" Map

With the availability of inexpensive land caused by decades of undue burden and disadvantage, the area was at the center of attention by FHWA for its new freeway alignment as part of the national highway system. I-90 freeway construction in the 1950s divided the neighborhood, north from south, and razed thousands of homes and businesses, as well as a public elementary (Figure 8). I-90 isolated small, diverse commercial areas that acted as community gathering spaces and destinations, including a portion along 5th Avenue, which was 20% Black or African American, a significantly higher proportion of the population than in all Spokane County at the time, with the exception of the central business district.



Figure 8. I-90 Construction approaching Liberty Park (from west)

Through determined efforts in recent decades, the community rebuilt ground-up systems of resilience and entrepreneurship. The neighborhood now fosters a range of culturally important organizations and businesses, including the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Center campus that hosts a healthcare facility, daycare and



Figure 9. MLK Community Center

learning center, and police youth and community outreach office (Figure 9). As the historic center and cultural hub of the Black community in Spokane, this area functions as the home for a diverse and growing community of residents including Latino, Marshallese, Vietnamese and recent immigrant communities.



Figure 10. 2023 8th Ave. Sidewalk and Bicycle Lane Improvements (Thierman and Park Roads).

In 2023, the east end of the project area experienced its first incremental improvement in a very long time. The City of Spokane Valley secured state funding to support the installation of a new sidewalk and bicycle lane on the north half of 8th Avenue between Thierman and Park Roads. This half-mile, half-street improvement filled a sidewalk gap on the north side of 8th Avenue and ultimately provides a one-mile stretch of uninterrupted sidewalk and bicycle lanes that neighbors to Edgecliff Park (Figure 10). The proposed LEIA program will leverage these existing improvements and complete the multi-modal facilities for all of 8th Avenue.

The three existing I-90 pedestrian bridges were installed with the urging of East Central Community leaders after construction of the freeway (Figure 11). They are narrow, not ADA compliant, and one of the bridges was removed in early 2023 due to structural concerns. WSDOT is planning to replace all three bridges as part of their US 395 connection work, but the locations have yet to be finalized. A land bridge concept is also being evaluated for the Liberty Park area.



Figure 11. One of three existing I-90 pedestrian bridges to be replaced by 2030 by WSDOT.

Proposed Actions to Address Burdens/Harms Consistent with Community

5th Avenue and 8th Avenue are the primary transit streets and through-streets serving East Central and Edgecliff neighborhoods, linking people to their homes, parks, local businesses, and community services such as libraries, daycare, schools, retirement homes, a grocery store and community centers.

The LEIA program will deliver a collaborative, multi-agency program of projects to reconnect these historic neighborhoods, diverse communities and legacy parks bordering I-90. By building safe and continuous routes for people of all ages and abilities to walk, bike and roll to transit stops and neighborhood destinations, this project will re-establish a core grid of multi-modal connectivity for all residents.

The scope includes community-supported Implementation Projects from project partners:

- Spokane Transit Authority: [2024-2029 Transit Development Plan](#)
- City of Spokane: [5th Avenue Initiative](#), [City of Spokane Pedestrian Master Plan](#), [City of Spokane Bicycle Master Plan](#)
- City of Spokane Valley: [Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan](#)

The project’s 4-mile-long corridor parallels I-90 to the north and runs east-west along 5th and 8th Avenues in the Cities of Spokane and Spokane Valley, Washington. STA’s Route 94 is the nexus of all proposed improvements. Transit upgrades will be installed along the length of the project and offer varying degrees of service amenities to transit users, including but not limited to: shelters, lighting, benches, trash cans, improved landing. See Figure 12 for a rendering of the typical transit stop improvements.



Figure 12. Typical Improved Transit Stop

The following description works from west (Liberty Park) to east (Edgecliff Park) and details the various project elements, mileposts are approximated. A detailed project map is included in Appendix A.

Milepost 0 to 2: Liberty Park (West End) to Havana Street

This project segment encompasses the heart of the former Liberty Park. Before 26 of the park's 28 acres were demolished for freeway construction, the park included recreational trails and pathways, a pond, a wading pool, and features such as a children's area, amphitheaters and gazebos.

Proposed projects in this segment will reconnect the remaining portions of Liberty Park, including community fixtures such as the Liberty Park Pool, frisbee golf course, and Liberty Park Library, into the neighborhoods surrounding 5th Avenue and 8th Avenue (Figure 13). These improvements will also create safe linkages to Underhill Park and extend east toward Edgecliff Park and the 530-acre Dishman Hills Natural Area. Proposed north-south active transportation

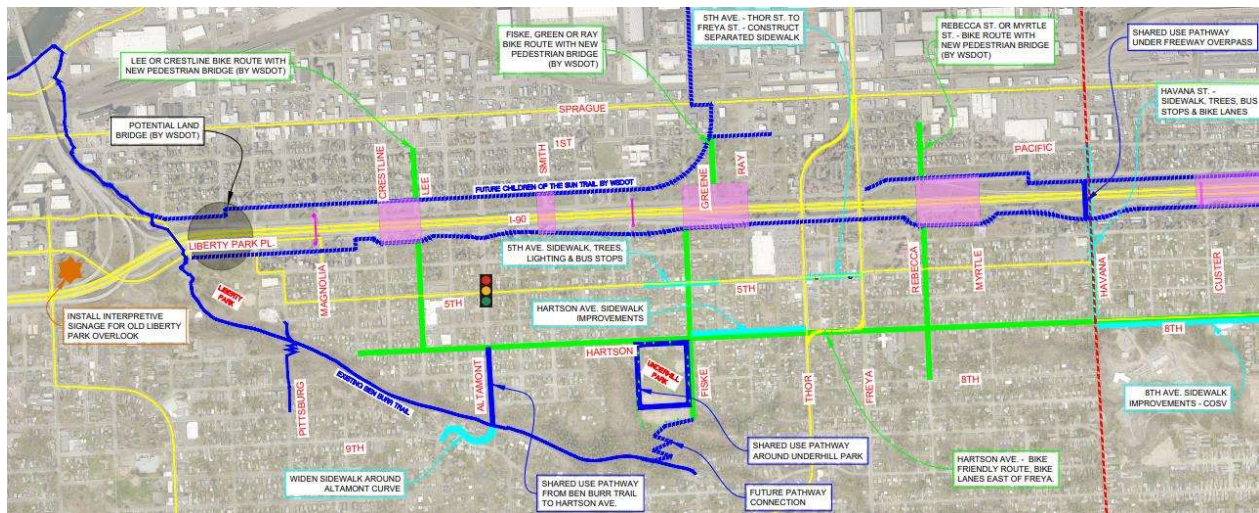


Figure 13. LEIA Improvements (Milepost 0-2, West Half) - See Appendix A

routes will connect directly to planned non-motorized bridges over I-90 to be constructed with completion of the North Spokane Corridor (US 395). WSDOT has committed to two new and improved multi-modal crossings of I-90 in the City of Spokane and one in the City of Spokane Valley. Locations for the crossings have not been determined, pending community engagement. Alignments of north-south improvements listed here will be adjusted to align with final crossing locations. The project will also likely improve an additional north-south route to connect to the future shared-use pathway on the south side of the freeway.

- **Liberty Park Olmsted Overlook Interpretive Site** – Interpretive signs and landscape cleanup around the historic Liberty Park overlook.
- **Altamont Street - Ben Burr Trail to Hartson Avenue Connection** – Widen the sidewalk on Altamont above the Ben Burr Trail and replace narrow sidewalk with a shared-use pathway from the trail down to Hartson Avenue.
- **Hartson Avenue Bicycle Route and Sidewalk** – Sidewalk infill, ramp replacement, other bicycle route improvements including a PHB at Thor/Hartson.
- **Crestline or Lee Bicycle Route and Sidewalk** – Coordinated with WSDOT's North Spokane Corridor work, the proposal includes sidewalk and bike facility upgrades to access the replacement non-motorized bridge over I-90.

- **5th/Altamont Traffic Signal** – Provide a signalized intersection to promote transit reliability and allow accessible pedestrian and bicycle crossings.
- **Fiske, Greene or Ray Street Bicycle Route and Sidewalk** – Coordinated with WSDOT’s North Spokane Corridor work, the proposal includes sidewalk and bike path/facility upgrades to access the replacement non-motorized bridge over I-90.
- **5th Avenue from Haven to Greene** – Wider sidewalk, bumpouts, bus stops, pedestrian lighting and street trees in this two-block business district. (Figure 14)
- **5th Avenue (Thor – Freya) separated sidewalk improvements** – Add swales or vegetated buffer strip to separate the sidewalk from the street and slow traffic. This is a walk route to Scott Elementary.
- **Rebecca or Myrtle Bicycle Route and Sidewalk** – Coordinated with WSDOT’s North Spokane Corridor work, the proposal includes sidewalk and bike facility upgrades to access the replacement non-motorized bridge over I-90.
- **Havana Street Improvements from 8th to Pacific** - Grind and overlay to improve surface, sidewalk infill, bus stop improvement, restripe northern section to three lanes, add a shared-use pathway under I-90.
- **Transit Improvements** – Route 94 stop improvements are site specific and may include sidewalks, ramps, bump-outs, boarding and alighting pads, standard shelter, lighting, trash cans, and benches.

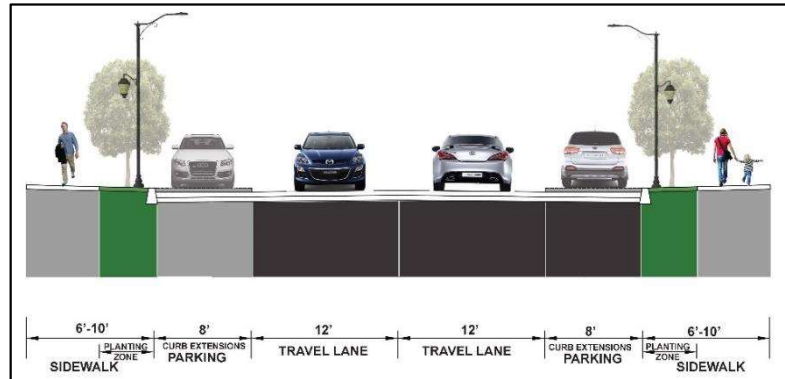


Figure 14. 5th Ave Concept Cross Section (Haven to Greene)

Milepost 2 to 4: Havana Street To Edgecliff Park (East End at Park Road)

The construction of I-90 posed a similar impact to neighborhoods east of Havana Street all the way to Edgecliff Park in the present-day City of Spokane Valley. Alcott Elementary on 2nd

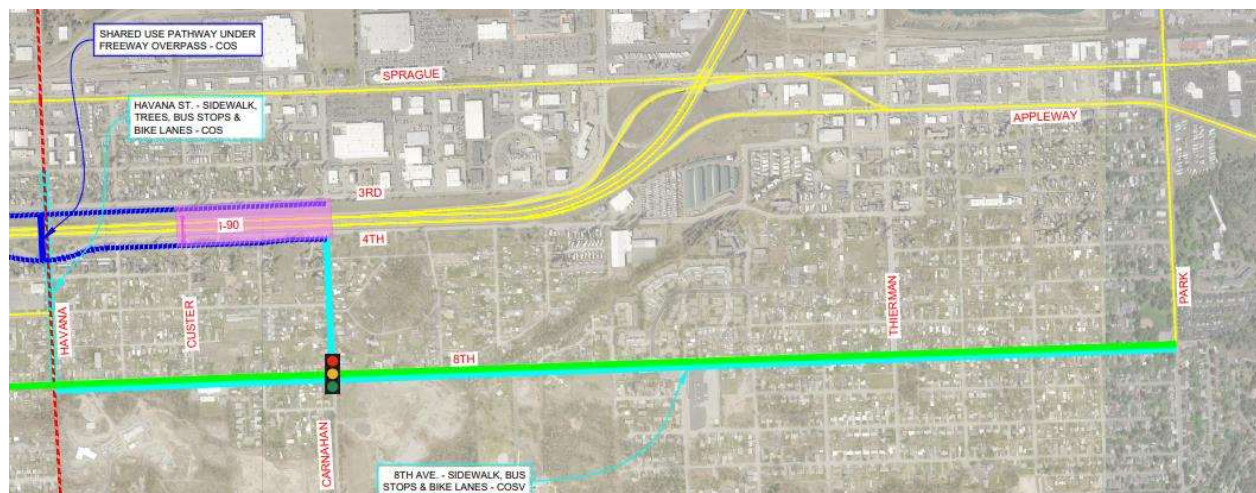


Figure 15. LEIA Improvements (Milepost 2-4, East Half) - See Appendix A

Avenue in Spokane Valley, a neighborhood elementary school constructed in 1893, was razed in 1955 to make way for the freeway. Today, 8th Avenue between Freya Street and Park Road is a busy commuter route for vehicles bypassing I-90 and travelling east-west along the south half of the greater urbanized Spokane area. The LEIA program improvements seek to rebuild a safe multi-modal connection along 8th Avenue, with connections down Carnahan Street to link with future rebuilt non-motorized crossings of I-90. (Figure 15)

- **8th Avenue from Havana to Park** – Widen the existing two-lane street with gravel shoulders to provide five-foot bike lanes in both directions and adjacent six-foot sidewalks on both sides of the street. Segments of 8th will be provided with a center turn lane for safer turning movements of all users, drivers, pedestrians, and bicycles alike. (Figure 16)
- **8th & Carnahan Signalized Intersection Improvements** – The existing 4-way stop-controlled intersection experiences 15,000 vehicles each day. These two arterial streets are also the nexus for school bus service, transit service, commuter traffic, and pedestrian traffic that will be travelling north/south on Carnahan to access the WSDOT pedestrian bridge over I-90. Improvements include traffic signals, pedestrian crossing signals and markings, and sidewalk ramps.
- **Carnahan Road Improvements (4th to 8th Avenues)** - The connection to WSDOT’s future non-motorized bridge over I-90 is anticipated to occur at or near Carnahan Road. The LEIA project will work with WSDOT to provide the appropriate half-street improvements from 8th Avenue up to the connection point along I-90. Improvements will include sidewalks, a bike lane, and the appropriate driveway approaches and curb ramps at local access side streets.

- **8th Avenue/Thierman Crossing** – The project design will consider enhanced pedestrian crossing treatments at the intersection. Enhancements considered include curb/sidewalk bulb outs to reduce

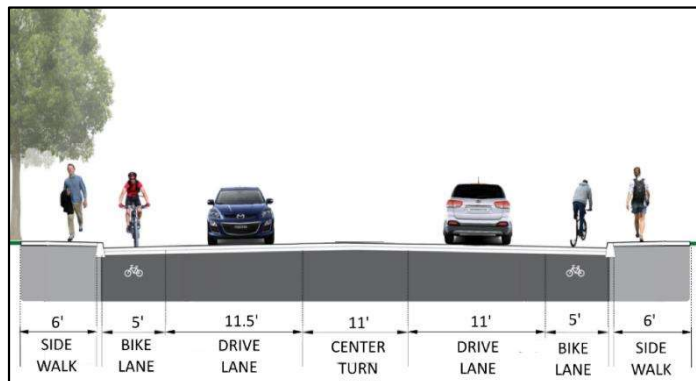


Figure 16. Typical 8th Avenue Improvements

- crossing distance, increased signage and/or striping, use of rectangular rapid flashing beacons, and an elevated intersection to eliminate the sidewalk ramps while increasing pedestrian visibility and also slowing down vehicle traffic.
- **8th Avenue/ Park Road Crossing** – The west leg of the 8th & Park intersection will include similar pedestrian crossing enhancements as described for the Thierman intersection.
- **Transit Improvements** – Route 94 stop improvements are site specific and may include sidewalks, ramps, bump-outs, boarding and alighting pads, standard shelter, lighting, trash cans, and benches.

II. Location and Map

LEIA Program improvements are located in the cities of Spokane and Spokane Valley, WA, and more specifically, persistent poverty census tracts 30, 31, 46.01, 123, and 145. The majority of LEIA Program elements are within [Areas of Persistent Poverty](#) as defined by this program and the USDOT Proposed improvements are detailed in the project maps in Appendix A. (Figure 17)

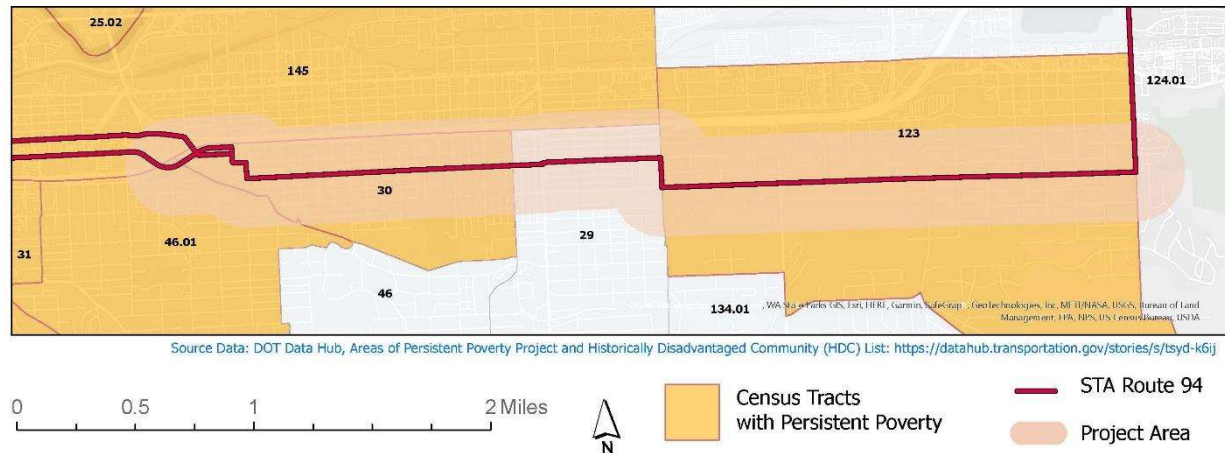


Figure 17. Areas of Persistent Poverty by Census Tract with LEIA Program Overlay

As described in Section I. Overview, and illustrated in Figure 1, Figure 13, and Figure 15, the LEIA program follows the street network that is home to neighborhoods burdened by the construction of I-90 between Liberty and Edgecliff Parks. The project centers on the corridor consisting of 5th Avenue, Havana Street and 8th Avenue along STA Route 94 between Liberty Park in the City of Spokane and Edgecliff Park in the City of Spokane Valley. Existing streets are typically two lanes, with areas of paved shoulder parking or gravel shoulders without parking, areas of intermittent sidewalks with near-zero crossing facilities at major cross street locations, and underwhelming transit stop facilities. Zoning maps designate the area as primarily residential with pockets of mixed-use, neighborhood retail or community-business uses. The north-south connections to WSDOT's pedestrian bridges spanning I-90 are assumed in Appendix A and will be aligned with WSDOT's final bridge locations.

III. Response to Merit Criteria

#1 Equity and Environmental Justice

While the neighborhoods along 5th Avenue and 8th Avenue were the first built east of the city's downtown core, their early financial success faded with changes in federal housing policy. Core industries declined in the neighborhood after World War I and land values in East Central dropped. The Federal Housing Administration refused to insure mortgages in and near African American, low income, and immigrant neighborhoods — a policy known as "redlining." The federal Homeowners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) created redlined maps to determine the kinds of mortgages it would insure in cities across the country, including in Spokane (Figure 5). This segregated African American communities, making it difficult or impossible for people in certain areas to access mortgage financing and become homeowners and build equity. The maps identified East Central neighborhood as an area of limited funds and improvements. By the

1950s it had become one of the poorest neighborhoods in Spokane along with other redlined neighborhoods in West Central and Hillyard. Still, East Central remained home not just to thousands of families from all different backgrounds, but hundreds of businesses which employed many of its residents. The struggles of the previous decades had left a robust, if less well-off, community.

This decline eventually made for cheap land in the area, attracting the attention of federal highway planners in the 1950s looking to develop the national system of highways. The selected freeway alignment went through East Central with devastating and traumatic impacts for residents. The development of I-90 split the neighborhood into two sections, leveled over a thousand homes, and displaced residents—the majority of whom were African American and immigrant families. Liberty Park was the oldest and most elaborate city park in Spokane at the time, and a source of pride for the community². Figure 18 illustrates the impact of I-90, cutting through the original vista point of Liberty Park. However, the park was destroyed when the city sold 26 of its 28 acres for the freeway. With traffic redirected onto the freeway, nearly all the long-standing businesses in the area struggled to stay open, and many were forced to close.



Figure 18. Liberty Park – ruins of Olmstead Overlook, I-90 in Background.

The Spokane Regional Health District conducted an extensive [Oral History](#) project with residents of the East Central Neighborhood. The quotes from these interviews demonstrate the severity of the socioeconomic changes brought on by I-90:

“The area where we grew up was a real neighborhood. Now it’s just fast food restaurants and the freeway.” - Debbie Takami, Resident since the 1960s

“Traffic being diverted to the freeway left the businesses here in more of a state of need than I think people were hoping.” - Devin Samuelson, Business owner since 2013

“It’s been a very graphic, if not shocking display of what a major infrastructure change can have on a neighborhood.” - Dave Clack, resident and business owner since 1938

This project seeks to address these barriers to connectivity through the re-establishment of continuous and safe active transportation routes. The associated projects consist primarily of smaller-scale installations such as sidewalk segments, ramp improvements, bus platforms, bike lane striping, intersection traffic control, and other individual streetscape improvements such as pedestrian-scale lighting and street trees. Impacts of the proposed infrastructure improvements on noise, air quality and transit will be mitigated by managing the scale, duration and complexity of each individual installation.

#2 Access

Access improvements are the primary goal of the LEIA project. Residents frequently cite challenges accessing transit stops due to gaps in sidewalks and the distance between I-90 crossing points. The intersection of 5th/Altamont causes transit delays because the bus can't find a gap to cross Altamont during the busier hours of the day while the higher speed traffic on Altamont is challenging for pedestrians and cyclists. Spokane Public Schools students, among



Figure 19. Transit stop at 8th & Carnahan (No existing markings)

other transit passengers, wait on gravel shoulders before riding STA routes to middle and high school. Students must navigate a busy 4-way stop controlled intersection during morning rush hour, without crosswalks or dedicated pedestrian facilities (Figure 19).

Residents provided comments on the proposed projects at an outreach event:

“I would LOVE for our area to be a walkable, person-focused neighborhood. Spokane has so much potential but the broken or inaccessible sidewalks, lack of transit connectivity and sprawl of necessary destinations make it nearly impossible to navigate without a car.”

“Pedestrian islands would be awesome! Would also love to see a light (signal) at 5th and Altamont.”

“Sidewalks, bike paths and transit build community.”

“Improve walkability. Reduce cars. Increase density with zoning.”

Figure 20 and Figure 21 show two locations where the LEIA project would improve access.



Figure 20. Underhill Park curb ramp without accessible route to facilities.



Figure 21. S. Altamont St. non-compliant sidewalk (narrow & heaved).

Table 1 summarizes the LEIA program elements that will improve access and whether they provide access to daily destinations, address a safety concern or otherwise improve mobility.

Table 1: Improving Access

<i>How LEIA improves Access</i>	<i>Mobility for All Users</i>	<i>Improves access to Daily Destinations</i>	<i>Addresses safety concern</i>	<i>Improves connectivity across I-90</i>
<i>City of Spokane</i>				
5 th /Altamont traffic signal	X	X	X	X
Underhill Park shared-use pathway	X			
5 th Avenue Business District improvements	X	X		
5 th Avenue Thor to Freya sidewalk	X		X	
Street tree maintenance and planting	X			
Altamont Street sidewalk and pathway	X	X	X	
Havana Street restripe and sidewalk	X	X	X	X
Hartson Ave bike route and sidewalk	X	X	X	
North-south bike routes to I-90 bridges	X	X	X	X
<i>City of Spokane Valley</i>				
8 th Avenue. Havana to Park sidewalks and bike lanes	X	X	X	
8 th Avenue/Carnahan traffic signal	X	X	X	X
Carnahan Rd 4 th to 8 th sidewalk and bike lane (west side only)	X	X	X	X
Crossing improvements at Park, at Thierman	X	X	X	X
<i>Spokane Transit Authority</i>				
Rebuild and enhance bus stops	X	X	X	X

#3 Facility Suitability

Barrier to Access, Mobility and Economic Development

The dividing facility impacting this neighborhood is Interstate 90. The transportation impacts include an overreliance on automobiles and lack of a walkable/bikeable community. While pedestrian bridges were added across I-90 at the urging of the residents, they do not make up for the loss of approximately 25 local street connections that were closed with the freeway construction.

The Spokane Regional Health District conducted an extensive [Oral History](#) project with residents of the East Central Neighborhood. The quotes from these interviews demonstrate the severity of the disruption to the neighborhood:

“We’re divided. We’re completely separate, and you have to make a concerted effort to get to one side or the other.” - Jack-Daniyel Strong, business owner since 2012

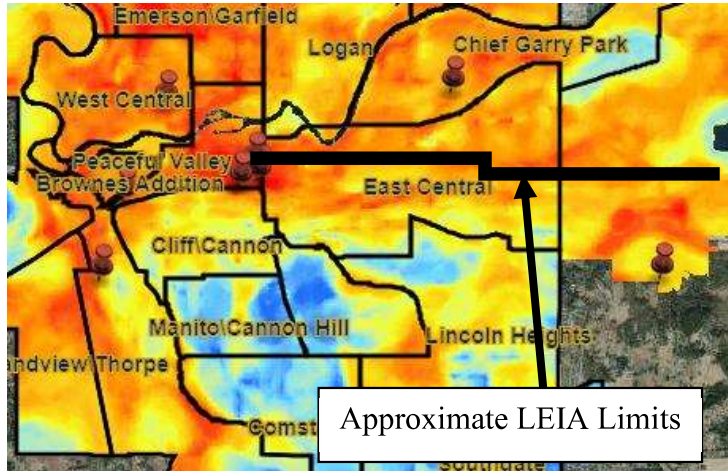
“I-90 might have been good for Spokane, but it was not good for [the East Central] neighborhood.” - Jerry Numbers, resident since 1945

“You’d have thought we moved to the North Pole when we moved to the other side of the freeway.” - Lois D’Ewart, resident since 1960

“[The effects of I-90 were] very negative. I don’t know, it just seemed to take the heart out of the people.” - Wayne Struck, resident since 1944

Environmental Burden

I-90’s environmental impacts include poor air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, heat islands, large gaps in the tree canopy, traffic noise and the relocation and shrinking of Liberty Park. Heat maps of Spokane and Spokane Valley show that East Central and Edgecliff neighborhoods stand out as one of the hotter parts of the city (Figure 22). The East Central neighborhood’s tree canopy is relatively low at 14%-18% coverage.



The City of Spokane has a staff of arborists charged with management and growth of the city’s 76,000 publicly owned trees. The LEIA project includes funding to improve the health of the existing canopy and plant new trees with the goal of reducing the high summer temperatures in East Central. This action will also help the City meet its adopted goal of increasing the tree canopy from 23% to 40% coverage by 2030 ([Ord. C35844](#)).

Figure 22. [Urban Heat Map](#). Source: Gonzaga University

The Washington State Department of Health has developed an online [Environmental Health Disparities Map](#) which maps the threat to residents from roadway exhaust, noise, ozone concentration and general air pollution (Figure 23). Neighborhoods in the LEIA project limits, parallel to I-90, are consistently ranked poorly for environmental exposures, scoring 8, 9, or 10.

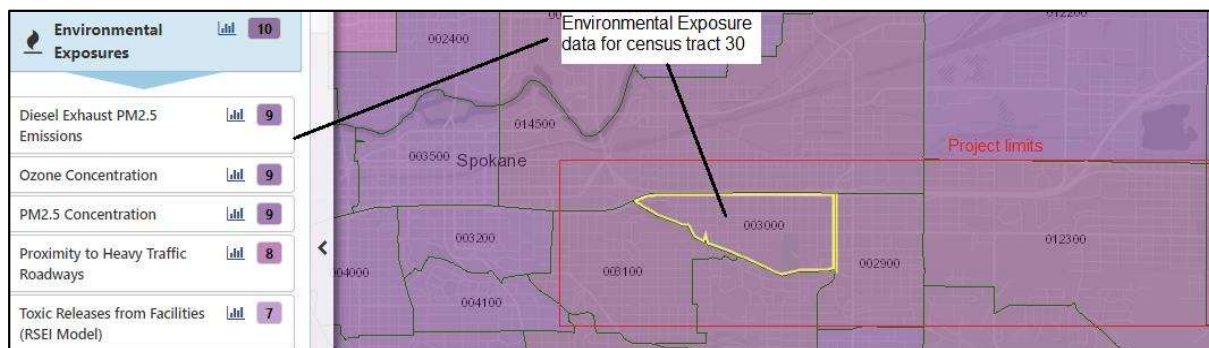


Figure 23. [Environmental Health Disparities Map](#). Source: WA Dept. of Health

#4 Community Engagement and Community-based Stewardship, Management, and Partnerships

Partnership

This project is formed on a partnership agreement between the Spokane Transit Authority, the City of Spokane and the City of Spokane Valley. A signed Letter of Intent is submitted with the application. STA will be the manager of the grant, but the two cities will manage the design and construction of projects within their jurisdictions.

Community Participation

The LEIA program developed a survey that was open for 40 days to obtain public input on the preferred improvements and reflects a context-sensitive approach to the project to capture the community's preferences. Nearly 200 survey responses were received. Outreach efforts included posting notice of the survey at approximately 60 bus stops within the LEIA project boundaries, social media posts, and outreach to community organizations that serve the area. The results of the survey revealed the three most requested improvements include pedestrian crossings, sidewalk improvements and lighting. To respect the time and lived experiences of the survey respondents the LEIA program team has ensured the most requested improvements are captured in the proposed improvements of the project. If awarded funds, the LEIA program team will ensure a continued collaborative, interdisciplinary approach that includes all stakeholders to provide transportation facilities that meet the needs of the people it serves.

The City of Spokane has 29 [Neighborhood Councils](#), and will work with representatives from the East Central and Lincoln Heights Neighborhood Councils. In addition, a range of community-based organizations participate actively in the neighborhood and will be engaged throughout public involvement phases. These include: the Carl Maxey Center, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center, Spokane Neighborhood Partners, Latinos en Spokane, and APIC-Spokane. (Figure 24)



Figure 24. Carl Maxey Center - A Black-led and Black-centered nonprofit in the heart of East Central.

neighborhood establish a coalition that guides long-term strategies for land use and transportation integration. This capacity-building process would also inform design phases of the projects listed in this LEIA grant application to the Neighborhood Access & Equity program. Primary stakeholders in this process include many of those listed above, such as the Carl Maxey Center, the Martin Luther King Jr. Center, Latinos en Spokane and APIC-Spokane.

Over the next year, a capacity-building grant through Smart Growth America's [Community Connectors](#) program will bring together residents, stakeholders from community organizations, and government agency representatives. The Community Connectors grant will assist the East Central

The City of Spokane Valley has spent more time and resources in its Edgecliff neighborhood since 2016 than it has since incorporation in 2003. The Edgecliff neighborhood has been home to multiple capital improvement projects: 2016 park upgrades with shelter space and splash pad amenities (Figure 25), 2018 half-street sidewalk project on 8th between Dickey and Thierman Roads, 2021 pavement preservation to local access neighborhood streets, and the 2023 half-street sidewalk and bicycle lane improvements between Fancher and Park Roads. Each project required public outreach meetings, formal council action with opportunities for members of the public to have their voice heard by local government. The LEIA program will continue the City of Spokane Valley’s commitment to provide equitable improvements to this historically disadvantaged community.



Figure 25. Edgecliff Park

#5 Equitable Development

Community Restoration and Land Use

The State of Washington has used Growth Management¹ regulations to direct growth since 1990. The City of Spokane’s land use planning has a focus on increasing the density of the city core to make better use of existing infrastructure and reduce reliance on high-carbon travel modes. Recent measures in support of this include allowing multi-family housing in locations that previously allowed only single-family homes. Current allowances under the interim housing ordinances include allowing duplexes, fourplexes and townhomes in any neighborhood citywide, including East Central. During this time, the City also expanded the Multi-Family Tax Exemption program citywide to increase the feasibility and affordability of building multi-family housing. Figure 26 highlights the neighborhood's efforts, including WSDOT and FHWA, to maximize existing housing options with the 2020 relocation of a building slated for demolition to make way for the WSDOT’s future US-395 connection to I-90.



Figure 26. Rose Apartment Building. Constructed in 1910. Relocated in 2020 within East Central for affordable housing.

Spokane Valley zoning in the project area includes single- and multi-family residential zones, along with mixed use. The project area is part of a SEPA Infill Exemption Area created by the city to encourage infill development by reducing permitting regulations. While single-family zones support duplexes and ADUs, multi-family and mixed-use properties support duplexes,

¹ <https://mrsc.org/explore-topics/planning/general-planning-and-growth-management/growth-management-act>

triplexes, quadplexes, townhomes, cottages, and apartment buildings. The mixed-use zones located at 8th Avenue and Carnahan support commercial business growth that will likely grow and connect to WSDOT’s future pedestrian bridge over I-90.

Placemaking and Equitable Development

The LEIA program also supports Equitable Development by enhancing streetscapes at local business storefronts on 5th Avenue, a historic neighborhood business district. Business owners on 5th Avenue between Regal and Fiske Street have requested investment in sidewalks, crosswalks, bus stops and streetscape elements such as street trees and pedestrian-scale lighting. Throughout Spokane, neighborhood business districts with these improvements for active transportation demonstrate an ability to sustain small-scale local businesses over the long-term. [South Perry Street](#), [Garland Avenue](#) and [North Monroe Street](#) exemplify the benefits of such investments.

Concurrently, a City of Spokane land use and zoning study is evaluating strategies to support neighborhood retail districts through updates to mixed-use zoning. The [Center & Corridor Update Study](#), currently underway, includes evaluation of isolated neighborhood retail parcels, such as those located on 5th Avenue between Fiske and Regal. Scoped deliverables will recommend strategies for supporting these small-scale retail districts as part of a comprehensive mixed-use zoning strategy.

Table 2: Addressing Equitable Development

<i>How LEIA will address Equitable Development</i>	<i>Public art, history and culture</i>	<i>Recreation, greenspace</i>	<i>Community stabilization</i>	<i>Small Business Support</i>
<i>City of Spokane</i>				
Liberty Park Overlook interpretive signage	X			
Underhill Park shared-use pathway		X		
5 th Avenue Business District improvements	X	X	X	X
Street tree maintenance and planting		X	X	
Altamont Street sidewalk and pathway		X		
Havana Street restripe and sidewalk		X	X	
Hartson Ave bike route and sidewalk		X		
North-south bicycle routes to I-90 bridges		X	X	X
Neighborhood gateway signs	X		X	
<i>City of Spokane Valley</i>				
8 th Avenue, Havana to Park sidewalks and bike lanes		X	X	
8 th Avenue/Carnahan traffic signal				
Carnahan Rd 4 th to 8 th sidewalk and bike lane (west side only)		X		
8 th /Thierman crossing improvements		X	X	
8 th /Park crossing improvements		X	X	
<i>Spokane Transit Authority</i>				
Rebuild and enhance bus stops	X		X	

In addition to the Community Connectors capacity-building grant referenced in Section #4 above, American Rescue Plan funding will support a sub-area planning process in the East Central Neighborhood. This process is scheduled to follow directly on the Community Connectors process and will focus on integrating long-range land use, zoning, affordable housing, economic development and transportation strategies into a city-adopted plan by 2025.

#6 Climate and Environment

Equitable access and connectivity throughout the East Central and Edgecliff communities is at the crux of this project. However, the LEIA program inherently brings environmental benefits to support a cleaner and healthier space for its neighbors to live, work, and play. The LEIA program will improve multimodal connectivity infrastructure and increase active transportation options.

Table 3: Addressing Climate and Environment

<i>How LEIA will address Climate and Environment</i>	<i>Increase Tree Canopy</i>	<i>Greenhouse gas reduction (transit, bike-ped)</i>	<i>Resident access to green space</i>
<i>City of Spokane</i>			
Traffic signal at 5 th /Altamont		X	
Underhill Park shared-use pathway		X	X
5 th Avenue Business District improvements	X		
5 th Avenue Thor to Freya sidewalk		X	
Street tree maintenance and planting	X	X	X
Altamont Street sidewalk and pathway		X	X
Havana Street restripe and sidewalk	X	X	
Hartson Avenue bike route and sidewalk	X	X	X
North-south Bicycle routes to I-90 bridges		X	X
Neighborhood gateway signs	X		
<i>City of Spokane Valley</i>			
8 th Ave Havana to Park sidewalks and bike lanes		X	X
8 th /Carnahan traffic signal			
Carnahan Rd 4 th to 8 th sidewalk and bike lane (west side only)		X	
8 th /Thierman crossing improvements		X	
8 th /Park crossing improvements		X	
<i>Spokane Transit Authority</i>			
Rebuild and enhance bus stops		X	X

State and Local Climate Change Legislation and Plans

This section lists the recent efforts by relevant governing agencies to address Climate Change concerns, greenhouse gas emissions, tree canopy, and other environmental concerns.

Washington State’s Climate Commitment Act. The State of Washington has been working on climate change policies for over a decade, with the most recent Climate Commitment Act (CCA) going into effect in January 2023. The program establishes a “Cap & Invest” system

to get to Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Big businesses must work to reduce their emissions every year but can buy or trade credits to exceed the cap temporarily. Revenues from the program will be reinvested in public transit, electrification, clean energy and other natural climate solutions.

Washington State’s Required Climate Element. Starting in 2023 all counties and cities with populations over 6,000 must include a Climate Element in their Comprehensive Plan.

City of Spokane’s Sustainability Action Plan. This plan was adopted by the City Council in 2021 which aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 95% no later than 2050.

City of Spokane’s Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Goal. Resolution 2010-0038 sets a goal that the City’s 2030 Greenhouse Gas Emissions will be 30% below the 2005 level.

City of Spokane Valley’s Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Policy. Resolution 2016-010 sets City policy for the regular and fair consideration for transportation facilities to evaluate environmentally friendly options encourage alternative modes of transportation, conserve energy and provide safe and convenient access for pedestrians and bicyclists.

City of Spokane’s Housing Density. The City of Spokane recently passed the [Building Opportunity and Choices for All ordinance](#) to allow denser housing in all residentially zoned areas. The densest housing will be focused on corridors with frequent transit. The legislation allows “Middle Housing” like small walk-up apartment buildings and fourplex townhomes to be built in formerly single-family areas. *Increasing density without adding single occupant vehicle trips* will help to meet climate change goals.

City of Spokane’s Tree Canopy. The City of Spokane adopted a goal to increase the tree canopy from 23% to 40% coverage by 2030 ([Ordinance C35844](#)). The SpoCanopy program is a partnership between the City of Spokane and The Lands Council, working with volunteers to plant trees and beautify the city. The City of Spokane was just awarded a \$6 million grant for tree canopy growth.

#7 Workforce Development and Opportunity

The construction jobs provided through this implementation grant will pay prevailing wages in compliance with the Davis-Bacon act and the Washington State laws. Further, the project will meet minority- and business-owned business participation requirements from WSDOT.

The City of Spokane has an established apprenticeship requirement² for all public works projects over \$600,000, which requires 15% of all craft/trade hours to be performed by apprentices. In addition, the city provides apprenticeship grants to programs targeting minority, women, veterans, and Community Empowerment Zone residents. Lastly, Spokane Transit Authority has adopted [Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Goals](#) to ensure equal opportunity for all interested parties to receive and participate in DOT-assistant contracts.

² Emergency Ordinance C36155 <https://my.spokanecity.org/business/bid-and-design/apprentice-program/>

The project partners have unionized workforces with memberships in the Washington State Council of County and City Employees and Amalgamated Transit Union, both of AFSCME and AFL-CIO. Design and construction administration for the LEIA program will include represented labor.

IV. Project Readiness

With a 2023 NAE funding award, the LEIA program is reasonably expected to authorize design funding in 2024 and construction funding by summer 2026. This section provides a summary of the project's various risks and the project team would mitigate such risks.

Technical Capacity

While Spokane Transit Authority is the primary applicant, the cities of Spokane and Spokane Valley will be responsible for the delivery of project elements within their respective jurisdictions. Each city will plan to deliver transit improvements within their respective jurisdictions as part of their contract documents. If needed, Spokane Transit Authority has the capacity to deliver its respective improvements as well.

All three project partners are experienced in the delivery of large-scale, federally funded capital projects administered by both FHWA and FTA. Since 2017, the project partners have been awarded 10 federal discretionary grants totaling over \$102 million, including funds from TIGER, CRISI, RAISE, and FTA's Section 5309 Capital Investment Grant for City Line, the region's first bus rapid transit project, which began service on July 15, 2023. This track record proves that the project partners have experience with high-risk projects and are committed to project delivery while serving as good stewards of federal funds.

The locations and types of projects in this application were selected in part because they will be simpler to design and construct. All of the projects are located within the city right-of-way, so no property acquisition should be needed other than temporary construction easements. These treatments have all been implemented somewhere in the Spokane region and will not require any exceptions to local, state or federal roadway standards. Coordination will be needed with WSDOT for any work adjacent to I-90 right-of-way.

Financial Completeness

The project scope and cost estimates are based on preliminary layouts and concept designs. This level of project scoping and cost estimating is supported by the relatively low level of complexity that the project elements bring. Transit upgrades can be described as "canned" improvements that are generally unchanged from one site to the next. Overall, there are minimal right of way impacts associated with the project. It is expected that acquisitions will be avoided altogether, leaving temporary construction easements at the back of sidewalks as the most impactful right of way elements anticipated.

Further, the LEIA program avoids those high-cost transportation impacts typically associated with larger projects like bridges, interchanges, or grade separations. Because the LEIA program offers a focused application of easy-to-deliver multimodal improvements across its four-mile

project stretch, the project scope and cost estimates have a high level of certainty than may be presumed. Spokane Transit Authority has secured all the non-federal funds for this project. These funds were approved in December 2021 and are in the agency’s capital improvement plan.

Environmental Risk

The project team has identified several issues that could impact project delivery, along with strategies to ensure on-time construction.

NEPA - NEPA approval is often an issue on large federally funded projects. The following actions in this proposal meet the criteria for categorical exclusions in the CEQ regulations (40 CFR 1508.4) and do not normally require further review: Installation of signs, pavement markings, traffic signals; landscaping; bicycle and pedestrian lanes, paths and facilities; and projects that take place entirely within the existing operational right-of-way.

Parks – Federally funded transportation projects impacting Parks require a Section 4f evaluation. We expect a “de minimus impact” finding for the small amount of work on park owned property.

SEPA - The [State of Washington’s Environmental Policy Act](#) in WAC 197-11-800 allows a categorical exemption for minor new construction on streets including pavement markings, safety structures, lighting, signs and signals, addition of bicycle lanes, sidewalks and pathways. All of the projects listed in the application should be categorically exempt from SEPA.

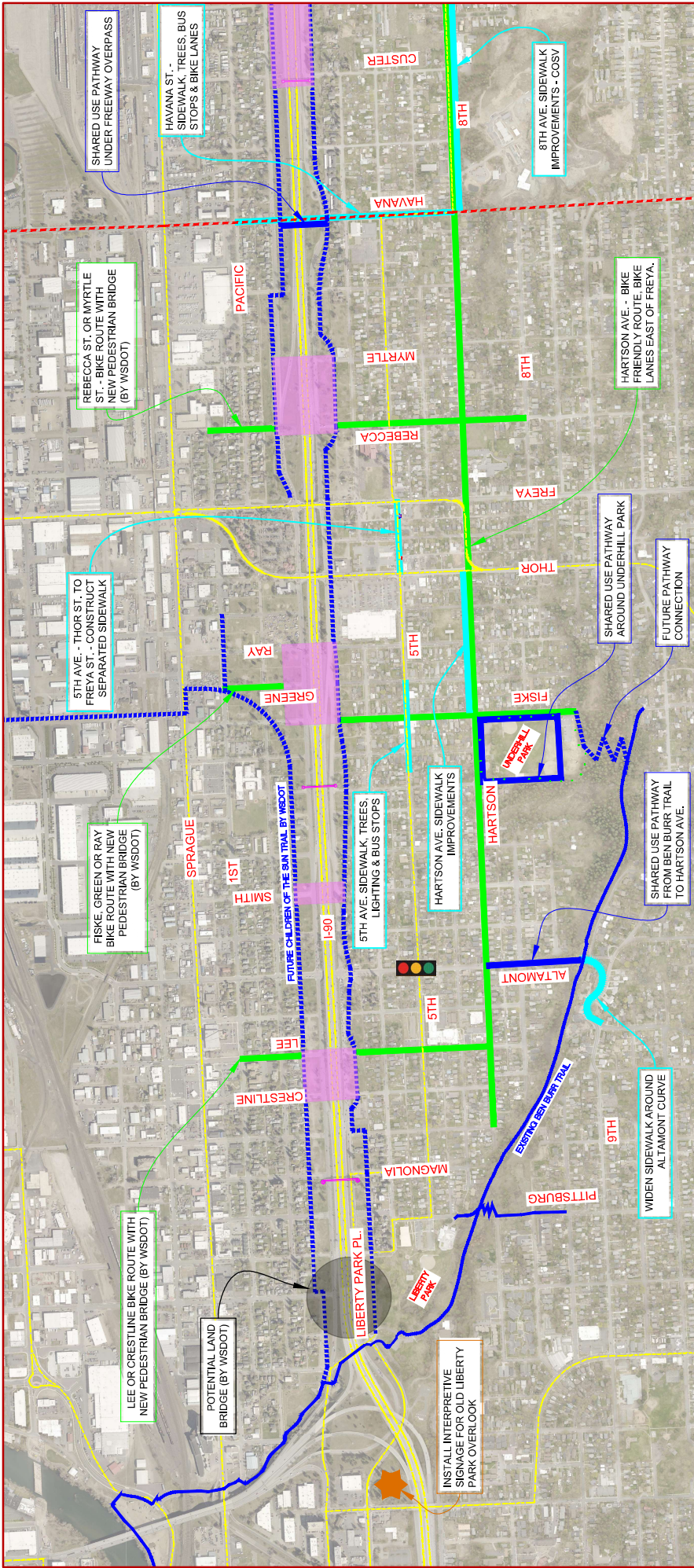
Utilities – Spokane and Spokane Valley staff work with the electric, gas and communications providers regularly and do not anticipate any delays resulting from utility coordination.

Phased Construction – The project team expects to split the work into two construction seasons. This will allow for quick-build type projects to get out the door right away and allow more design time for those that need it. Table 4 outlines project milestones that illustrate how the project satisfies the funding programs schedule requirements.

Table 4: Detailed Activity Schedule

Project Milestone	Date		Notes
Award Announcement		Feb 2024	Assumed Date
Add to WA STIP	Feb 2024	Apr 2024	Immediate amendment to STIP
Obligate Design Funds	May 2024	June 2024	
Design Engineering	July 2024	May 2026	Open until CN obligation
NEPA & SEPA	Aug 2024	Dec 2024	Categorical exclusion/exemption
Right of Way	Jan 2025	Dec 2025	Construction easements expected, acquisitions not anticipated
Obligate Construction Funds	June 2026	July 2026	
CN Bid/Ad/Award	July 2026	Sept. 2026	
Construction (2 seasons)	Oct 2026	Dec 2028	Substantial completion
Public Involvement	July 2024	May 2026	Ongoing through design phase

Appendix A – Maps



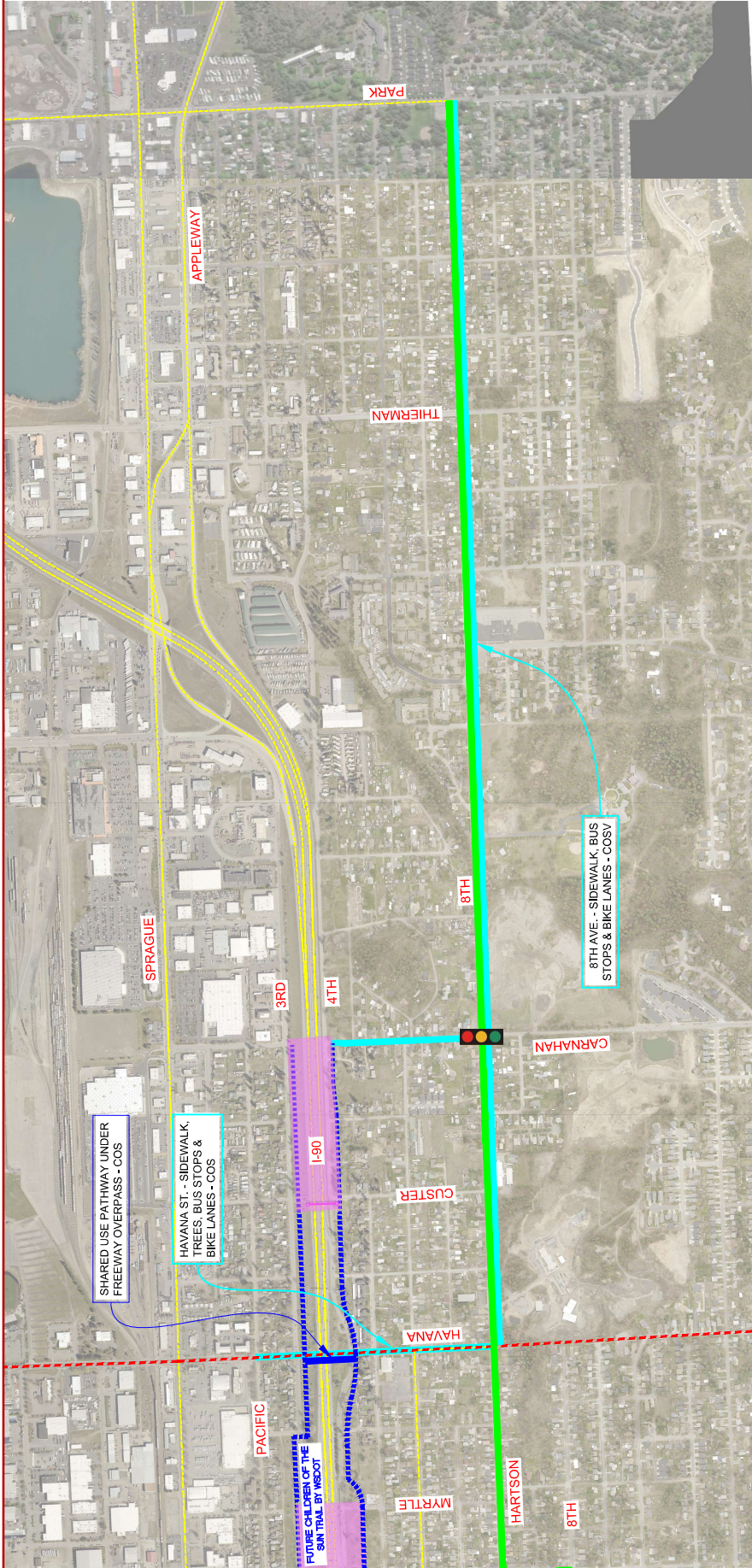
LEGEND

- SIDE WALK IMPROVEMENTS
- - - - - FUTURE SHARED USE PATH BY WSDOT
- SHARED USE PATH
- ON STREET FACILITIES
- POSSIBLE PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE BY WSDOT
- - - - - CITY OF SPOKANE BOUNDARY
- - - - - STA BUS ROUTES










PROPOSED SIGNAL SYSTEM

WSDOT is committed to replacing the three existing I-90 pedestrian bridges at Magnolia, Regal & Custer with the construction of the US 395 interchange. The final locations of the pedestrian bridges have yet to be determined, but likely locations are shown on the map. Two will be built in the City of Spokane & one in the City of Spokane Valley. The City of Spokane intends to improve three north-south bike routes through the neighborhood leading up to the bridges and/or shared use pathway on the south side of I-90.



LEGEND

-  SIDE WALK IMPROVEMENTS
-  FUTURE SHARED USE PATH BY WSDOT
-  SHARED USE PATH
-  ON STREET FACILITIES
-  POSSIBLE PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE BY WSDOT
-  CITY OF SPOKANE BOUNDARY
-  STA BUS ROUTES

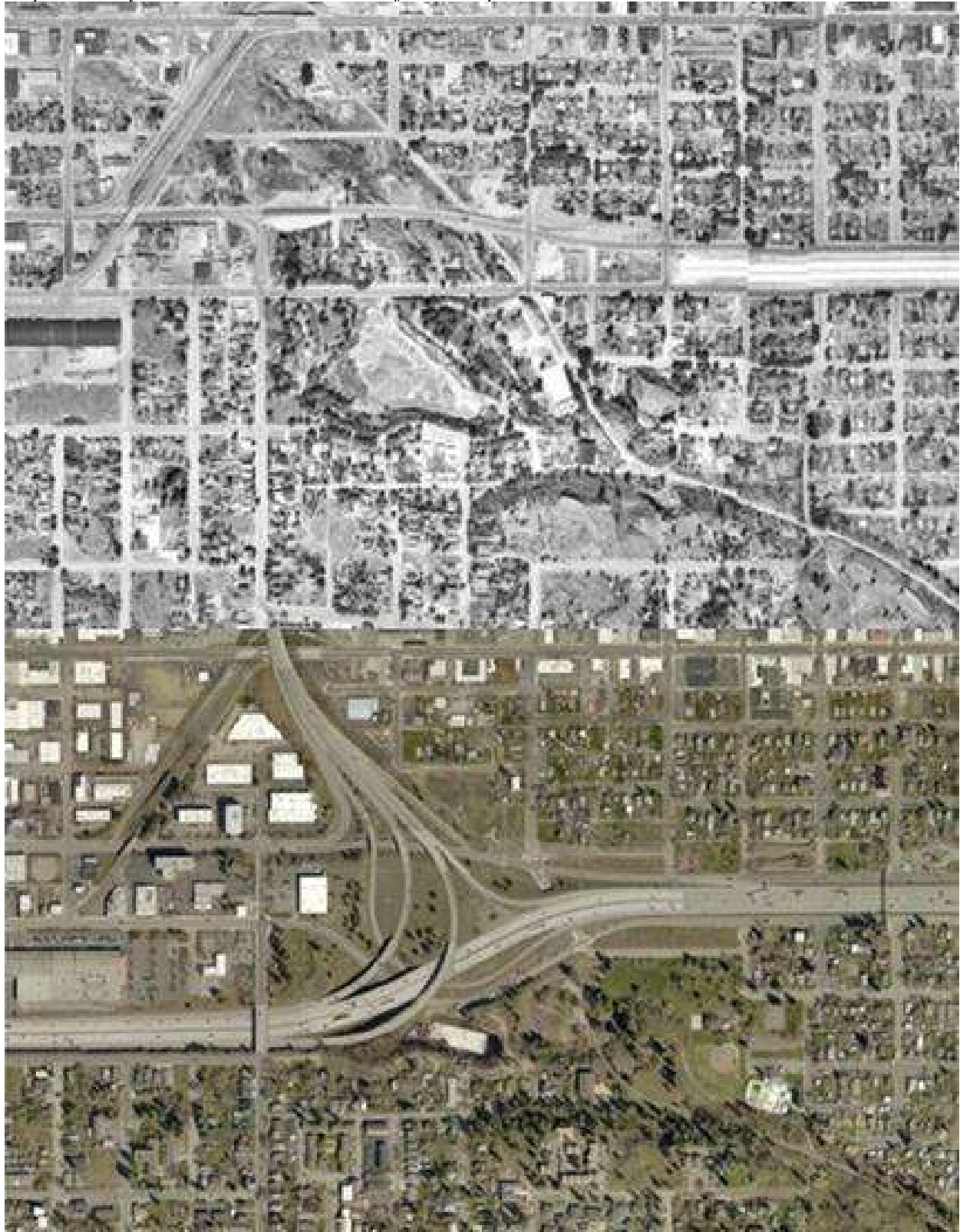


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Map 2: Liberty Park and the construction of I-90. Top – 1958. Bottom – 2018. Source: ESRI



Appendix B – Key Information Table

Lead Applicant Name	Spokane Transit Authority
Organization Type	Public Transit Authority
Lead Applicant State	Washington
UEI	QV32KQAKHCE3
Points of Contact	Tara Limon
Program?	NAE only
Grant Type	Capital Construction Grant
Project Title	2023 LEIA (Liberty to Edgecliff Improvements for Accessibility) Program
Project Description	A program of sidewalks, bicycle facilities, crosswalks, lighting traffic signals, transit stops, tree canopy improvement, and signage for the East Central community in Spokane and Spokane Valley.
Match	\$343,000
Is the lead applicant the Facility Owner?	Dividing Facility - No Facility to be improved - Yes
Name of the Facility Owner(s) of the eligible facility creating the barrier or the burden	Washington State Department of Transportation, City of Spokane, City of Spokane Valley
Does the application include a Facility Owner endorsement?	Yes (Streets owned by Spokane and Spokane Valley)
If a joint application provides organizational names of sub-recipients that will receive funds and other key partners	City of Spokane, City of Spokane Valley
What is the eligible facility type that creates a barrier or a burden, that your application intends to address?	Interstate highway
Is the project located in an economically disadvantaged community?	Yes
Is the project located in a rural area?	No
Is the facility aged and likely to need replacement or significant reconstruction within 20 years?	No
What type of transportation facility is the focus of the proposed solution?	Transit, pedestrian, bicycle
Is the project included in a Climate Action Plan?	Strategies TL 1.7, 4.3 and 4.7 of the City of Spokane Sustainability Action Plan
Total RCN Program grant request amount	\$26,120,000
Total Project Cost	\$26,463,000
Is the project already in the STIP, TIP, or equivalent? Or the Transit Asset Management Plan?	Part of the project is included in the CIP. Project will be added to STIP if awarded.