UNIVERSITY DISTRICT

ECOLOGICALLY INFORMED DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES

May 2026

MEASURE MEANT®

UNIVERSITY DISTRICT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements →	3
Introduction and Approach →	4
Findings →	5
Program Implementation Plan →	18
Recommendations →	19
Conclusion →	22
Appendix A - Draft Scorecard →	23
Appendix B - Case Study: Austin, TX →	29
Appendix C - Case Study: Hoboken, NJ →	36
Appendix D - Case Study: Philadelphia, PA →	44
Appendix E - Example Work Plan →	51
Appendix F - Example Budget →	79
Appendix G - Photo and Image Credits →	88

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was created for the University District to support their continued efforts to promote ecological design and environmental sustainability, and their work to improve the quality of life in downtown Spokane, WA.

UNIVERSITY DISTRICT

Measure Meant conducted research on ecological design frameworks and incentive models to prepare this report. We would like to acknowledge the following individuals and organizations who supported our work.

- Juliet Sinisterra - University District
- Karlee Agee, Jake Closson, and Kreg Shelby - Bouten Construction
- Jim Frank - Greenstone
- Ryan Arnold - Avista Corporation
- Amanda Beck, Spencer Gardner, Steve McDonald, Tami Palmquist, Kevin Picanco, and Colin Quinn-Hurst - City of Spokane
- Rex Anderson and Dave Buescher - Fusion Architects
- Plini Fisk and Gail Vitorri - Center for Maximum Potential Building Systems

We also acknowledge the work completed by Mithun. They authored the University District's *Next Generation Conceptual Plan 2065*, which was a key source of context for this report. Some photos and images are taken from that report.

MEASURE MEANT

INTRODUCTION AND APPROACH

Placemaking sign in UD

THE UD

Spokane's University District (UD), located on the east end of downtown Spokane, is a hub for education, business, and living. The organization describes itself as "an urban laboratory creating new knowledge and applied, community-engaged research, resulting in increased regional prosperity and improved quality of life". Part of the mission includes leading Spokane towards greater environmental and social resiliency.

INTERVIEWS

We met with Juliet Sinisterra, CEO of the University District, throughout the project to review research and findings, and to maintain alignment as the scope and focus of the project evolved.

We also met with individuals and organizations to gain local perspective.

1. Karlee Agee, Jake Closson, and Kreg Shelby
   - **Bouten Construction**
2. Jim Frank
   - **Greenstone**
3. Ryan Arnold
   - **Avista Corporation**
4. Amanda Beck, Spencer Gardner, Steve McDonald, Tami Palmquist, Kevin Picanco, and Colin Quinn-Hurst
   - **City of Spokane**
5. Rex Anderson and Dave Buescher
   - **Fusion Architects**

BACKGROUND

In 2025, the UD hired Measure Meant, a Spokane-based sustainability consultancy, to evaluate green building and ecological development investments to further the UD's mission. The scope of this project was to:

- Evaluate models used by different Public Development Authority's (PDA) to incentivize ecological design
- Develop a scorecard framework for evaluating projects and determining applicable incentives
- Estimate implementation costs
- Propose a phased launch strategy
- Write case studies for three communities or PDAs with ecological development initiatives

Measure Meant used interviews and desktop research to identify trends and best practices at local, regional, and national levels. We also conducted desktop research to assess green building certification methodologies; evaluate incentive models used by regional, national, and international communities; identify trends in ecological development; and gain other insights to inform our work.

FINDINGS

DEFINITIONS

There are varied terms used to describe environmentally focused building and development approaches of the type that the UD is pursuing. Common terms include eco-architecture, regenerative design, net-zero building, passive design, high-performance building, energy efficient construction, carbon-neutral construction. Ecological design, green infrastructure, and green building are used throughout this report.

Ecological design generally refers to development practices that integrate natural systems and processes into the built environment. In the context of the UD, ecological design encompasses the specific principles outlined in the UD's Next Generation Conceptual Plan 2065, including biomimicry, nature-based solutions, blue-green infrastructure, decarbonization, and regenerative development. These principles reflect the UD's commitment to development that supports ecosystem health, climate resilience, and community wellbeing simultaneously. When this report refers to green building or ecological design, it is in reference to practices that align with those objectives.

COMMON TERMS FOR ECOLOGICAL DESIGN

- Eco-architecture
- Regenerative design
- Net-zero building
- Passive design
- High-performance building
- Energy efficient construction
- Carbon-neutral construction
- Green infrastructure
- Green building

University District Gateway Bridge

IMPORTANCE OF CULTURE

Environmentally sustainable development, such as what the UD is undertaking, requires a strong, local culture of sustainability. Cities that have experienced success with environmentally sustainable development have broad coalitions of city, business, and community leaders who are committed to and prioritize environmental resiliency. These coalitions are fundamental to a strong culture.

Cities that are most effective in meeting sustainable development goals and transforming their communities also have a well-developed sustainability action plan that they are actively implementing, and codes and policies that support

and advance sustainable and green development. These tools exist because the cities established a strong culture. And the tools are critical in creating the conditions for success.

The following are some of the characteristics shared by communities included in our research:

- **Sustainability Action Plan (SAP):** Communities have plans that were created by the community and provide focus for sustainable development initiatives. These generally include guidance on green infrastructure.
- **Active implementation of SAP:** The sustainability action plans are embraced by the city government and are actively being implemented. The plans are living documents that guide policy, rather than merely serving as a historical artifact.
- **Broad coalitions committed to environmental resiliency:** Coalitions cross industries, government, education, nonprofits, and the general community. There may be disparate perspectives and no clear consensus, but there is general agreement that environmental resiliency is important and should be prioritized.
- **Financial incentives for green development:** The incentives are generally offered by city governments with some support from local utilities. Providing financial support helps shift the return on investment (ROI) calculation in favor of environmental resiliency. The dividend to the local community is improved financial and health benefits from the green infrastructure. (More detail on these incentives are provided later in the report.)
- **Rating and evaluation methodologies:** The methodologies are usually tied directly to the financial incentives. Establishing a methodology ensures that expectations are clear.
- **Public ownership of property:** This is not common, but city governments that

Communities and revitalization areas pursuing ecological development share common characteristics that likely contribute to their success.

Comparison of community characteristics that make ecological development successful

Characteristics	Austin	Hoboken	Philadelphia	Seattle	Portland
Sustainability Action Plan (SAP)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Actively implementing SAP	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Broad Coalitions committed to environmental resiliency	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	Yes
Array of financial incentives for green development	No	Yes	Yes	Some	Yes
Rating and evaluation methodologies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Own some or all property in revitalization area	No	Parks	Parks	No	Yes
City builds initial ecological designed infrastructure	Yes	Yes	Yes	Some	Yes

do own property have more control over what is built and how it gets built. This is particularly helpful when the revitalization area has ambitious goals.

- **Ecologically designed infrastructure built by city:** The most effective green infrastructure is connected across parcels within a PDA, rather than being bifurcated or developed in isolation. Connected infrastruture requires planning. Developers may be more interested in pursuing green development when infrastructure for water management, shade, and other ecological design is integrated and already in place.

The City of Austin serves as a model for developing an effective sustainability culture. Austin created the first green building rating system in the US (see case study on page 10) and in 1991 they were the only US city to receive one of the 12 awards for local environmental initiatives at the 1992 Earth Summit. The Center for Maximum Potential Building Systems diagramed the model (see below), based on a cybernetic feedback model, that was used for developing community engagement that supported the success of the green building program.

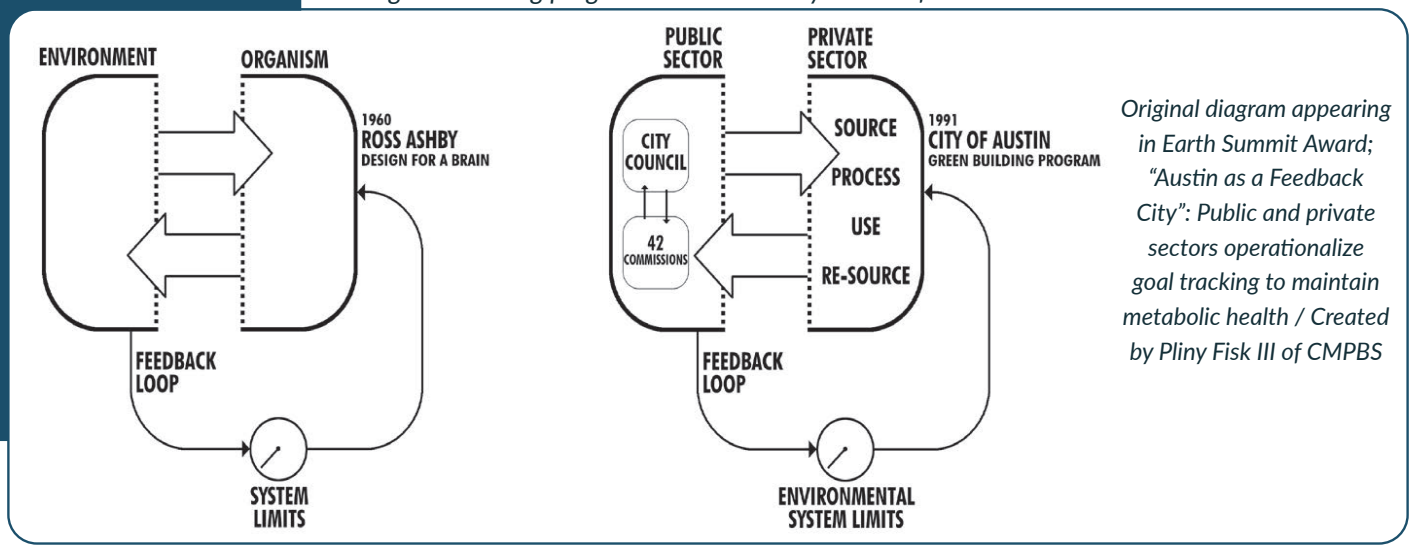
The model borrows from the symbiotic relationship between the natural environment and organisms within the environment. Each group requires the other to survive, and system limits create conditions for balance, long-term health, and the ultimate success of the system.

The City of Austin adapted that system to the relationship between the Public and Private Sectors that was needed to make the green building program successful. The Public Sector needs a successful Private Sector for funding, and Private Sector success depends on the Public Sector creating and maintaining conditions for stable and healthy communities. In this relationship, the natural environment serves as a system limit – if the natural environment is not healthy and balanced, it is more difficult for communities to be healthy and balanced, which makes it more difficult for either sector to be successful.

These systems are foundational to creating sustainability cultures. The City of Austin understands that both sectors are essential to creating a vibrant community and the conditions for the program to be successful. They recognize that the green building program is an important aspect of maintaining a healthy environment where people can thrive.

This is one finding that indicates culture is the biggest contributor to successful ecological design and development programs and projects. Our research also suggests a culture of sustainability,

Austin green building program is based on a cybernetic feedback model



Original diagram appearing in Earth Summit Award; "Austin as a Feedback City": Public and private sectors operationalize goal tracking to maintain metabolic health / Created by Pliny Fisk III of CMPBS

and many of the characteristics listed previously, are still emerging in Spokane. With the absence of an ecologically sustainable culture in Spokane, the UD may need to play a major role in creating it.

While the City of Spokane has a sustainability action plan, a lack of funding has slowed implementation and it does not appear that the plan is being implemented systematically. City policies and codes are not designed to promote or support green building concepts, and it is not clear whether the city leadership sees environmental sustainability and ecological design as a priority.

The City has made progress on the recommendations made in the 2021 Sustainability Action Plan, with 60% of recommendations in-progress with 10 actions (out of more than 300) indicated as complete as of May 2026. Additionally, during our meeting with the City Planning Department, they indicated willingness to work with the UD to pro-actively implement parking strip improvements in alignment with the UD's objectives. The is generally supportive of smart city concepts and the UD can leverage that.

The Planning Department's support could be valuable because local developers cite infrastructure as a challenge. The UD could collaborate with the City Planning Department to address some ecological infrastructure needs, such as the parking strips previously mentioned.

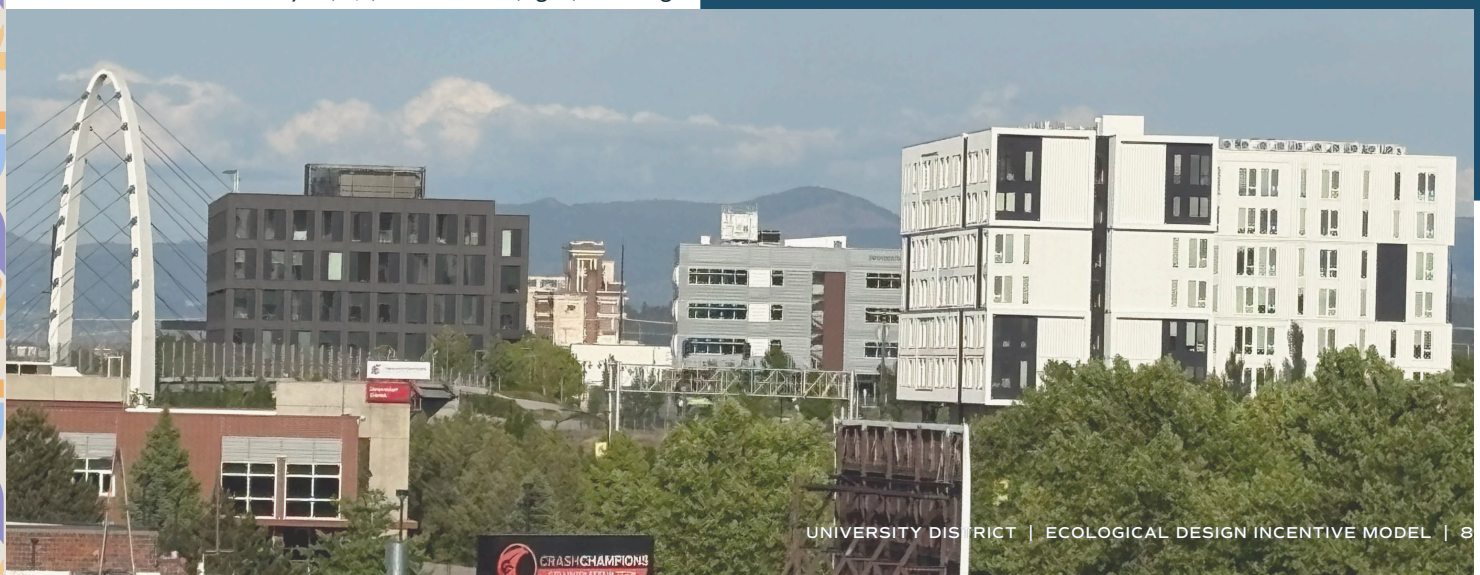
This could help attract developers by reducing the amount of infrastructure they need to build as part of their projects. Doing so would change the ROI calculation for developers.

There is limited evidence of broad coalitions of City, business, and community leaders who are committed to and prioritize environmental resiliency in Spokane. While there are community leaders and coalitions focused on environmental sustainability, they generally are not business leaders, building owners, or commercial and residential builders and developers. Existing coalitions may have some influence, but they are not the people with money and the financial resources needed to create the environmentally sustainable communities that the UD aims to create.

In some successful cities, property within the development district is owned by the City, the revitalization area, or some other managing organization like the UD. Or there is some level of financial backing to purchase property in coordination with a developer. This approach mitigates developer risks, but more importantly gives the PDA more control over how development proceeds. This is not the case within the UD where much of the property is privately owned or is owned by universities.

Incentive programs, similar to those described in

The Catalyst (left) and Boxcar (right) buildings



the next section, motivate developers because incentives can improve the return on their investments. Incentive programs usually involve a scorecard or rating methodology to determine the level of available benefits. Tying incentives to desired outcomes increases the likelihood that a revitalization area achieves its goals.

Creating a culture focused on environmental sustainability likely requires a multi-faceted and extensive lobbying and education campaign. Any campaign should focus on businesses and developers because they have the needed financial resources. The Spokane City Council and the Mayor's office are required to change public policy, which is a critical success criterion as well.

INFRASTRUCTURE

All development projects need to be financially feasible for developers. In the short-term, green buildings may have higher construction costs (although this is not always the case). When considering a project's ROI, developers may conclude conventional buildings are a better investment.

There are substantial research and documented examples that show ecological design and development can have a higher ROI than conventional approaches. Operational costs can be lower, and green buildings can have higher tenant demand and resale values. However, the break-even point may not be until 7-10 years after projection completion.

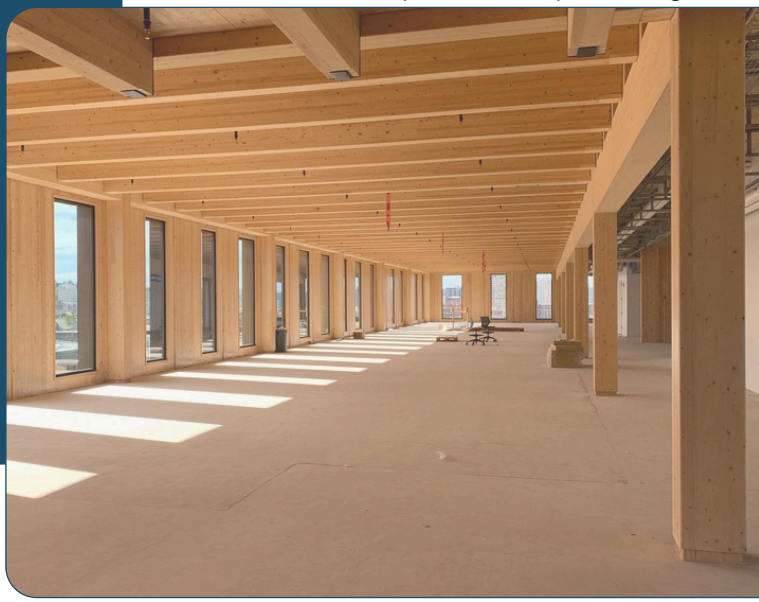
Developers who are less familiar with the economics of green design may be less likely to undertake these projects. Even slightly higher upfront costs may be a significant deterrent.

Developers who do not intend to manage buildings in the long term may have less incentive to invest in green building approaches. They may not factor in the cost of operations, which is where the benefits from ecological design and green building are derived. The short-term ROI may have an influence over their decisions.

Overcoming this reality - and potential misconceptions about the cost and value of ecological design and development - requires significant effort and developers may need tangible examples before investing in green building. Case studies from other communities, like those provided in this report, can provide context for successful projects. But skeptical developers likely need to see direct proof of success in Spokane because market differences can vary significantly from one community to another.

Many successful mixed-use, sustainable development efforts include connected, nature-based infrastructure, such as coulees, clean water parks, urban forests and parks, and walking and biking trails. That infrastructure can be critical to the success of revitalization areas that target tenants who are interested in walkable, ecologically designed communities. Creating that infrastructure early in a project is important in attracting tenants because they want to experience those benefits on day one, not at some distant point in the future.

Cross-laminated timber panels - Catalyst Building



Kendall Yards is an example of a successful, mixed-use and walkable community. While it doesn't

CITY OF AUSTIN, TX

Austin, Texas is one of the most successful examples of a city-led ecological development program in the United States, and offers instructive lessons for the UD. Nature-based and green infrastructure in the City of Austin has proliferated because the city has integrated sustainability into municipal code and public policy. While rating criteria and city code have driven sustainable development, leadership and a strong desire for change are perhaps the most critical components for the City of Austin's success.

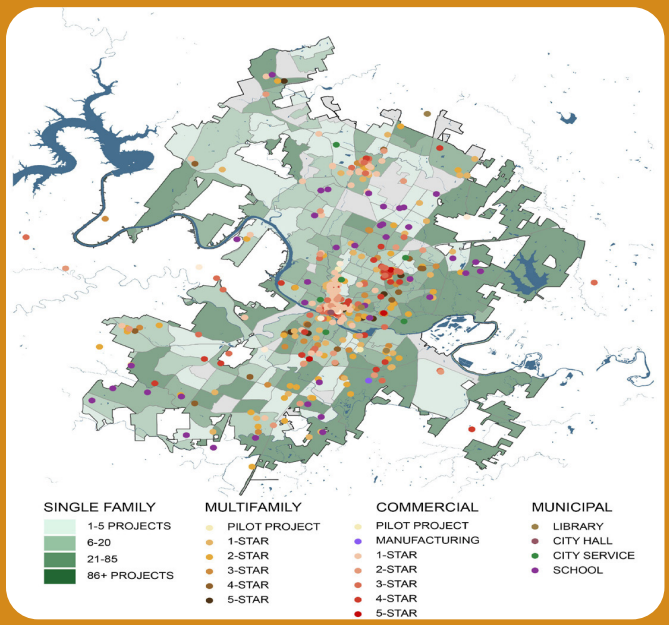
To drive green development and achieve the City of Austin's environmental goals, AEGB uses a rating system to evaluate single-family, multifamily, and commercial development projects. The ratings include an array of sustainability requirements including site transportation, energy, water, indoor environmental quality, materials and resources, education, and equity as priorities. It also includes over 60 electives and innovations that receive points, including vulnerability preparedness assessment, shelter in place, Energy Star equipment and appliances among others.

Over the past 35 years, the City of Austin has proven that nature-based, sustainable development can succeed at scale when supported by strong institutional leadership, a community-owned utility, and a broad coalition of public, private, and nonprofit partners. Austin's experience offers several instructive lessons for the UD.

First, starting small is not a barrier to long-term impact — Austin's program began with a budget of just $50,000 and grew by demonstrating value over time. Second, non-financial incentives can be effective motivators, especially when embedded in a culture that values ecological design. Building that culture requires sustained, deliberate effort across government, business, and community organizations. Third, integrating sustainability into municipal code and public policy is ultimately what drives consistent adoption — marketing and education alone are not sufficient.

For the UD, Austin's trajectory suggests that investing in culture and relationships now, while pursuing policy change and financial incentives over time, is the most realistic path to achieving its ecological design objectives.

Map of green building development in Austin, TX



FAST FACTS

- First rating system in US for guiding and evaluating building sustainability (1991)
- Sustainability is embedded in public policy
- Austin Energy Green Building (AEGB) – a city department – manages the sustainability program
- Benefits include project support, education, and public recognition
- Austin residences use only 860 kWh per month on average compared to 1000 kWh per month throughout the rest of Texas

have the same level of ecological design the UD is committed to, it is evidence that large-scale mixed-use development can be successful in Spokane. They used an "if you build it, they will come" approach, believing that prioritizing connected infrastructure and amenities was an important component for attracting home buyers and renters.

Across the country, demand for office space in ecologically designed buildings is consistently higher than conventional buildings. Green buildings also tend to garner higher rent premiums and sell for higher prices than conventional buildings.

The Catalyst Building is a good test case for how green building can be successful in Spokane. At one point, the Catalyst Building was the most sustainably designed building in the United States. High occupancy at the Catalyst Building aligns with the national trend. The project clearly demonstrates the benefits of energy efficiency and green building concepts. However, the Catalyst Building is exclusively office space.

Mixed-use development is necessary to accomplish the UD's broader vision. The Boxcar Building, a mixed-use building adjacent to the Catalyst Building, serves as an example of why existing infrastructure and amenities are important. The Boxcar Building has encountered challenges filling its first-floor retail space. One cause may be a lack of nearby amenities and foot traffic needed to make a retail business viable in that location.

Kendall Yards Commercial Area

There is some tension in priorities. Retail tenants may not commit to renting space if there are not enough people to support their business. Renters seeking walkable neighborhoods may be reluctant to live in the UD without retail businesses and the amenities associated with ecological design. The Boxcar Building example demonstrates this tension and potentially points to the importance of establishing ecological amenities and pedestrian infrastructure before expecting retail tenants to commit.

The infrastructure the UD envisions is connected and integrated, branching out across the entire district. And unlike Kendall Yards, the UD is reliant on multiple developers to achieve its vision. As development occurs sporadically and disparately – without continuity – connecting infrastructure becomes more challenging without alignment across all development projects. Expecting one developer to anticipate how their project connects with others in the UD is probably unreasonable and unrealistic.

Effective planning and coordination is one way to address this challenge. But that doesn't address the additional costs to developers for integrating the connectivity into their projects. Every additional expense is a potential deterrent for developers, particularly those who are already skeptical about green building.

Another way to reduce developer cost and to encourage green building is to remove responsibility for ecological infrastructure from the developer. Infrastructure that is built and maintained by a city or revitalization area ensures connectivity, while also reducing expenses for developers and potentially increasing their ability to rent space. This approach requires funding, likely from the City, the UD, or alternative sources like

state or federal grants.

While not directly connected to infrastructure, support from the broader business community is also important. In addition to knowing the City of Austin would provide regulatory support to make their projects successful, developers knew they had local financial and business support. Having confidence that resources are available makes it easier to take risks. Convincing a developer to take a risk is difficult if they feel they are alone on an island.

Developers may point to the Boxcar Building as evidence that sites lacking infrastructure development are challenging and less desirable. Completing one or two pilot projects, working with developers who already use green building practices, could demonstrate the value of ecological design and motivate other developers to adopt new building practices. If developers see existing infrastructure and a substantial network of financial and business support in Spokane, they may be more inclined to pursue projects in the UD.

PUBLIC POLICY

Public policy plays a significant role in the success of development projects. Profitability erodes quickly when a project gets bogged down in regulations and administrative bureaucracy. Our research suggests that builders are prioritizing development in Spokane Valley, Liberty Lake, and Post Falls because the City of Spokane's regulations, ordinances, and public policy have made development in the city significantly more difficult by comparison.

In Austin, TX, local builders, developers, and businesses engaged early on to support the city's sustainability efforts. A business ecosystem has evolved since the 1990s, making it easier for developers to carry out projects and feel more comfortable that they will realize the projected financial returns. One of the case studies at the end of this report outlines how the City of Austin created conditions for success. Austin's experience and approach are referenced throughout this report to demonstrate how the characteristics noted above lead to positive, tangible outcomes.

In Austin, the green building and sustainable design principles started with the city government. The City of Austin started creating a regulatory framework to support ecological design. Their approach was a combination of requirements and incentives.

Their sustainability team engaged business leaders who understood the vision and the long-term benefits of sustainable development. By working with local leaders, The City of Austin obtained a critical mass of financial interest because they worked directly with local leaders to develop the regulatory framework. The result is that developers consistently use green building practices.

If policy is impacting developers' decisions, changes to policies and regulatory frameworks could make development (of any kind) in the city more attractive. Communities that find success typically leverage policy to encourage ecological design and development. Rather than using policy as a cudgel, communities can adapt existing policy

STA City Line in UD on Spokane Falls Blvd

to prioritize green building, making it easier for builders to maximize their investment while also benefiting the community.

INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

Developers want more flexibility and less regulation. The following are characteristics in the Spokane area:

- City code makes large developments difficult, which is evidenced by more recent development in the Spokane Valley. Development in Post Falls is growing faster than in Spokane because Idaho has fewer building restrictions and rents are higher, allowing developers to be profitable more quickly.
- Development outside of Spokane, in most cases, does not include the ecologically friendly and sustainable principles that are part of the UD's vision.
- Developers may have a better understanding than City planners of market demand, particularly for larger, multi-lot development. Developers have direct experience with how large, mixed-use community development projects should be organized to meet demand, be profitable for the developer, and be effective for residents and the broader community.
- Stormwater requirements are one of the biggest costs for developers. The preponderance of basalt in the University District makes connecting to the City of Spokane's system a challenge. An alternative to connecting with existing infrastructure is managing water on the property, though that does have separate challenges.

The cities we evaluated all have some form of green building incentive programs to address stormwater management, infrastructure, regulations, public bureaucracy, and other challenges cited by developers. Incentive programs support and promote development that aligns with City objectives, and they can shift the paradigm for developers. In an environment in which developers seem to be favoring projects in neighboring communities that have fewer restrictions, incentive programs may be a way to attract developers while maintaining the City of Spokane's vision and standards.

The following list provides more context for some common incentives:

- **Floor Area Ratio (FAR) Bonus:**
  A Floor Area Ratio bonus increases the amount of buildable space permitted on a given lot or parcel, giving developers more rentable square footage without requiring additional land. This is an effective incentive because it directly improves a project's return on investment by increasing revenue potential at relatively low additional cost. The City of Spokane is in the process of eliminating FAR requirements.
- **Height Bonuses:**

The incentives available to the UD may be limited in the short-term, with free publicity and marketing support being the lowest cost, most accessible starting point. Other incentives could be added later.

  A height bonus allows developers to exceed height limits, thereby giving developers more rentable space. The City of Spokane is already willing to provide exceptions to height limits, but developers have not been asking. Most recent buildings are well below the height restriction, likely because adding extra height doesn't improve the ROI of the project.
- **Fee Reductions:**
  Reducing or removing development fees — such as stormwater hookup, electrical hookup, and permitting fees — lowers the upfront cost

of a project, directly improving a developer's return on investment and making green building projects more financially viable. The Planning Department noted that discounts or fee reductions require coordination with multiple City departments. Political pushback and the current budget shortfall make this challenging. Avista indicated that there are regulatory requirements that make it challenging to reduce or remove fees for electric and gas utilities.

- **Faster permitting and expedited design review:** Expedited permitting prioritizes and fast-tracks permit approvals for developers whose projects meet certain levels of ecological design based on established criteria. This incentive is particularly effective because it reduces one of the most significant sources of uncertainty and cost in development — delays in the permitting process erode profitability and increase risk. This could be structured at multiple levels, so that stormwater permits are separated from building permits to maximize the benefit. Scorecards are required for all development projects and those that meet specific criteria obtain this benefit.

- **Parking minimum reductions:** This allows developers to reduce the amount of parking they must provide for each building. This would reduce costs because more land could be used for rentable space and parking garages would not be required. Discussions indicate that parking minimums are not a concern and that developers prefer to incorporate more parking. If the City had a parking maximum restriction rather than a parking minimum, an exception would be a valuable incentive. However, making exceptions for more parking runs counter to the goal of more walkable, people-centric infrastructure.

- **Green Building Code Mandates:** While not a direct incentive, requiring green building practices ensures it happens. This could require the City to change the code and policy, which doesn't appear to be part of existing plans. Developers already find Spokane to be a challenging regulatory environment, and adding mandates would exacerbate that perspective and further reduce interest.

- **Green Bonds:** Green bonds are debt instruments where the proceeds are explicitly designated for sustainable development projects, with that purpose made clear at the time of issuance. They provide a dedicated funding stream for green infrastructure and signal a municipality's commitment to sustainability to investors and the broader community. Bonds can be issued by city governments, utilities, or other public entities. Given the City of Spokane's current budget constraints, city-backed green bonds are unlikely in the near term. However, this is worth monitoring as the City's financial situation evolves and as green bond markets continue to grow nationally.

Green rooftop at the David L Lawerence Convention Center in Pittsburgh, PA

- **Blended Financing:** Blended financing pairs public or philanthropic funds with private capital to improve the financial feasibility of sustainable construction projects. By reducing the risk profile of a project, blended financing can make green building practices more attractive to developers who might otherwise view them as financially unviable. Developers typically provide guarantees to reduce investor risk, and the public or philanthropic contribution can take many forms, including grants, low-interest loans,

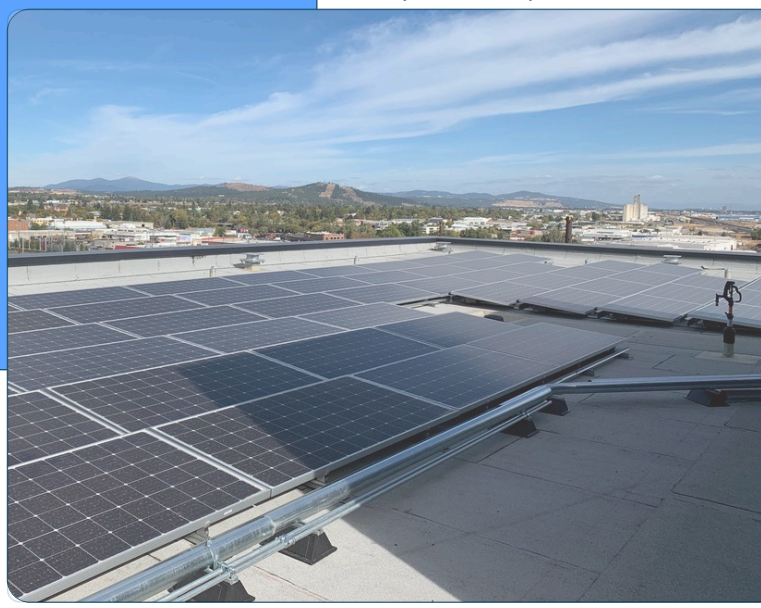
or equity. Our research did not investigate whether there is local interest in blended financing in Spokane.

- **Zoning and City Codes:**
  Zoning and code updates are among the most powerful tools available to municipalities for advancing ecological design because they establish binding expectations for all development rather than relying on voluntary adoption. This may take the form of updates to the municipal code, overlay districts, or performance standards tied to specific outcomes such as stormwater retention or energy efficiency. The most likely path for the UD is to set their own development standards within the district, which would establish clear expectations for developers without requiring city-wide code changes. Engaging the City of Spokane's Planning Department will be important if broader code changes are desired.

- **Financial Incentives:**
  Direct financial incentives, such as grants, tax credits, or tax increment financing, are among the most effective tools for motivating developers to adopt green building practices because they directly improve the return on investment. Some larger municipalities award grants for sustainable design or provide tax advantages tied to ecological design criteria. In Spokane, city-backed financial incentives are unlikely given current budget constraints. However, the UD could play a meaningful role by helping developers identify and apply for state, federal, and philanthropic grant funding, reducing the administrative burden that often discourages developers from pursuing available resources.

- **Free Publicity and Marketing Support:**
  Marketing and branding support is a low-cost incentive that can meaningfully benefit developers by helping them lease space and attract tenants. Creating awareness of the UD's amenities and identity as a distinctive, walkable district adds value to development projects within its boundaries. There is also evidence that tenants are willing to pay a premium for space in sustainable buildings, meaning that highlighting the ecological design features of a development can directly support a developer's ability to command higher rents. For the UD, this type of incentive is among the most financially feasible in the near term, and could include case studies, social media promotion, signage, and coordination with local and regional media.

Roftop solar array in UD



- **Stormwater Credits:**
  Some municipalities offer stormwater bill credits or fee reductions based on the volume of stormwater diverted from the combined sewer system through on-site management practices. Credits are typically calculated based on the amount of impervious surface managed, and qualifying practices can include permeable pavement, rain gardens, green roofs, and landscaping that captures and infiltrates runoff. In Spokane, the preponderance of basalt bedrock in the UD creates particular stormwater management challenges, making on-site solutions especially valuable. A stormwater credit program coordinated with the City of Spokane could reduce operating costs for building owners and provide an ongoing financial incentive for maintaining green infrastructure.

- **Green Construction Loans:**
  Some financial institutions offer green lending programs with discounted interest rates for construction projects that incorporate sustainable design elements or achieve recognized green building certifications. These programs reduce the cost of capital for developers, directly improving project feasibility. Examples of lenders with green

lending programs include Beneficial State Bank and Alpine Bank. C-PACE (Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy) financing is also a potential option, allowing property owners to finance energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements through a special assessment repaid over time, which can make upfront green building costs more manageable. The UD should investigate whether local banks and credit unions — several of which are already engaged with the UD — have interest in developing similar programs for projects within the district.

The table below provides context for how some of these incentives could apply in Spokane. The first column lists the incentive and the second column reflects feedback we heard during our meetings. This feedback can inform any incentive program developed in Spokane.

Not all effective incentives are financial. The Austin Energy Green Building program, detailed in the case studies appendix, demonstrates that non-financial incentives such as marketing support, project recognition, award ceremonies, and branding opportunities can meaningfully motivate developers. However, Austin's experience also illustrates that non-financial incentives are most effective when embedded in a strong culture of ecological design — one where developers and the community value the visibility and recognition those incentives provide.

In Spokane, where that culture is still nascent,

Common incentives used in programs that promote green building projects

Common Incentives	What We Heard
Floor Area Ratio Bonus	The City of Spokane is eliminating floor ratio requirements, rendering this as something the City cannot use as an incentive. However, it can still have the desired effect or improving ROI.
Height Bonus	Height restrictions are currently generous. However, developers are not asking for exceptions which suggests this incentive would be ineffective.
Fee Reductions (City)	Providing fee reductions has incentivized development in other communities and could work in Spokane. Criteria needs to be well-defined and well communicated.
Fee Reductions (Utility)	Avista has regulatory limitations that limit (or even prohibit) fee reductions for specific projects.
Faster Permitting & Reviews	Faster permitting is a common incentive, with material benefits for developers when the process can take several months or more. Criteria need to be well-defined and effectively communicated.
Parking minimum reductions	The City and State have already implemented changes to parking minimums. However, developers are typically maximizing parking area in their projects due to tenant demand for additional parking. Offering further reductions may have limited benefit.
Green building code mandates	Mandates of any kind are a political challenge in Spokane. Developers are already reluctant to build within city limits, and green building mandates would likely exacerbate their concerns.
Green bonds	The City has budget challenges in 2026 and these may continue into future years. There is likely minimal interest in a bond issuance at this time.
Blended Financing	The level of interest and size of the opportunity is unknown. This may be an option the UD could explore.

non-financial incentives alone may take longer to gain traction. That said, they are more financially feasible for the UD in the near term and can play an important role in building momentum while financial incentives are pursued. This is reflected in Priority 3 of the Recommendations section below, which focuses on marketing, education, and administrative support as initial developer incentives.

SCORECARDS

Incentives are typically managed using a scorecard or rating methodology. Nearly every community evaluated has some form of scorecard to rate projects. All development projects are required to complete the scorecard before receiving building permits - every project is given the same opportunity to qualify for incentives.

Points are assigned based on individual ecological design elements and incentives are provided on a tiered basis based on the number of criteria the project meets. Projects with more ecological design elements receive more incentives.

Some scorecards align with existing certification, such as LEED or the Living Building guidelines established by the International Living Future Institute (ILFI). Using an existing approach eliminates the need to develop criteria. The requirements are well documented, and some developers may already be familiar with them. However, most certifications and standards are extremely complex. For instance, the ILFI standards cover more than 500 pages.

The communities we evaluated have developed their own standards. They may borrow from other communities and existing standards like ILFI, but they are designed to meet project goals and align them with local conditions.

Appendix A is a draft scorecard created for the UD. This reflects research, elements used in other communities, input from the City of Spokane, and direction from the UD. We recommend getting input from local developers, businesses, and other interested parties to ensure the scorecard is practical and realistic before finalizing it.

Renovated Don Kardong Bridge

PATHWAY FORWARD

The core challenge the UD faces is the absence of the characteristics shared by successful projects. These include a culture of sustainability, public policy, and financial infrastructure. The primary barrier is a lack of culture. It is difficult to find success in any endeavor when the prevailing mindset is firmly entrenched against the endeavor's goals. The lack of funding is also a significant obstacle. Even if developer's see the benefit of green building practices, development projects cannot proceed without funding or, at the very least, support from the local business community.

Despite these barriers, the UD has a pathway to progress. This report includes ideas for an implementation plan and outlines funding needs for building a successful program. The Recommendations section, at the end of the report, provides areas where the UD can focus and ideally create a foundation for the desired support.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Appendix F includes two potential implementation plans: a fast-track work plan and a fully-developed work plan. The fast-track workplan emphasizes implementing and piloting an incentive program in 6-9 months. This approach accelerates implementation, but assumes less engagement with partners and collaborators, like the City of Spokane. A fast-track approach enables the UD to develop a pilot program quickly and use the experience to create a more robust version.

The second work plan involves more engagement and alignment with interested parties over a period of 18 months. This model includes exploring financial incentives and engagement with the City of Spokane on code changes.

Appendix G outlines potential costs for implementing each work plan. The budget assumes that full funding is possible. Costs should be reviewed with UD partners to identify gaps and opportunities, and to test for feasibility.

The fast-track plan is recommended because it has fewer dependencies, better reflects current financial and political challenges, and allows the UD to develop a program, test it, and learn from the experience more quickly. While the level of engagement is lower, the UD could identify strategic partnerships that require less time to gain consensus. For instance, the UD would work with the Planning Department on parking strip improvements or other small infrastructure projects that support existing City goals.

Regardless of the chosen approach, both work plans should be adjusted to align with the UD's knowledge of opportunities and limitations. This is especially important if the UD intends to engage the City for policy changes, additional funding, or support for implementing the incentive program or other components of the program.

Summary of fast-track work plan approach

Phase	Duration	Key Steps	Key Outputs
Phase 1: Quick-Start Foundation	Months 1–2	Designate project lead and working group; review existing materials	Charter, working group roster, baseline summary
Phase 2: Focused Stakeholder Input	Months 2–4	Two developer input sessions; synthesize input; finalize scorecard scope	Input summaries, prioritized criteria, tier and incentive direction
Phase 3: Draft Scorecard & Incentives	Months 4–6	Draft working scorecard; define pilot incentive menu; produce developer tools	Working Scorecard v1.0, Pilot Incentive Menu, Developer Worksheet
Phase 4: Pilot Launch & Learning	Months 6–9	Recruit pilots; apply scorecard; document lessons; plan transition to full process	Pilot reports, Lessons Learned Summary, Transition Memo

RECOMMENDATIONS

The principles and practice of environmental sustainability, ecological design, and green building are still taking root in Spokane. Many of the characteristics that make successful revitalization areas in communities across the country are just getting started in Spokane. To accelerate green development, we recommend five priorities which are detailed in the following pages.

1. **Lead** in building a culture of environmental sustainability and ecological design.
2. **Develop** an incentive scorecard in collaboration with local businesses and developers, and the City Planning Department where practical.
3. **Focus** initial developer incentives on marketing, education, and administrative support.
4. **Identify** 1-2 pilot projects.
5. **Investigate** funding sources for financial incentives.

PRIORITY 1 - LEAD

Culture and community leadership is critical to success. There has been some progress with environmental sustainability in Spokane, and there are nascent collections of interested parties focused on the environment and climate resilience. The Austin case study illustrates how transformative broad community engagement can be — more than 200 local participants collaborated to write Austin's Climate Equity Plan, and that coalition of public, private, nonprofit, and institutional entities became the foundation for sustained progress over decades. Spokane created a similar coalition in developing the City's 2021 Sustainability Action Plan, but that coalition disbanded after the plan was adopted, and no group has emerged to take its place. Similarly, the UD engaged with a broad coalition of business, nonprofit, government, and community leaders in the development of their Next Generation Conceptual Plan 2065. The challenge in Spokane is the lack of leadership support and sustained efforts for long-term cultural change. The organizations and momentum described below represent early building blocks.

- The City of Spokane adopted a comprehensive update to its Sustainability Action Plan (SAP) in October 2021. However, funding has been limited, and only small parts have been implemented since adoption.
- The City formed a Climate Resilience and Sustainability Board (CSRB) following adoption of the SAP. The board serves to advise the City on sustainability policy, however it is not a replacement for broad community engagement similar to the Austin model.
- A collection of consultants is completing an update to the City's Comprehensive Plan to include a Climate Element. The work includes a Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment, which will give city leaders more insight into the coming impacts of climate change. It is important to note that the City's Comprehensive Plan acts as a long-term strategic document

and is not a replacement for a sustainability or climate action plan, nor does it fill the need for sustained, community engagement towards progress on implementation.

- In 2024, long-established, environmentally focused nonprofits and businesses organized to form the Spokane Environmental Policy Coalition (SEPC). Their purpose is to advocate for land and water conservation, climate action, and environmental justice in the greater Spokane region. The UD could leverage the coalition's momentum by partnering on shared goals.
- Spokane would benefit from having a sustainability convener, an organization or individual whose role it is to provide leadership and direction toward both short-term and long-term sustainability in the Spokane area. The UD could choose to provide this leadership or partner with existing efforts to broaden a coalition.

Contributing to a culture of environmental sustainability and ecological design should be the UD's top priority. With an aligned community, City leadership will have more political capital to adopt policies supporting the UD's efforts.

Contributions might include continued engagement with the environmental community, including attending meetings with organizations focused on social change. The UD does not need to sign on or publicly advocate or support initiatives, but participation would strengthen existing relationships and give the UD important perspective. Participation would also provide the UD opportunities to share their vision for ecological design with the intent to deepening community support for the UD's objectives.

Engaging business leaders, including local banks and credit unions, might be an area of focus. While exploring funding sources, bank and credit union leaders have influence within the community. Build relationships with the local chapter of Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA), the Spokane Homebuilders Association, and the Inland Northwest Chapter of the Certified Commercial Investment Member Institute may add value. These groups likely will require significant effort to influence. The UD should continue their engagement with the Downtown Spokane Partnership and Greater Spokane Incorporated with increased intentionality around sustainable development.

The UD could also tap into the network of volunteers who contributed to Spokane's 2021 Sustainability Action Plan and the UD's Next Generation Conceptual Plan 2065. Both plans were shaped through broad community engagement, and the projects created a micro-culture and coalition of motivated organizations and residents.

Snapshot of potential UD incentive scorecard

2. URBAN HEAT ISLAND MITIGATION

Objective: Reduce ambient temperatures and improve pedestrian comfort.

Category	Metric	Points	Standards / Method
Tree Canopy	% canopy cover provided on-site	0-5	Canopy at maturity; use City-approved species with some native species required
Shade Structures	% of pedestrian routes shaded	0-5	Includes natural and architectural shade
Heat Reflective / High Albedo Surfaces	% of hardscape with Solar Reflective Index greater than 29	0-5	Applies to roofs & paved areas
Green Walls / Vertical Greening	Total sq. ft. installed	0-5	Species must be drought-tolerant with some native species required
Onsite Bioretention ponds	# of ponds and total sq. ft. or volume	0-5	
Maximum Points		**25**	

3. BIODIVERSITY AND HABITAT

Objective: Increase native species presence and strengthen ecological connectivity.

Category	Metric	Points	Standards / Method
Native Landscape	% of plantings that are native	0-5	75%+ native species earns full points
Pollinator Habitat	Total sq. ft. of pollinator-friendly planting	0-5	Meets Xerces Society guidelines
Habitat Connectivity	Adjacent to corridor or contributes to one	0-5	Verified through UD Observatory maps
Maximum Points		**15**	

4. AIR QUALITY AND CARBON

Objective: Improve particulate capture and carbon sequestration.

Category	Metric	Points	Standards / Method
Carbon Sequestration	Estimated annual CO_2 stored	0-5	Use California Air Resources Board (CARB) or other equivalent methodology
Air Filtration	Tree leaf area index & placement	0-5	High-impact locations near traffic prioritized
Reduced Emissions	On-site renewable energy or shading to reduce cooling load	0-5	Verified energy modeling
Maximum Points		**15**	

PRIORITY 2 - DEVELOP

The second priority is to develop a scorecard, using the draft in Appendix A as a starting point. Co-creating the scorecard with local developers and construction companies would be beneficial as a means of validating the feasibility and effectiveness of any scorecard criteria. The draft reflects our research and discussion with local leaders but has not been field-tested.

PRIORITY 3 - FOCUS

As noted in the Incentive Programs section, non-financial incentives are the most feasible option for the UD in the near term. Some cities provide marketing and branding support as an incentive. While incentives that more directly address expenses and impact return on investment are most effective, providing marketing and branding for developers also provides real financial benefit but at a lower cost for the UD. We recommend connecting with the Austin Green Building Department for insight into how the City of Austin supports developers. Prosper Portland and the City of Seattle's sustainability department may also be good resources, along with the US Green Building Council.

Creating a toolkit to educate developers on the benefits of green building and ecological development would be a low-cost solution. This could be paired with outlining additional services that the UD could provide to support developers. For instance, the UD could help developers obtain grant funding, work with developers on evaluating and aligning their projects with the scorecard criteria, or other efforts that make it easier for developers to meet the UD's design goals.

PRIORITY 4 - IDENTIFY

The UD is already working on pilot projects, and this should continue as a priority. These projects should incorporate a sufficient number of the UD's ecological design objectives to provide a full proof of concept. Demonstrating the long-term benefits of green building and the support the UD can offer may help motivate developers to work with the UD and undertake development projects. A key part of this priority is quantifying market response to green design and demonstrating consumer and resident demand.

PRIORITY 5 - INVESTIGATE

Financial incentives are the most powerful motivator, particularly in the absence of a strong culture of ecological design in Spokane. The Philadelphia case study describes an innovative Purchase of Assets program, in which the city purchases green infrastructure from developers at the close of construction and assumes long-term maintenance responsibility — a model worth exploring as the UD investigates funding mechanisms.

McKinstry commitment - Catalyst Building

CONCLUSION

There are many examples of successful ecological design projects similar to what the UD has undertaken. They have been successful because of broad community support, and as noted repeatedly, a strong culture and shared set of priorities.

While the environment in Spokane is challenging, there are groups who understand the long-term value of ecological design and development. Those groups, however disparate, should be leveraged to expand the local culture and shift attitudes, which can then create momentum.

Obtaining funding to maintain the current UD staff, and ideally expanding staffing, will be important. The City of Austin started with a budget of just $50,000 in the early 1990s and has expanded their budget by demonstrating the value they bring to the community. That team had the benefit of being connected with the city government and had the support of the community-owned electric utility. These relationships serve as an inspiration for the potential the broader Spokane community has to offer.

Gaining traction may require the UD to expand their role beyond their current focus on development within the UD boundaries. The UD Board and leadership team may want to consider being advocates for ecological development throughout the city. This could be done without distracting from the existing mission. Developers may be encouraged to work with the UD if they see there is a network of support for their projects.

Overhead view of WSU Spokane Campus

APPENDIX A

DRAFT SCORECARD

ECOLOGICAL DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES

Ecological design and development are a central part of the University District (UD) strategy and are intended to improve how the built environment integrates with the surrounding natural environment. Examples of ecological design and development include permeable surfaces, nature based infrastructure, renewable energy production capability, energy efficiency upgrades, green roofs, and street trees. These design elements create a variety of benefits for the adjacent natural ecosystems and those who reside, work, and recreate in the developed area.

The UD is developing an incentive program that will financially reinforce ecological design elements into UD projects. These incentives will support private development that contributes to a cooler, healthier, and more resilient future. **This document outlines the concept but is not intended as the actual, final program and approach.**

A four-tier system will be used to determine the incentives available to developers, with a point-based matrix that establishes the relevant incentive tier for a project. The framework will be voluntary and apply to private development and major renovation projects in the UD boundary. This model has been used successfully in communities across the country.

Scoring projects, coordinating incentives, and ensuring developers implement design elements would be coordinated in a partnership between the UD and City Staff. There is currently no intention of increasing the UD staff, making City support essential to this plan.

PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM

1. Quantify the environmental and social value of ecological design investments in the University District.

2. Incentivize private development that delivers ecological design and development that exceeds minimum regulatory requirements.

3. Align real estate economics with district goals around climate resilience, public health, ecosystem services, etc.

OBJECTIVES

1. Increase the total area and performance of ecological design and development.

2. Reduce stormwater runoff and urban heat island effects.

3. Enhance biodiversity, tree canopy, and pollinator habitat.

4. Improve air quality, public-realm comfort, recreation, and well-being.

5. Support local food systems and urban agriculture where possible and appropriate.

FRAMEWORK

TIER STRUCTURE

Scoring Range: 0 to 125 points

Tier 1 (0-39)
No Incentives.

Tier 2 (40-69)
Eligible for some regulatory incentives (e.g., minor landscape flexibilities), grant support and other financial incentives.

Tier 3 (70-99)
Tier 2 plus FAR/height bonuses, fee credits, additional grant support, tax abatements, access to district managed maintenance programs.

Tier 4 (100 -125)
Tier 3 plus the maximum regulatory and financial incentives, naming recognition, and UD flagship designation.

ECOLOGICAL DESIGN CATEGORIES

1. Nature Based Infrastructure
Reduce runoff volume, peak flows, and water quality impacts

2. Heat Island Mitigation
Reduce ambient temperatures and improve pedestrian comfort

3. Biodiversity and Habitat
Increase native species presence & strengthen ecological connectivity

4. Carbon and Air Quality
Improve particulate capture and carbon sequestration

5. Public Realm, Joy, and Human Well-being
Enhance comfort, delight, accessibility, and social engagement

6. Urban Agriculture and Food Systems
Support local food production, education, and community resiliences

7. Mobility and Green Streets
Integrate ecological design into transportation & multimodal corridors

INCENTIVES

There are a variety of incentives that could be provided to developers and the following are examples actively used by other municipalities. These would apply to Tiers 2-4 and would not be available for Tier 1 projects.

REGULATORY INCENTIVES

- **Faster Permitting and Expedited Design Review:** Shorten processing time for Tier 3 and Tier 4 projects, allowing developers to accelerate their return on investment
- **Flexible Landscaping & Setback Requirements:** Ability to meet certain code requirements through ecological design equivalents (e.g., deeper bioswales in lieu of standard landscape strips).

PROCESS AND RECOGNITION

- **Branding:** Establish a branding program that recognizes ecological design elements
- **Marketing:** Promote developments through a website, district tours, and other marketing/business channels
- **Access to Pilot Programs:** Create pilot programs and business partnerships with prominent institutions as a means of demonstrating effectiveness of nature-based solutions

FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

- **Fee Credits:** UD funded credits for meeting UD Living Infrastructure framework criteria or other design elements that could be tied directly to modeled reductions in runoff and heat.
- **Tax Abatements or Credits:** For projects achieving Tier 3 or Tier 4, especially if they deliver publicly accessible green infrastructure.
- **Green Infrastructure Matching Grants:** A small capital fund (or other similar mechanism) administered by UD or other entity for incremental green infrastructure features such as green roofs or tree planting.
- **District-Managed Maintenance Programs:** In some cases, the UD or a partner could assume maintenance responsibility for certain green infrastructure elements in exchange for a fee, de-risking long-term OPEX for the developer.

SCORECARD

This section illustrates a potential scorecard framework.

1. NATURE BASED INFRASTRUCTURE

Objective: Reduce runoff volume, peak flows, and water quality impacts.

Category	Metric	Points	Standards / Method
Green Roofs	% of roof area vegetated	0-5	Minimum depth of 4” with some drought tolerant and native species required
Rain Gardens/Bioswales	Total functional area	0-5	Must meet infiltration/performance criteria
Permeable Pavement	% of non-vehicular surfaces permeable	0-5	Meets permeability standards
Cisterns / Reuse Systems	Volume of water captured & reused	0-5	Water reuse for irrigation or building systems
Maximum Points		**20**	

2. URBAN HEAT ISLAND MITIGATION

Objective: Reduce ambient temperatures and improve pedestrian comfort.

Category	Metric	Points	Standards / Method
Tree Canopy	% canopy cover provided on-site	0-5	Canopy at maturity; use City-approved species with some native species required
Shade Structures	% of pedestrian routes shaded	0-5	Includes natural and architectural shade
Heat Reflective / High Albedo Surfaces	% of hardscape with Solar Reflective Index greater than 29	0-5	Applies to roofs & paved areas
Green Walls / Vertical Greening	Total sq. ft. installed	0-5	Species must be drought-tolerant with some native species required
Onsite Bioretention ponds	# of ponds and total sq. ft. or volume	0-5	
Maximum Points		**25**	

3. BIODIVERSITY AND HABITAT

Objective: Increase native species presence and strengthen ecological connectivity.

Category	Metric	Points	Standards / Method
Native Landscape	% of plantings that are native	0-5	75%+ native species earns full points
Pollinator Habitat	Total sq. ft. of pollinator-friendly planting	0-5	Meets Xerces Society guidelines
Habitat Connectivity	Adjacent to corridor or contributes to one	0-5	Verified through UD Observatory maps
Maximum Points		**15**	

4. AIR QUALITY AND CARBON

Objective: Improve particulate capture and carbon sequestration.

Category	Metric	Points	Standards / Method
Carbon Sequestration	Estimated annual CO_2 stored	0-5	Use California Air Resources Board (CARB) or other equivalent methodology
Air Filtration	Tree leaf area index & placement	0-5	High-impact locations near traffic prioritized
Reduced Emissions	On-site renewable energy or shading to reduce cooling load	0-5	Verified energy modeling
Maximum Points		**15**	

5. PUBLIC REALM, JOY, AND HUMAN WELL-BEING

Objective: Enhance comfort, delight, accessibility, and social engagement in the public realm.

Category	Metric	Points	Standards / Method
Publicly Accessible Open Space	Area and usability score	0-5	Seating that people would reasonably choose to sit in for at least 10 minutes based on Project for Public Spaces, LEED, or other benchmarks
Shade for Public Space	% of shaded seating and walkways	0-5	Combined tree and built shade
Human Joy/Comfort Features	Water, art, sensory gardens, play elements	0-5	Based on UD Placemaking Guide
Universal Accessibility	Paths, seating, and sensory access	0-5	Meets ADA and UD Accessibility Standards
Maximum Points		**20**	

6. URBAN AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS

Objective: Support local food production, education, and community resilience.

Category	Metric	Points	Standards / Method
Productive Landscapes	Sq. ft. of edible plantings	0-5	Rooftop or ground; drip irrigation required
Community Food Assets	Integration with food hub, co-op, or education	0-5	Partnerships and implementation plans documented
Composting & Soil Health	On-site composting or soil regeneration features	0-5	Verified plan and maintenance schedule
Maximum Points		**15**	

7. MOBILITY AND GREEN STREETS

Objective: Integrate ecological design into transportation and multimodal corridors.

Category	Metric	Points	Standards / Method
Green Street Elements	Stormwater planters, median planting	0-5	Must be within ROW or frontage
Onsite Ride-share, Bike-share, & EV Charging	Units per occupant	0-5	Access to ride-share, bike-share, and EV charging based on building occupancy
Shade-to-Mobility Ratio	% of key pedestrian/bike routes shaded	0-5	Based on UD Mobility Plan
Maximum Points		**15**	

SCORECARD SUMMARY

Category	Points
1. Nature Based Infrastructure	0-25
2. Heat Island Mitigation	0-25
3. Biodiversity and Habitat	0-15
4. Carbon and Air Quality	0-15
5. Public Realm, Joy, and Human Well-being	0-20
6. Urban Agriculture and Food Systems	0-15
7. Mobility and Green Streets	0-10

Maximum Points	**125**

APPENDIX B

CASE STUDY
AUSTIN, TX

THE CULTURE OF GREEN BUILDING IN AUSTIN

Austin, Texas is one of the most successful examples of a city-led ecological development program in the United States, and offers instructive lessons for the UD. Beginning in 1989, the City of Austin, Texas evolved a green energy program focused on building energy efficiency into a comprehensive sustainability rating system addressing energy, water, solid waste, and materials.[1] The program, now called Austin Energy Green Building® (AEGB), developed the first building sustainability rating system in the U.S.[2] It started with staff funding from the City government, a small federal grant, and support from the Center for Maximum Potential Building Systems, a 501(c)(3) dedicated to design, planning, and architecture.[3]

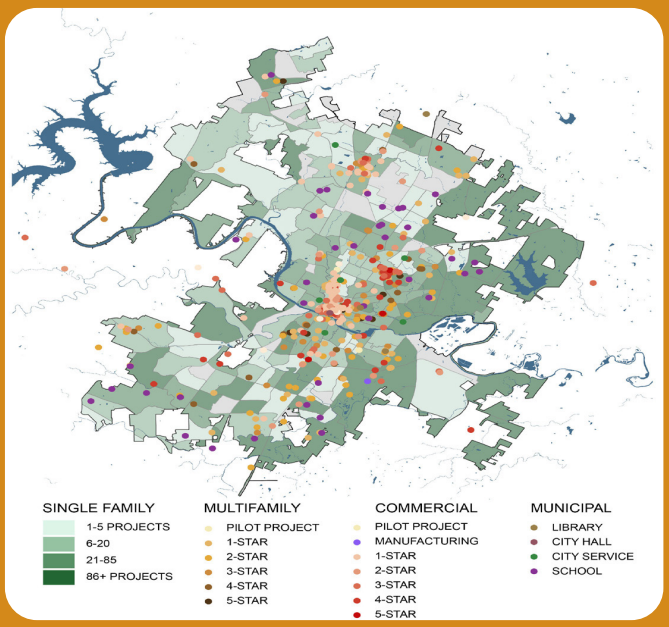
AEGB was created because the City of Austin recognized the importance of environmental sustainability and resilience. "Where some cities are just beginning to prepare for climate resilience with their growing populations in mind...Austin has been charting its course for decades—and it just took a major step forward by codifying nature-based solutions in city policy."[4]

Their forward-thinking has positioned the City of Austin to mitigate the impacts of climate change more effectively than most other communities. Texas continues to experience an increasing number of extreme weather events, such as the ice storm in 2021, that have an outsized impact on the Austin community. AEGB's work has contributed to Austin's resilience. Liana Kallivoka, a Ph.D., PE, LEED Fellow and assistant director of PARD, explains that Austin's "green infrastructure is the first line of defense for these climate disasters".[5]

The AEGB program now rolls up under Austin Energy, which is a community-owned, nonprofit utility managed by the City of Austin. As a community-owned utility, Austin Energy is directly accountable to its ratepayers and the citizens of Austin. Without the need to satisfy shareholders, Austin Energy can invest resources into projects that are directly aligned with city goals and that will have broad community impacts beyond basic energy efficiency.

> "While building ratings are an important component of the work, AEGB serves

Map of green building development in Austin, TX



FAST FACTS

- First rating system in US for guiding and evaluating building sustainability (1991)
- Sustainability is embedded in public policy
- Austin Energy Green Building (AEGB) – a city department – manages the sustainability program
- Benefits include project support, education, and public recognition
- Austin residences use only 860 kWh per month on average compared to 1000 kWh per month throughout the rest of Texas

other key roles for the city. AEGB leads the adoption of the local energy codes (Austin was the first city in the US to adopt the 2021 IECC), aids in the development and implementation of citywide sustainability policies, and creates low and no-cost educational content to ensure that Austin's building professionals are amongst the best and brightest. These facets of the work enable outcomes to scale well beyond the $3 Million annual budget of the program funded entirely by on-bill utility customer benefit charges."[6]

To drive green development and achieve the City of Austin's environmental goals, AEGB uses a rating system to evaluate single-family, multifamily, and commercial development projects. The ratings include an array of sustainability requirements including site transportation, energy, water, indoor environmental quality, materials and resources, education, and equity as priorities. It also includes over 60 electives and innovations that receive points, including vulnerability preparedness assessment, shelter in place, Energy Star equipment and appliances among others.

Projects that receive a 2-star rating or higher are eligible for various benefits, which are primarily non-financial. The benefits include construction site signage, case studies of featured projects, newsletter features, educational presentation tours, news releases and social media posts, and award ceremonies.[7]

The program has had significant environmental and community impacts:

"Since its inception, AEGB has reduced energy consumption by 188,270 megawatt-hours and reduced demand on the utility's generation resources by 72 megawatts. These energy savings have resulted in the reduction of power plant CO2 emissions by 63,100 metric tons.

AEGB initiatives are also responsible for diverting 2 M tons of construction waste from the landfill and conserving 918 million gallons of irrigation and indoor potable water. The AEGB approach strives for win-win outcomes, demand savings for the electric utility, and cost savings for the customer. This approach has resulted in Austin residences using only 860 kWh per month on average compared to 1000 kWh per month throughout the rest of Texas while the bills are in the lower 50% of Texas overall."[8]

The program has tangible, financial benefits for developers as evidenced in a testimonial on Austin Energy's website:

"The Austin Energy program gave us useful, specific steps that helped guide the design and construction of our new facility. As a result, we're realizing a 29% savings of utility costs per square foot versus our old building." — *Derrick Chubbs, President & CEO, Central Texas Food Bank*[9]

Austin City Hall - LEED Certified Gold

Nature-based and green infrastructure in the City of Austin has proliferated because the city has integrated sustainability into municipal code and public policy. While rating criteria and city code have driven sustainable development, leadership and a strong desire for change are perhaps the most critical components for the City of Austin's success.

> "The factors working in Austin's favor are potentially useful for other cities. One asset is the municipally owned electric utility. A second asset is the highly motivated public, private, non-profit, and institutional entities within the local community to advance the building sector. More than 200 local participants came together to write the Austin Climate Equity Plan that was adopted by City Council in September 2021. The AEGB Rating system unites the local building community in approach and goals and tracks progress towards these goals. The foundational ability within the rating system to evolve-- conceive, pilot, and prototype ideas that can fail or scale quickly, has long been a key feature that enables Austin to develop the local green market. Finally, the human capacity and rugged resilience of the Austin, Texas community is not to be underestimated."[10]

Over the past 35 years, the City of Austin has proven that nature-based, sustainable development can succeed at scale when supported by strong institutional leadership, a community-owned utility, and a broad coalition of public, private, and nonprofit partners. Austin's experience offers several instructive lessons for the UD.

First, starting small is not a barrier to long-term impact — Austin's program began with a budget of just $50,000 and grew by demonstrating value over time. Second, non-financial incentives can be effective motivators, but only when embedded in a culture that values ecological design. Building that culture requires sustained, deliberate effort across government, business, and community organizations. Third, integrating sustainability into municipal code and public policy is ultimately what drives consistent adoption — marketing and education alone are not sufficient.

For the UD, Austin's trajectory suggests that investing in culture and relationships now, while pursuing policy change and financial incentives over time, is the most realistic path to achieving its ecological design objectives.

Austin Central Public Library - LEED Platinum Certified

GREEN BUILDING

2022 Commercial Rating Scorecard Planner

AUSTIN ENERGY

PROJECT NAME

AEGB COMMERCIAL RATING STAR LEVELS	
1 Star	Basic Requirements
2 Stars	35–44 points
3 Stars	45–54 points
4 Stars	55–74 points
5 Stars	75 points or more

MEASURE	POINTS AVAILABLE	YES	MAYBE	NO
BASIC REQUIREMENTS				
1. Goal Setting	Required			
2. Codes and Regulations	Required			
3. Bicycle Parking	Required			
4. Electric Vehicle Charging	Required			
5. Commissioning	Required			
6. Energy Performance	Required			
7. Potable Water Use Reduction	Required			
8. Interior Paints and Coatings	Required			
9. Material Quantities	Required			
10. Tenant and Residential Requirements	Required			
CORE MEASURES – SITE AND TRANSPORTATION				
1. Intentional Site Selection	1-2			
2. Multi-Modal Transportation	1-3			
3. Site Engagement	1			
4. Parking Management	1			
5. Additional Electric Vehicle Charging	1			
6. Landscapes for Resilience	2			
7. Light Pollution Reduction	1			
SITE AND TRANSPORTATION SUBTOTALS – 11 Points				
CORE MEASURES – ENERGY				
1. Energy Performance	1-10			
2. Renewables	1-5			
3. Additional Commissioning	1-2			
4. Refrigerants	1			
5. Grid Flexibility	1-2			
ENERGY SUBTOTALS – 20 Points				

Source: Austin Energy Green Building Commercial Rating Guidebook (2022)

Austin Energy Green Building Commercial Rating: Scorecard Planner

MEASURE	POINTS AVAILABLE	YES	MAYBE	NO
CORE MEASURES – WATER				
1. Rainwater and Condensate	1-4			
2. Water Metering	1			
3. Access to Quality Drinking Water	1			
4. Reclaimed Water	1			
5. Stormwater	1-3			
WATER SUBTOTALS – 10 Points				
CORE MEASURES – INDOOR ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY (IEQ)				
1. Active Occupants	1			
2. Daylight	1			
3. Operable Windows	1			
4. Indoor Air Quality	1-2			
5. Construction Indoor Air Quality	1			
6. Combustion Minimization	1			
7. Pollutant Source Control	1			
8. Material Ingredients	1			
9. Acoustic Quality	1			
10. Healthy Materials	2			
IEQ SUBTOTALS – 12 Points				
CORE MEASURES – MATERIALS AND RESOURCES				
1. Lifecycle Assessment	1-5			
2. Environmental Product Declarations	1-3			
3. Certified Wood	1			
4. Construction and Demolition Waste	1-3			
MATERIALS AND RESOURCES SUBTOTALS – 12 Points				
CORE MEASURES – EDUCATION AND EQUITY				
1. Educational Outreach	1			
2. Construction Worker Equity and Skills Training	2-3			
3. Inclusive Restrooms	1			
EDUCATION AND EQUITY SUBTOTALS – 5 Points				
PRIORITY				
1. Location Priority	5			
2. Typology Priority				
PRIORITY SUBTOTALS – 5 Points				
ELECTIVE AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES				
1. Elective Measures	25			
2. Exemplary Performance				
3. Equitable Performance				
4. Innovative Performance				
ELECTIVE AND PERFORMANCE SUBTOTALS – 25 Points				
GRAND TOTAL POINTS	**100**			

Source: Austin Energy Green Building Commercial Rating Guidebook (2022)

ENDNOTES

1 Fisk, Pliny. Talkington, Sarah. *Green Building in Austin, Texas*. Urban Climate Change Research Network. ARC 3.3 Climate Change and Cities. https://academiccommons.columbia.edu/doi/10.7916/2vkp-8g53/download.

2 Austin Energy Green Building Commercial Rating Guidebook (2022). Accessed on February 25, 2026. https://speakupaustin.org/Customer/File/Full/c52141f2-91ef-4e93-a9e9-4318fe15864f. Accessed on February 25, 2026.

3 Fisk, Pliny. Talkington, Sarah. Green Building in Austin, Texas. Urban Climate Change Research Network. ARC 3.3 Climate Change and Cities. https://academiccommons.columbia.edu/doi/10.7916/2vkp-8g53/download.

4 US Green Building Council. Nature as infrastructure in the city of Austin. https://www.usgbc.org/articles/nature-infrastructure-city-austin.

5 Ibid.

6 Fisk, Pliny. Talkington, Sarah. Green Building in Austin, Texas. Urban Climate Change Research Network. ARC 3.3 Climate Change and Cities. https://academiccommons.columbia.edu/doi/10.7916/2vkp-8g53/download.

7 Austin Energy website. Accessed on February 25, 2026. https://austinenergy.com/energy-efficiency/green-building/design-build/why-green.

8 Fisk, Pliny. Talkington, Sarah. Green Building in Austin, Texas. Urban Climate Change Research Network. ARC 3.3 Climate Change and Cities. https://academiccommons.columbia.edu/doi/10.7916/2vkp-8g53/download.

9 Austin Energy website. Accessed on February 25, 2026. https://austinenergy.com/energy-efficiency/green-building/design-build/why-green.

10 Fisk, Pliny. Talkington, Sarah. Green Building in Austin, Texas. Urban Climate Change Research Network. ARC 3.3 Climate Change and Cities. https://academiccommons.columbia.edu/doi/10.7916/2vkp-8g53/download.

APPENDIX C

CASE STUDY
HOBOKEN, NJ

HOBOKEN GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGIC PLAN

The City of Hoboken is a mile-square community situated along the Hudson River, due west of lower Manhattan. Hoboken is an urban village with approximately 55,000 residents, bounded to the east by water and to the west by the cliffs of the Palisades. Hoboken's population continues to grow, experiencing an estimated 40% population growth between 2000 and 2016.[1] Hoboken remains an attractive real estate location because of its proximity to New York City, waterfront location, thriving downtown, and access to several modes of mass transportation.

The City of Hoboken is a leader in implementing innovative, sustainable, and green urban design strategies within the built environment. Hoboken was the first LEED Gold certified city in New Jersey by the U.S. Green Building Council in 2019. The city has earned other sustainable awards and certifications, including an A from the CDP-ICLEI unified climate reporting system from 2021 - 2023, and is a Sustain Jersey Silver City.[2]

The development of Hoboken's Green Infrastructure Strategic Plan was a major step towards fostering climate resilience and green design within the city. The plan entails a comprehensive green infrastructure framework specifically developed to incorporate place-based green infrastructure best management practices, green space, and permeable surfaces throughout the city to better manage stormwater and mitigate the hazards of poorly managed stormwater and flooding.

BACKGROUND

In 2012, Hurricane Sandy inundated Hoboken with nearly 500 million gallons of storm surge. Throughout the following years, the City, along with state and federal partners, have made significant investments in resiliency to ensure future sustainability and environmental resiliency of Hoboken. In 2013, HUD launched the Rebuild by Design (RBD) grant to take a multi-faceted approach to improving physical, ecological, economic, and social resiliency of communities.[3] New Jersey developed a regional project proposal with the goal of reducing frequent flooding due to storm surge, high tide, and heavy rainfall. The proposed project was among the competition's six winning concepts, and HUD awarded $230 million to the State of New Jersey for the project, which spans the municipalities of Hoboken, Weehawken, and Jersey City.[4] Receiving RBD funds jump-started the integration of green infrastructure into Hoboken's urban form.

Flooded street in Hoboken following Hurricane Sandy (2012)

Green infrastructure and design can take many different forms and can be used to mitigate various climate hazards, such as urban heat, drought, erosion, air pollution, and flooding. The priority for implementing green infrastructure in Hoboken was to mitigate issues associated with poorly managed stormwater such as street flooding, structural damage to infrastructure, water pollution, and

potential impacts to human health due to stagnant and polluted water. To manage stormwater, increase climate resiliency, and improve quality of life for Hoboken residents, the city developed the Hoboken Green Infrastructure Strategic Plan in 2013 as part of the Together North Jersey Local Demonstration Project Program.[5]

HOBOKEN GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGIC PLAN

The plan established a citywide framework to reduce flooding, improve transit resilience, and protect vulnerable populations through targeted green infrastructure (GI) design. The plan also identified the most cost-effective place-based best management practices (BMP) the city could employ to address stormwater management and the anticipated increase in frequency of flooding events.[6]

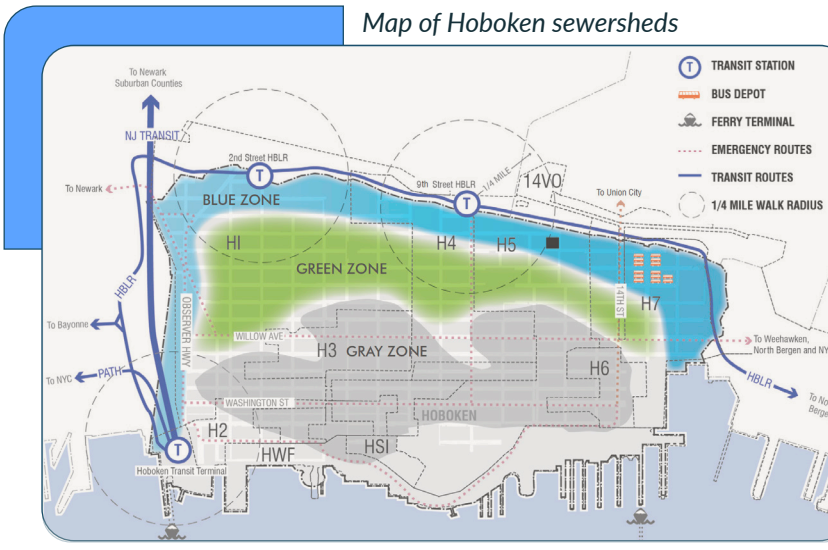
A three-zone conceptual framework based on an analysis of the carrying capacity of the underlying landforms, and water table data, was introduced and the framework organized the City into three zones:[7]

- ***The Gray Zone:*** which contains a shallow depth to-bedrock and therefore cannot infiltrate stormwater efficiently, is most appropriate for above-ground BMPs such as rainwater harvesting and green roofs. These strategies focus on detention, capture, and slowing of stormwater runoff above or underground, rather than infiltrating it.
- ***The Green Zone:*** which has a greater depth-to-bedrock and soil that can accept and infiltrate stormwater. This zone is most appropriate for vegetated BMPs like rain gardens, swales, and stormwater planters. These systems mimic natural hydrology by absorbing stormwater where it falls, reducing pressure on the combined sewer system, and providing the best opportunity for stormwater infiltration.
- ***The Blue Zone:*** which contains unique topography and the lowest elevations in the city, makes these geographic areas prime for detention of stormwater. Blue zones are designed to act as stormwater storage corridors, particularly near public lands and redevelopment areas.

The plan framework provides an overarching conceptual structure that can be used to educate residents, business owners, and developers to advance Hoboken's green infrastructure program. It can also be used to help guide strategies for the individual sewersheds and future redevelopment of the areas in the northwestern part of the city, where parks had been proposed.

Interconnection was a key theme of the plan. Although each zone is identified by its capacity to process stormwater, they are all interconnected. This strategic approach allows detention, infiltration, and retention to work together, increasing stormwater management benefits by employing specific green infrastructure BMPs in their most suitable locations. Gray infrastructure improvements are intended to work cooperatively with this green infrastructure strategy. Separate sewer lines could be constructed to convey stormwater from localized flooding problem areas to green infrastructure retention systems in the Blue Zone.

Map of Hoboken sewersheds

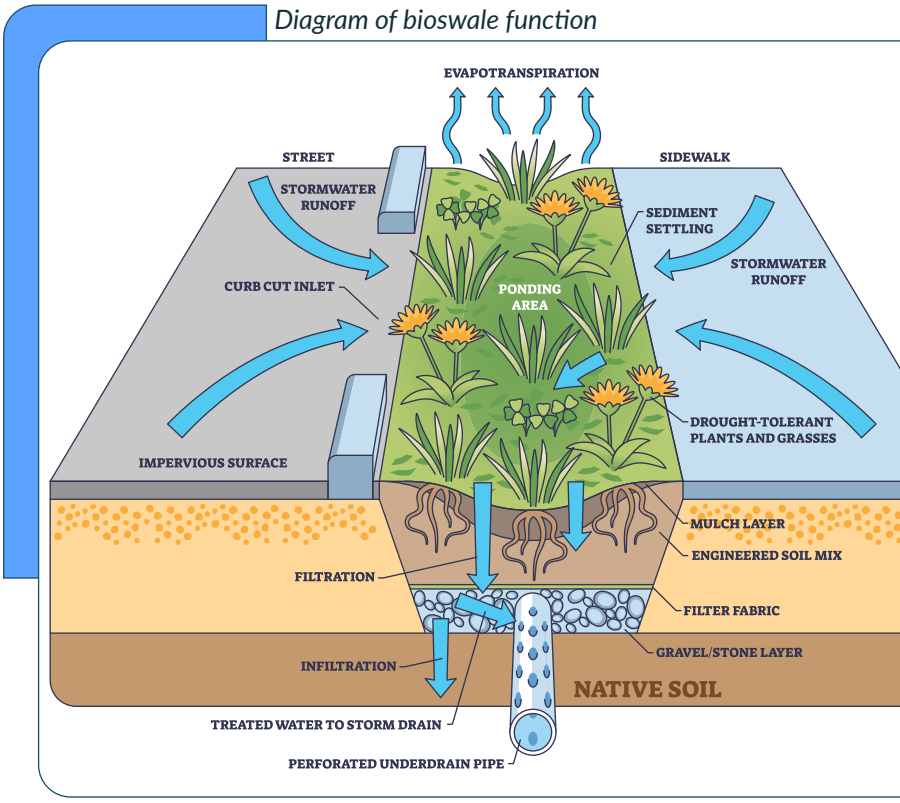


Sewersheds were recognized as the biggest potential opportunities to capture the largest quantity of stormwater using green infrastructure BMPs. The chart highlights the BMPs best suited for each sewershed. Identifying priority sewersheds instead of applying green infrastructure evenly across the city, ensured that the intervention would produce the most cost-effective results. To determine priority areas, the city analyzed Hoboken's combined sewer system and identified key interconnections between sewersheds that exacerbate localized flooding. The analysis revealed that stormwater captured in one area can intensify flooding in another, particularly in low-lying western neighborhoods. Four priority sewersheds were identified based on factors including flooding frequency, topography, soil and bedrock conditions, redevelopment opportunities, and the concentration of vulnerable populations.[8]

The plan recommended that the City of Hoboken implement performance- and incentive-based zoning as a mechanism to expand green infrastructure development. Under this approach, rather than prescribing exactly how a site must be designed, developers are held to an outcome-based standard. Performance-based standards require a site to function in a particular way, regardless of the design. This allows for greater function at lower costs than prescriptive standards because they accommodate more creative and integrated designs. For stormwater management, one example of a successful strategy is the adoption of a performance goal related to the amount of rainfall retained on site, which allows the developer to implement whichever BMP or BMPs are best suited to the site. The plan describes this type of zoning as "a flexible, site-specific regulating tool".[9] The plan also proposed that incentive zoning could complement performance standards by rewarding developers with bonuses in terms of increased density, floor area ratio, and/or height based on the amount of rainfall retention. It is not clear whether Hoboken formally adopted incentive zoning, but the concept offers a useful model for communities looking to encourage green infrastructure through development incentives.

The plan also recommended establishing a Stormwater Trust Fund as a valuable funding tool for sites where BMPs cannot be implemented based on specific site conditions or excessive costs. While it is unclear whether a dedicated Stormwater Trust Fund was formally implemented, Hoboken did establish an Open Space Trust Fund that has been used to finance resiliency park projects, demonstrating the viability of trust fund mechanisms for green infrastructure investment. This type of trust fund is described as a "mechanism that allows a developer to provide a contribution in lieu of meeting a required standard."[10] Rather than being exempt from stormwater management requirements entirely due to site constraints, developers would be

Diagram of bioswale function



required to provide an in-lieu contribution equal to a predetermined amount based upon the cost of an equivalent BMP mechanism. The municipality can then use these funds to implement BMPs in strategic locations that benefit an entire sewershed and/or community at large, such as developing a new park with parking and stormwater storage capacity.

Hoboken ultimately codified green infrastructure through mandatory performance standards within city ordinances pertaining to stormwater, utilizing and integrating BMPs from the Green Infrastructure Strategic Plan into Hoboken code, this is expanded on further in the *Enforcing Green Infrastructure* section.

The Hoboken Green Infrastructure Strategic Plan incorporated a cost-effectiveness analysis to guide which best management practices (BMPs) should be prioritized. Green infrastructure was not recommended solely on environmental performance, but each BMP was evaluated according to its capital cost per cubic foot of stormwater treated, annual operation and maintenance costs (expressed as a percentage of capital cost), and expected useful life.[11] Using a lifecycle approach allowed the City to understand the long-term financial value rather than focusing only on upfront costs. Pairing financial metrics with geological suitability and sewershed priorities, ensured that green infrastructure investments would deliver the greater stormwater reduction per dollar spent.

Below are some of the BMPs cost analysis from the plan:[12]

- ***Constructed wetlands:*** capital cost of $0.45 per cubic foot, annual operations and maintenance cost of 6% of capital, and a useful life of over 20 years. One of the most cost effective BMPs.
- ***Vegetated swales:*** capital cost of $5.98 per cubic foot, annual operations and maintenance cost of 6% of capital, and a useful life of 20 to 50 years.
- ***Basins or ponds:*** capital cost of $15.00 per cubic foot, annual operations and maintenance cost of 12% of capital, and a useful life of over 20 years. This BMP can treat drainage areas up

Green infrastructure best management practices (BMP) in Hoboken

Table 1
Green Infrastructure BMPs for Groundwater Recharge, Stormwater Runoff Quality, and/or Stormwater Runoff Quantity

Best Management Practice	Stormwater Runoff Quality TSS Removal Rate (percent)	Stormwater Runoff Quantity	Groundwater Recharge	Minimum Separation from Seasonal High Water Table (feet)
Cistern	0	Yes	No	—
Dry well[a]	0	No	Yes	2
Grass swale	50 or less	No	No	2[e] 1[f]
Green roof	0	Yes	No	—
Manufactured treatment device[a][g]	50 or 80	No	No	Dependent upon the device
Pervious paving system[a]	80	Yes	Yes[b] No[c]	2[b] 1[c]
Small-scale bioretention basin[a]	80 or 90	Yes	Yes[b] No[c]	2[b] 1[c]
Small-scale infiltration basin[a]	80	Yes	Yes	2
Small-scale sand filter	80	Yes	Yes	2
Vegetative filter strip	60-80	No	No	—

to 25 acres, but their high construction and maintenance costs make it one of the least cost-effective options.

- ***Stormwater Infiltration Planters:*** capital cost of $29.92 per cubic foot, annual operations and maintenance cost of 5% of capital, and a useful life of 20-50 years.

ENFORCING GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Ensuring that development adheres to green infrastructure design standards is a common challenge for cities. Within Hoboken's general legislation, the stormwater chapter includes specific rules for "major developments" that disturb one or more acres of land or create one-quarter or more of regulated impervious or motor-vehicle surfaces, within certain zoning districts.[13]

The policy statement for the scope and purpose of the Stormwater Management Measures and Controls chapter states:

> "Flood control, groundwater recharge, and pollutant reduction shall be achieved by stormwater management measures, including green infrastructure best management practices (GI BMPs) and nonstructural stormwater management strategies. GI BMPs and low impact development (LID) should be utilized to meet the goal of mitigating the City's highly urbanized hydrology to reduce stormwater runoff volume, reduce erosion, encourage infiltration and groundwater recharge, and reduce pollution. GI BMPs and LID should be developed based upon physical site conditions and the origin, nature and the anticipated quantity, or amount, of potential pollutants. Multiple stormwater management BMPs may be necessary to achieve the established performance standards for water quality, quantity, and groundwater recharge."[14]

Garden Street Lofts - LEED Green Certified

Green infrastructure is integrated into development code as management practices; therefore, developers are required to utilize green infrastructure standards. Incorporation of GI into development code makes the BMPs a fundamental element of development and urban design standards in Hoboken. The default rule in Hoboken's stormwater code is that GI BMPs from Table 1 must be used to satisfy recharge and water quality standards, other BMPs in Table 2 and 3 (not shown below) may only be used if a variance or waiver is granted.[15]

FUNDING

The Hoboken Green Infrastructure Strategic Plan was funded through a $5 million Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, awarded to the Together North Jersey consortium.[16] Securing political support from city government was an essential step to integrating GI BMPs into development code. Gaining political support can be aided by having a strategic plan that provides a clear articulation of green infrastructure's direct benefits, co-benefits, and cost-effectiveness. Larger capital projects, including the Resiliency Parks, were financed primarily through federal and state grants, supplemented by local grants and public-private partnerships.[17]

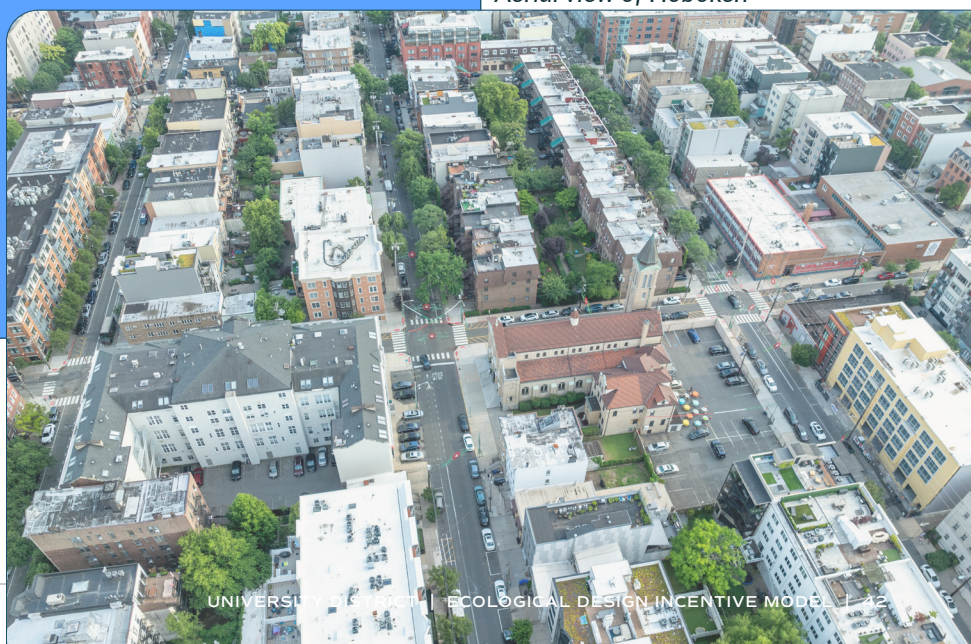
PROJECT OUTCOME

The Hoboken Green Infrastructure Strategic Plan produced a citywide framework to reduce flooding through targeted implementation of best management practices. The framework provides guidance for decision-making across the public realm, development community, and for City residents and business owners. To ensure success of the plan and to meet the issues and challenges raised by the residents of Hoboken during the engagement process, implementation priorities and next steps were established. These priorities centered on three areas: developing new regulatory mechanisms, implementing gray and green infrastructure solutions, and strengthening communication and local partnerships.

Hoboken's Green Infrastructure Strategic Plan stands out as a distinctive funding and design model. Rather than relying solely on municipal capital budgets, the City structured a system in which private development, zoning incentives, and trust fund contributions collectively finance long-term investments in flood mitigation and climate resiliency. The strategic plan has been successful in implementing green infrastructure throughout Hoboken's urban form, with some notable examples being the City's Resiliency Parks. These parks are designed to meet community needs, incorporating amenities such as dog parks and passive recreation spaces, while simultaneously functioning as green infrastructure built upon stormwater basins, with the newest park holding up to 2 million gallons.[18] Hoboken's plan is a key example for cities looking to integrate green infrastructure in a cost-effective, functional, and design-conscious manner.

Hoboken's experience offers several relevant lessons for the UD. First, a strategic plan with a clear framework and cost-effectiveness analysis is a powerful tool for securing political support and federal funding — both of which will be important for the UD's long-term success. Second, integrating green infrastructure into municipal code through mandatory performance standards is the most reliable way to ensure consistent adoption by developers, reinforcing the importance of the UD's engagement with the City of Spokane's Planning Department. Third, Hoboken's use of parks as dual-purpose infrastructure — serving both community recreation and stormwater management — offers a compelling model for the UD, where similar opportunities exist along the Spokane River corridor. Finally, Hoboken demonstrates that meaningful progress is possible even in a dense, constrained urban environment, when there is political will, a clear plan, and a diversified funding strategy.

Aerial view of Hoboken



ENDNOTES

1 G. Rutledge, “The History of Hoboken, How Has the Mile Square City Changed?,” The Digest, September 18, 2020, https://thedigestonline.com/new-jersey/history-of-hoboken/.

2 City of Hoboken, “Sustainability and Resiliency,” accessed March 2, 2026, https://www.hobokennj.gov/resources/sustainability.

3 New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, “Rebuild by Design – Hudson River,” accessed March 2, 2026, https://dep.nj.gov/floodresilience/rebuild-by-design-hudson-river/.

4 Ibid.

5 Perkins Eastman, “Hoboken Green Infrastructure Strategic Plan,” accessed March 2, 2026, https://www.perkinseastman.com/projects/hoboken-green-infrastructure-strategic-plan/.

6 Ibid., pages 1-2.

7 Ibid., pages 4, 16.

8 Ibid., pages 6, 24.

9 Ibid., page 4.

10 Ibid., page 45.

11 Ibid., pages 33-42.

12 Ibid.

13 City of Hoboken, NJ, “Chapter 166, Article II: Stormwater Management Measures and Controls,” Ordinance No. B-687, 2024, https://ecode360.com/print/HO0741?guid=34911491.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.

16 Perkins Eastman, “Hoboken Green Infrastructure Strategic Plan,” accessed March 2, 2026, https://www.perkinseastman.com/projects/hoboken-green-infrastructure-strategic-plan/

17 Ibid.

18 City of Hoboken, “Sustainability and Resiliency,” accessed March 2, 2026, https://www.hobokennj.gov/resources/sustainability.

APPENDIX D

CASE STUDY
PHILADELPHIA, PA

PHILADELPHIA - GREEN CITY, CLEAN WATERS

Philadelphia is the most populous city in the State of Pennsylvania, is rich in American history, and is home to 1.6 million people according to the 2020 U.S. Census. The Delaware River is located on the eastern edge of Philadelphia, forming the border between Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Philadelphia often sees the effects of flooding, extreme heat, hurricanes, as well as tropical and winter storms. Managing a large population and natural hazards led to the development of City plans to increase green design, green infrastructure, social equity, and climate resiliency throughout the city. Philadelphia earned a LEED Platinum Certification in 2024 and was on the CDP A-List in 2021 for "bold leadership" in climate action and transparency.[1] This case study analyzes two essential City-wide sustainability plans; *Greenworks Philadelphia* and *Green City, Clean Waters*.

GREENWORKS PHILADELPHIA

In 2009, the City's Office of Sustainability launched Greenworks Philadelphia, which serves as Philadelphia's first comprehensive sustainability plan. The plan addresses sustainability through five lenses: Energy, Environment, Equity, Economy and Engagement. Sustainability is considered through five overarching goals, 15 measurable targets, and more than 160 initiatives.[2] The plan's overarching goals include:[3]

- Philadelphia reduces its vulnerability to rising energy prices.
- Philadelphia reduces its environmental footprint.
- Philadelphia delivers more equitable access to healthy neighborhoods.
- Philadelphia creates a competitive advantage from sustainability.

View of Philadelphia City Hall

- Philadelphians unite to build a sustainable future.

Since the plan's release, sustainability principles have been woven into several related city plans, zoning code, and the 2035 Comprehensive Plan. Greenworks' goals and targets led to the creation of overlay zones and incentive programs that provide a strong framework for ensuring green design is integrated into the growth of Philadelphia's built environment.

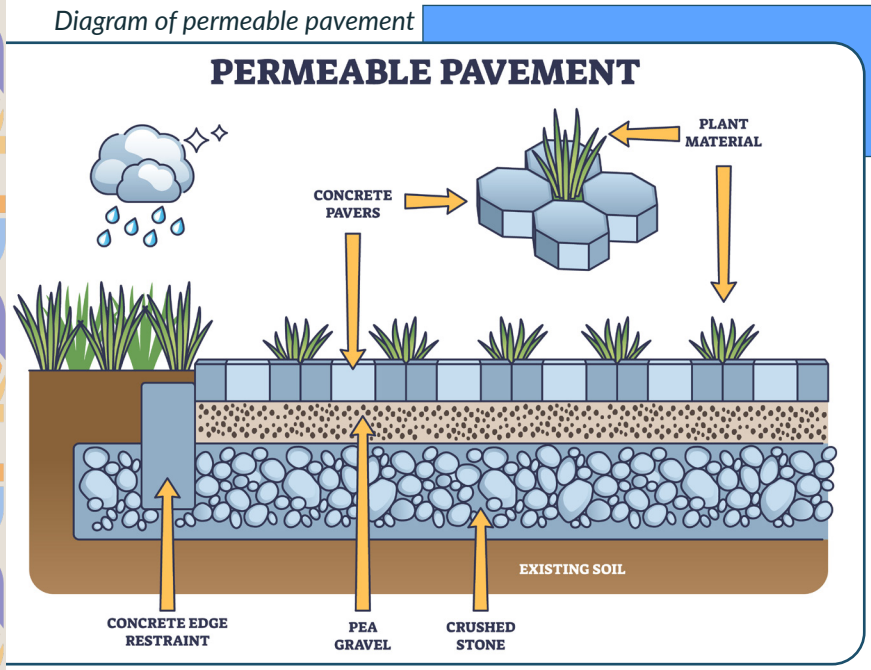
Greenworks set out three specific building and energy related targets:[4]

- Lower city government energy consumption by 30%.
- Retrofit 15% of Philadelphia's housing stock with insulation, air sealing, and cool roofs.
- Purchase and generate 20% of electricity used in Philadelphia.

To meet these goals, the City of Philadelphia established LEED Silver as the minimum standard for all new municipal building construction and major renovations, and this was codified into building code. The LEED requirement for municipal buildings was then strengthened in 2022 when the city council passed an update requiring LEED Gold for all new or substantially renovated city buildings. Furthermore, within the Central Delaware Overlay District, developers can earn an additional 24 feet of building height for achieving LEED Gold certification, and up to 36 additional feet for LEED Platinum.[5]

Greenworks includes a goal to manage stormwater to meet federal standards while utilizing green infrastructure strategies. Additional goals include providing park and recreation resources within 10 minutes of 75 percent of residents. Increasing tree coverage was also recognized as a goal in order to mitigate effects of urban heat and maintain natural environments in Philadelphia. To address these goals, the city employed an overlay district as a protective tool to preserve natural and scenic areas from development pressures. The Environmental Preservation Overlay District (/ENV) designates specific areas of the city where land use is restricted to natural resource preservation, parks and open space, educational facilities, and limited non-commercial urban agriculture. This overlay district does not offer any rewards for developers but was established to protect natural assets for the communal good. An example of the (/ENV) overlay zone is the Roxborough parcel pictured above, where an educational community garden is permitted to help increase urban residents' connection to the natural environment.

Diagram of permeable pavement



Greenworks Philadelphia established a foundational sustainability and green infrastructure framework for the City to reach their goals. The implementation of Greenworks showcases how jurisdictions can implement sustainability standards into various planning mechanisms, including building code, zoning overlays, and incentive programs.

GREEN CITY, CLEAN WATERS

Green City, Clean Waters (GCCW) was created in 2011 to further address green design, sustainability, and adaptation to changing climatic conditions, particularly in relation to stormwater management. GCCW broadens the City of Philadelphia's sustainability strategy and directly addresses the City's frequent combined sewer overflows that threaten public health and safety. Creation of the plan was motivated by the City's need to meet EPA requirements to reduce combined sewer overflows by 85% by 2035. CSO overflows are frequent public health and environmental issues because approximately 60% of Philadelphia is served by a combined sewer system.[6]

GCCW was developed under a Consent Order and Agreement (CO&A) between the Philadelphia Water Department (PWD) and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.[7] Since

the development of GCCW, Philadelphia has been recognized as the first city in the U.S. to meet both state and federal water quality mandates through green interventions. GCCW uses a green-first approach, complemented by gray infrastructure, to reduce combined sewer overflow volumes.[8]

Undertaking stormwater management is an expensive task, but green infrastructure can minimize those costs. The original budget was $2.4 billion, with roughly 70% of that budget designated for green infrastructure. The targeted goal was converting one-third of impervious surfaces in the combined sewer area into green stormwater infrastructure over 25 years, with a target of 9,564 acres managed by 2036.

Within the plan's framework, impervious surface types are grouped into three drainage area types: Right-of-Way, Ground Level, and Rooftops. PWD evaluates and categorizes land based on stormwater management capacity. This process supports the prioritization of green infrastructure design, project location, and retrofitting challenges based on land use type. PWD's plan uses eight different types of land use programming to categorize potential projects and impacts. Program types are shown on the right.

Land ownership influences how and if stormwater is managed, and GCCW considers that when evaluating retrofitting and green infrastructure. To overcome land ownership challenges, GCCW created a Green Strategic Infrastructure framework that categorizes land within Philadelphia as one of three owner categories to gauge implementation potential:

- **City-owned:** Any land owned by the City of Philadelphia or its agencies is classified as City-owned. City-owned lands would only be eligible for public retrofits.[9]
- **Public non-city:** Any land owned by public agencies or institutions, other than the City of Philadelphia, is classified as public. This may include land owned by state and federal agencies, public colleges and universities, transportation agencies, and port authorities. Land classified as Public non-city is typically eligible to participate in incentivized retrofits and public retrofits.[10] (See the next section for definitions of incentivized and public retrofits.)
- **Private:** Land that is not owned by the city or another public agency is classified as private. Under the Private classification, there are various stormwater billing classifications that determine whether a property is eligible for incentivized retrofits.[11]

The Green Strategic Infrastructure framework (GSI) utilizes ownership designation to determine the onsite and off-site implementation potential of parcels within Philadelphia across three pipelines:

- **Redevelopment:** The PWD Stormwater Regulations require post-construction stormwater management on development projects that disturb more than 15,000 square feet of the parcel (5,000 feet within watershed areas). Redevelopment rates are highly dependent on market demand, and PWD has limited ability to affect general redevelopment trends.[12]
- **Public Retrofits:** PWD's GSI Planning and Design teams identify, plan, and design public retrofit projects in the public-right-of-way, on

A bioswale in Washington, DC

City-owned land, and on land in which the PWD holds a property interest. Property interests stem from legal liens from unpaid stormwater bills or easements. Public retrofit projects are primarily implemented within the public right-of-way (known as green streets) and within City-owned parks.[13]

- **Incentivized Retrofits:** PWD incentivizes Public or Private landowners to manage stormwater runoff from impervious areas on their sites through a range of incentives, including the Stormwater Grants program and by offering a discount of up to 80% on the owners' stormwater bills for managed areas. The resulting GSI projects are owned and maintained by the property owner or their designee. Most incentivized retrofit projects occur on commercial property, although private facilities, schools, and campuses are also eligible.[14]

The GSI methodology has had success, with various projects completed within different programming and land ownership types. The framework has been integrated within municipal code, zoning ordinances, and incentive programs to work with each ownership designation.

Philadelphia Water Department offers two incentive programs. The Stormwater Grants Program is applicable to development projects that can manage additional on-site impervious area beyond the area required by the stormwater regulations. After a grant project is complete, the property owner qualifies for lower stormwater charges on their monthly bill through the Stormwater Credits Program. Second, the Purchase of Assets program offers a project developer the option to construct the GSI on behalf of PWD. At the close of construction, PWD will purchase the GSI asset from the developer and take on long-term ownership and maintenance.[15] This creates an arrangement where the developer is exempt from maintenance costs since PWD takes that responsibility back with the purchase of the GSI. It is a mutually beneficial service as both parties require the same street improvements, such as sidewalk repaving, accessibility ramps, and street trees. Coordinating construction under a single project reduces redundant work and can shorten the overall construction time.[16] Specific financial terms of PWD's asset purchase, including whether PWD's purchase price fully covers a developer's construction costs, are not publicly disclosed in any planning documents.

Five Crescent Drive, Philadelphia's first developer-owned LEED Platinum office building

Non-PWD funding includes the opportunity for zoning bonuses. The Green Roof Density program allows developers to exceed zoning code maximums for certain mixed use and multi-family projects that include a green roof. Additionally, certain mixed-use projects within an overlay zone can gain height bonuses by including stormwater management features such as managing street drainage, implementing additional on-site drainage, or using surface stormwater management practices like bio infiltration or bioretention.

GCCW OUTCOMES

PWD has been successful in implementing green infrastructure throughout Philadelphia's built environment. Success is measured by the number of greened acres (GAs) converted within

the city. PWD defines a greened acre as a unit of measurement that expresses the volume of stormwater managed by green stormwater infrastructure. For example, one greened acre is equal to managing one inch of runoff from one acre of drainage area. Table 2 shows cumulative greened acres between 2011-2025. A little over halfway into the project, PWD has implemented about one-third of the way to the 9,564-acre goal.[17]

CONCLUSION

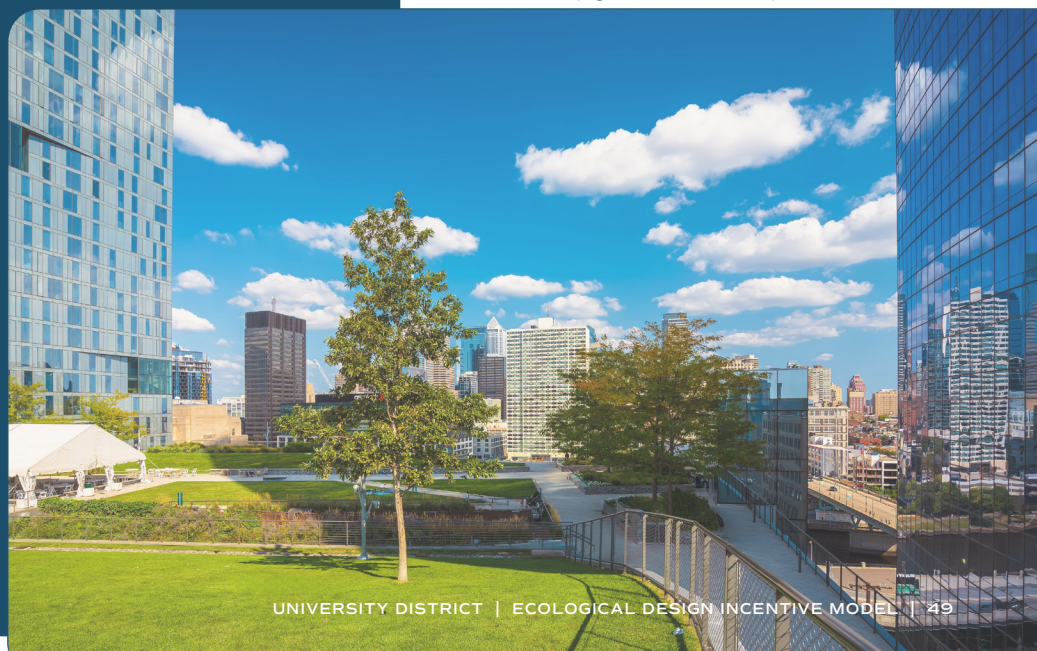
Incentives, programming, zoning overlays, and partnerships are key components in the City of Philadelphia achieving regulatory compliance goals and the city's vision. The Green City, Clean Waters and Greenworks programs have been successful because they outline clear strategies for implementing green design and infrastructure throughout the city.

Developers understand the requirements because the city has made them clear. And developers know they have support from the city via grants, incentive programs, and infrastructure development. Establishing this partnership helps motivate developers to build more sustainably because they see a clear path to profitability.

Taken together, GCCW and Greenworks reflect the benefits of development incentives. They also demonstrate that a programmatic approach has been essential to accomplishing the City of Philadelphia's green infrastructure ambitions.

Philadelphia's experience offers several instructive lessons for the UD. First, embedding sustainability standards directly into building code and zoning ordinances — rather than relying solely on voluntary adoption — is the most reliable way to ensure consistent green building practices across a city. This reinforces the UD's need to engage the City of Spokane's Planning Department on regulatory changes over time. Second, Philadelphia's tiered incentive structure, which combines grants, stormwater bill discounts, height bonuses, and the innovative Purchase of Assets program, demonstrates that financial incentives work best when they are diverse, well-publicized, and directly tied to developer costs and returns. Third, the success of both Greenworks and GCCW illustrates the value of having complementary plans that reinforce each other — one establishing a broad sustainability vision, the other providing a specific, measurable implementation framework. For the UD, this suggests that the Next Generation Conceptual Plan 2065 and any incentive program that follows should be developed as mutually reinforcing tools rather than standalone efforts.

CIRA Park rooftop garden in Philadelphia



ENDNOTES

1 City of Philadelphia, Office of Sustainability, "Philadelphia One of 95 Global Cities Named as New Generation of Climate Leaders," December 29, 2021, https://www.phila.gov/2021-12-29-philadelphia-one-of-ninetyfive-globalcities-named-as-new-generation-of-climate-leaders/.

2 City of Philadelphia, Office of the Mayor, Greenworks Philadelphia (Philadelphia: City of Philadelphia, 2009), https://www.phila.gov/media/20160419140515/2009-greenworks-vision.pdf.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid., 26.

5 City of Philadelphia, Philadelphia Code § 17-111: Energy Efficiency and Environmental Design in Construction of Buildings, American Legal Publishing, 2022, https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/philadelphia/latest/philadelphia_pa/0-0-0-295699#JD_17-111.

6 Philadelphia Water Department, Green Stormwater Infrastructure Strategic Framework (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Water Department, 2022), https://water.phila.gov/wp-content/uploads/files/gsi-strategic-framework.pdf.

7 PennFuture, About Philadelphia Water Department's Green City, Clean Waters. Accessed March 11, 2026. https://pennfuture.org/Keep-Philly-Green-Clean.

8 Philadelphia Water Department, Green Stormwater Infrastructure Strategic Framework. Accessed March 11, 2026. https://water.phila.gov/wp-content/uploads/files/gsi-strategic-framework.pdf.

9 Ibid., page 12.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid., page 13.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

15 Philadelphia Water Department, "Development Incentives". Accessed March 11, 2026, https://water.phila.gov/stormwater/incentives/development/.

16 Philadelphia Water Department, "Development Incentives"; Sustainable Business Network of Greater Philadelphia, Water Center at Penn, and The Nature Conservancy, "Improving GSI Outcomes from Redevelopment in Philadelphia," November 2023, https://www.sbnphiladelphia.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/SBN-GSI-Redevelopment-White-Paper_Nov2023.pdf.

17 Philadelphia Water Department, Green City, Clean Waters FY25 Annual Report, Appendix A in Philadelphia's Wet Weather Management Programs: FY25 NPDES Annual Report (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Water Department, September 2025). Accessed March 11, 2026. https://water.phila.gov/wp-content/uploads/files/fy25-npdes-annual-report.pdf.

APPENDIX E

WORK PLAN

FAST-TRACK WORK PLAN

Ecological Development Scorecard & Incentive Program

Pilot-First Approach — 9-Month Implementation

Prepared for:

University District Public Development Authority (UDPDA)

Date: 2026

Estimated Timeline: 9 Months

Companion Document: Ecological Development Scorecard & Incentive Program — Full Work Plan (18 Months)

Purpose & Intent

This Fast-Track Work Plan provides an accelerated pathway to launch a working scorecard and incentive program for ecological development in Spokane's University District. It is designed to get pilot projects underway as quickly as possible — within nine months — without waiting for the full stakeholder engagement, technical validation, and policy alignment process that a comprehensive program requires.

The approach is intentionally lean. The scorecard produced through this process will be functional and informed by targeted input from key stakeholders, but it will not be fully validated, exhaustively reviewed, or formally adopted through City processes. It is a working tool — good enough to guide pilot projects and generate real-world evidence — not a finished product.

How This Plan Relates to the Full Work Plan

This document is a companion to the Ecological Development Scorecard & Incentive Program — Full Work Plan (18 months). The two plans are designed to work in sequence:

- This Fast-Track Plan (9 months) produces a working scorecard and launches 1–3 pilot projects quickly, prioritizing speed and early learning over comprehensiveness.
- The Full Work Plan (18 months) then uses lessons from pilots — along with broader stakeholder engagement, technical validation, and optional City coordination — to produce a fully developed and refined scorecard and incentive framework.

Pilot projects completed under this fast-track process will provide concrete, Spokane-specific evidence to strengthen and validate the full scorecard. The fast-track scorecard should be understood as a starting point, not a final product.

This plan does not include formal City of Spokane engagement as a required element. A brief, optional check-in with City Planning staff is recommended to flag the initiative and identify any immediate policy considerations, but City coordination is not on the critical path. The full work plan addresses City engagement in depth and should be the vehicle for any formal policy or code work.

Timeline Summary

The following table summarizes the four phases of the fast-track plan. Each phase is described in detail in the sections below.

Phase	Duration	Key Steps	Key Outputs
Phase 1: Quick-Start Foundation	Months 1–2	Designate project lead and working group; review existing materials	Charter, working group roster, baseline summary
Phase 2: Focused Stakeholder Input	Months 2–4	Two developer input sessions; synthesize input; finalize scorecard scope	Input summaries, prioritized criteria, tier and incentive direction
Phase 3: Draft Scorecard & Incentives	Months 4–6	Draft working scorecard; define pilot incentive menu; produce developer tools	Working Scorecard v1.0, Pilot Incentive Menu, Developer Worksheet
Phase 4: Pilot Launch & Learning	Months 6–9	Recruit pilots; apply scorecard; document lessons; plan transition to full process	Pilot reports, Lessons Learned Summary, Transition Memo

Phase 1: Quick-Start Foundation

PHASE 1: QUICK-START FOUNDATION | Months 1–2
Goal: Stand up a lean project structure, identify the right people to involve, and gather the materials needed to build a working scorecard quickly.

Step 1.1: Designate a Project Lead & Define the Working Group

Tasks

- Designate a UD staff member as Project Lead with dedicated time to drive the fast-track process.
- Identify a small Working Group of 4–6 people who can move quickly: at minimum, 1–2 developers or builders with local experience, one additional UD staff member, and one person with technical knowledge of green building or stormwater (consultant, university contact, or City staff if available and willing).
- Confirm participation and availability. This process requires people who can turn around feedback within days, not weeks.
- Set a standing biweekly meeting cadence for the duration of the fast-track process.

Deliverables

- Project Lead designated with defined time commitment
- Working Group roster with confirmed participation
- Biweekly meeting schedule through Month 9

Estimated Timeline: *Weeks 1–2*

Step 1.2: Review Existing Materials & Establish a Baseline

Tasks

- Distribute the Measure Meant draft scorecard to all Working Group members as the primary starting reference.
- Compile a short benchmarking summary drawing on comparable scorecard programs (Austin, Kirkland, Portland, Philadelphia) identified in the full work plan research.
- Review the UD Next Generation Conceptual Plan 2065 to confirm which ecological design priorities should be reflected in the scorecard.
- Identify any existing City of Spokane stormwater or landscaping standards that scorecard criteria should reference, without requiring City involvement to proceed.
- Document known data gaps or technical questions to be resolved during scorecard drafting.

Deliverables

- Baseline Summary: draft scorecard, benchmarking highlights, and UD design priorities (5–10 pages)
- Working Group briefing materials distributed ahead of first session

Estimated Timeline: *Weeks 2–4*

Step 1.3: Optional: Notify City of Spokane Planning Department

Tasks

- Send a brief informational note to City of Spokane Planning Department staff flagging the UD's intent to develop and pilot a voluntary ecological development scorecard.
- Request a single informal meeting to inform City staff of the effort, ask whether there are near-term code or policy processes the UD should be aware of, and gauge openness to future coordination.
- Do not structure this as a formal partnership request. The goal is awareness and relationship maintenance, not co-development.
- Document any useful information gathered and flag items relevant to the full work plan process.

Deliverables

- Brief memo or email to City Planning staff
- Notes from optional meeting (if held)

Estimated Timeline: *Weeks 3–4 (optional — proceed regardless of City response)*

Phase 2: Focused Stakeholder Input

PHASE 2: FOCUSED STAKEHOLDER INPUT | Months 2–4

Goal: Gather targeted, practical input from developers and builders to ground the scorecard in local conditions. Keep sessions focused and efficient.

Step 2.1: Conduct Two Developer Input Sessions

Tasks

- Organize two focused input sessions with local developers, builders, and architects. Keep groups small (5–8 people per session) to allow for substantive discussion.
- Session 1 — Criteria Feasibility: walk participants through the draft scorecard categories and criteria. For each, ask: Is this achievable in the UD context? What does it cost? What are the barriers? Collect candid reactions, not polished feedback.
- Session 2 — Incentives & Motivation: present a preliminary list of potential incentives drawn from the Measure Meant report and comparable programs. Ask: Which incentives would actually change your decision-making? What would make you more likely to pursue a higher scorecard tier?
- Use a structured but informal facilitation style. The goal is fast, honest input — not consensus or sign-off.
- Prepare a one-page summary of findings after each session and share with the Working Group within one week.

Deliverables

- Session 1 Summary: feasibility ratings and barriers for draft scorecard criteria
- Session 2 Summary: prioritized incentive types and developer motivation factors
- Working Group briefing on key takeaways

Estimated Timeline: *Months 2–3*

Step 2.2: Synthesize Input & Finalize Scorecard Scope

Tasks

- Review all Working Group and developer input to identify which criteria have strong feasibility support, which need modification, and which should be deferred to the full process.
- Narrow the scorecard to a manageable set of criteria — aim for clarity and usability over comprehensiveness. A working scorecard with 10–15 well-defined criteria is more useful at this stage than an exhaustive but unwieldy one.
- Confirm the tier structure (number of tiers and general point thresholds) with the Working Group.
- Confirm the short list of incentives to include in the pilot program, prioritizing those the UD can deliver independently without requiring City action.
- Present the proposed scorecard scope to the Working Group for a go/no-go decision before drafting begins.

Deliverables

- Input Synthesis Memo: recommended criteria, tiers, and incentives with rationale
- Working Group go/no-go decision documented

Estimated Timeline: *Month 4*

Phase 3: Draft Scorecard & Incentive Framework

PHASE 3: DRAFT SCORECARD & INCENTIVE FRAMEWORK | Months 4–6
Goal: Produce a working scorecard and incentive menu that is clear, usable, and ready for pilot application. Perfect is the enemy of good here.

Step 3.1: Draft the Working Scorecard

Tasks

- Build out the full draft scorecard based on the finalized scope from Phase 2. For each criterion, define: the performance description, how it is measured or documented, point value, and any minimum requirements.
- Keep language plain and practical — the scorecard should be usable by a developer or project architect without requiring a sustainability consultant to interpret it.
- Establish tier thresholds that reflect a reasonable distribution: Tier 1 should be achievable with modest effort; higher tiers should require meaningful investment in ecological performance.
- Include a brief notes field for each criterion flagging technical questions or areas that will need further refinement in the full process.
- Circulate the draft to Working Group members for a focused, time-boxed review (one week turnaround requested).

Deliverables

- Working Scorecard v1.0: criteria, point values, tier thresholds, and documentation requirements
- Working Group review comments and incorporated revisions

Estimated Timeline: *Months 4–5*

Step 3.2: Define the Pilot Incentive Menu

Tasks

- Finalize the set of incentives available to pilot projects, focusing on those the UD can offer and administer directly.
- Include: marketing and recognition support (UD branding, case study features, public announcements); technical assistance (help navigating pre-application processes, connecting developers with resources); and administrative support (UD staff time to assist with scorecard documentation and grant identification).
- Clearly document what each incentive includes, how it is delivered, and what scorecard tier is required to qualify.
- Note any financial or City-dependent incentives that are not available in the pilot phase but are targeted for inclusion in the full program.

Deliverables

- Pilot Incentive Menu: available incentives by tier, delivery method, and eligibility
- Incentive description sheet for developer-facing use

Estimated Timeline: *Month 5*

Step 3.3: Produce Developer-Facing Application Materials

Tasks

- Produce a concise program overview document (2–3 pages) explaining the scorecard purpose, how it works, what incentives are available, and how to apply.
- Develop a simple scorecard self-assessment worksheet developers can use during early design to estimate their likely scorecard score.
- Create a brief application form for pilot projects to formally enter the program and document their scorecard submission.
- Keep materials clear and low-barrier — avoid technical jargon and keep required documentation to a practical minimum for the pilot phase.

Deliverables

- Program Overview Document (2–3 pages)
- Scorecard Self-Assessment Worksheet
- Pilot Application Form

Estimated Timeline: *Months 5–6*

Phase 4: Pilot Launch & Learning

PHASE 4: PILOT LAUNCH & LEARNING | Months 6–9

Goal: Recruit pilot projects, apply the working scorecard, document what works and what doesn't, and plan the transition to the full program.

Step 4.1: Recruit Pilot Projects

Tasks

- Identify 1–3 development projects in the University District that are in pre-application or early design phase and are good candidates for the pilot program.
- Prioritize projects with developers already engaged with the UD, who have expressed interest in green building, or who are working with architects familiar with ecological design principles.
- Meet individually with each candidate to walk through the scorecard, explain the incentive menu, and assess fit. Be transparent that this is a pilot — the scorecard is a working document and their participation helps improve it.
- Confirm participation in writing (a simple letter of intent or email confirmation is sufficient).

Deliverables

- Pilot project roster (1–3 confirmed projects)
- Confirmed letters of intent or participation agreements

Estimated Timeline: *Months 6–7*

Step 4.2: Apply the Scorecard to Pilot Projects

Tasks

- Work directly with each pilot project team to complete a scorecard assessment during the design phase.
- Assist project teams in gathering required documentation and calculating their scorecard score.
- Track time required for scorecard completion and identify any criteria that are confusing, difficult to document, or impractical to implement.
- Formally assign each project a scorecard tier and confirm applicable incentives.
- Deliver committed incentives (marketing support, technical assistance, recognition) to qualifying projects.

Deliverables

- Completed scorecard assessments for each pilot project
- Tier assignments and incentive delivery documentation

Estimated Timeline: *Months 7–8*

Step 4.3: Document Lessons Learned

Tasks

- After completing scorecard assessments, conduct a structured debrief with each pilot project team. Ask: What worked well? What was confusing or burdensome? Which criteria were most and least relevant? Were the incentives meaningful?
- Compile a Lessons Learned Summary documenting key findings across all pilot projects, organized by scorecard section.
- Identify which scorecard criteria performed well and should carry forward, which need revision, and which should be reconsidered entirely.
- Document observations about the incentive menu — which incentives resonated, which did not, and what developers identified as most valuable.
- Share the summary with the Working Group for a final brief round of feedback.

Deliverables

- Pilot Project Summary Reports (one per pilot project)
- Lessons Learned Summary across all pilots
- Annotated scorecard flagging recommended changes for the full process

Estimated Timeline: *Months 8–9*

Step 4.4: Plan Transition to the Full Work Plan

Tasks

- Using the Lessons Learned Summary, prepare a Transition Memo outlining: what the fast-track process produced, what it did not address, and what the full work plan process should prioritize based on pilot experience.
- Identify which steps of the Full Work Plan are now better informed by pilot data and which may be streamlined as a result.
- Recommend whether to continue accepting applications under the working scorecard while the full process is underway, or to pause until the full scorecard is adopted.
- Present the transition plan to UD leadership and the Board for direction on initiating the full work plan process.
- Publicly recognize pilot participants and communicate fast-track outcomes to the broader stakeholder community.

Deliverables

- Transition Memo: fast-track outcomes, gaps, and recommendations for the full process
- Full Work Plan initiation recommendation for UD Board
- Pilot participant recognition materials (press release, case study content)

Estimated Timeline: *Month 9*

Immediate Next Steps (First 30 Days)

To initiate this Fast-Track Work Plan, the following actions should be taken within the first 30 days:

- Secure UD leadership approval to proceed with the fast-track approach.
- Designate a Project Lead with a defined time commitment.
- Identify and invite 4–6 Working Group members, prioritizing developers and builders who can engage quickly.
- Distribute the Measure Meant draft scorecard and benchmarking materials to Working Group members.
- Schedule the two developer input sessions for Months 2–3.
- Identify 2–3 potential pilot project candidates for early outreach.
- Optionally, send a brief awareness note to City of Spokane Planning Department.

What This Plan Does Not Include

This fast-track process is intentionally limited in scope. The following elements are not included here and are addressed in the Full Work Plan:

- Broad public input or community comment periods
- Formal City of Spokane policy or code engagement
- Technical validation of scorecard metrics by an independent expert panel
- Environmental or SEPA documentation
- Financial incentives requiring City coordination (fee reductions, FAR bonuses, etc.)
- Formal adoption by resolution of the UD Board or City Council
- Staff training curriculum for City reviewers
- Long-term monitoring and reporting framework

These elements are important to a fully realized program and should be addressed through the Full Work Plan following pilot completion. The fast-track scorecard should be clearly communicated to all participants as a working pilot tool — not a final, formally adopted program.

WORK PLAN

Ecological Development Scorecard & Incentive Program

Prepared for:
University District Public Development Authority (UDPDA)

In Collaboration With:
City of Spokane Planning Department
Local Developers & Construction Firms
Community Partners & Subject Matter Experts

Date: 2026
Estimated Timeline: 18 Months

Introduction

This Work Plan outlines a structured, collaborative process to develop and adopt a scorecard that evaluates development projects on ecological performance criteria and determines available incentives for developers who meet or exceed defined thresholds.

The scorecard and incentive program will be developed collaboratively with key stakeholders, including the City of Spokane Planning Department, local developers and construction firms, community organizations, and subject matter experts. A participatory process is critical to ensuring the scorecard is practical, locally relevant, and supported by those who will use and administer it.

This Work Plan is organized into five phases spanning approximately 18 months. Each phase includes specific steps, tasks, deliverables, responsible parties, and estimated timelines.

> **A Note on City of Spokane Engagement:** This Work Plan is designed as a fully developed program and includes steps that involve engagement with the City of Spokane — including coordination with the Planning Department, alignment with City codes and policies, and in some cases, formal policy or code amendments. However, *City engagement is optional and not required to implement the core scorecard and incentive program*. The UD can develop, adopt, and administer the scorecard independently. Steps involving the City should be pursued where there is genuine interest and capacity on the City's part to collaborate.

Purpose & Objectives

This Work Plan is designed to accomplish the following objectives:

- Develop a locally informed scorecard that evaluates development projects based on ecological design criteria relevant to the University District.
- Define a tiered incentive program that rewards developers for achieving progressively higher levels of ecological performance.
- Engage key stakeholders — including the City of Spokane Planning Department, local developers, construction firms, utility providers, and community organizations — in co-creating the scorecard and incentive framework.
- Produce implementation tools that allow the scorecard and incentive program to be administered effectively by the UD and the City.
- Establish a monitoring and reporting framework to track outcomes and continuously improve the program over time.

Stakeholders & Roles

A collaborative process requires clearly defined roles. The following stakeholders are expected to contribute to scorecard and incentive program development:

Stakeholder	Role in Process	Type of Engagement
University District Public Development Authority (UDPDA)	Project lead; manages process, coordinates stakeholders, administers program	Lead / Convener
City of Spokane — Planning Department	Policy alignment, zoning and code input, permitting integration, formal adoption	Formal Partner
City of Spokane — Public Works	Stormwater standards, infrastructure requirements, green infrastructure integration	Technical Advisor
Local Developers & Builders (e.g., Bouten Construction, Greenstone)	Feasibility input, cost analysis, field testing of scorecard criteria	Subject Matter Expert
Architects & Engineers	Technical design input; review scorecard metrics for buildability	Subject Matter Expert
Avista Corporation	Utility incentive alignment, energy efficiency guidance	Technical Advisor
Spokane Homebuilders Association / BOMA	Broader developer community voice, advocacy and outreach conduit	Stakeholder Representative
Environmental & Community Organizations	Ecological priorities, equity considerations, community interest	Community Input
University Partners (WSU, EWU, Gonzaga)	Research support, data analysis, pilot project partnerships	Technical & Research Support

Timeline Summary

The following table provides a high-level overview of all phases, estimated durations, and key outputs. Detailed steps are described in the sections that follow.

Phase	Duration	Key Steps	Key Outputs
Phase 1: Foundation	Months 1–3	Governance structure, stakeholder mapping, project charter	Steering committee, project charter, outreach plan
Phase 2: Stakeholder Engagement	Months 3–6	Stakeholder roundtables, interviews, public input sessions	Engagement summary, prioritized criteria, incentive inventory
Phase 3: Scorecard Development	Months 6–9	Draft scorecard, metrics definition, incentive framework	Draft scorecard v1.0, incentive menu, technical guidance
Phase 4: Review & Refinement	Months 9–12	Stakeholder review, public comment, pilot testing	Revised scorecard v2.0, pilot test results, adoption package
Phase 5: Adoption & Launch	Months 12–18	Formal adoption, training, public launch, monitoring setup	Final scorecard, policy resolution, developer handbook, launch

Phase 1: Foundation & Governance

PHASE 1: FOUNDATION & GOVERNANCE | Months 1–3

Goal: Establish project structure, define roles, and build the collaborative foundation for scorecard development.

Step 1.1: Establish the Scorecard Steering Committee

Tasks

- Identify and formally invite key participants: City of Spokane Planning staff, 2–3 local developers, a representative from a local construction firm, a utility provider (Avista), a community organization, and a subject matter expert in ecological design or stormwater management.
- Define committee roles, decision-making authority, and meeting expectations.
- Establish meeting cadence (monthly or biweekly during active development phases).
- Assign a project lead from the UD to manage logistics, communications, and documentation.

Deliverables

- Steering Committee Charter (roles, membership, decision protocols)
- Responsibility Matrix (RACI) identifying who is Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, and Informed for each task
- Meeting schedule for Phases 1–3

Estimated Timeline: *Weeks 1–3*

Step 1.2: Develop Project Charter & Work Plan

Tasks

- Draft a project charter summarizing the program purpose, goals, scope, and success criteria.
- Confirm the phased Work Plan with the Steering Committee and establish shared expectations.
- Identify any parallel policy processes at the City of Spokane that should be coordinated with (e.g., Comprehensive Plan updates, stormwater code revisions).
- Prepare and distribute a project overview document for broader stakeholder communication.

Deliverables

- Approved Project Charter
- Finalized Work Plan with milestone schedule
- Stakeholder communication brief

Estimated Timeline: *Weeks 2–4*

Step 1.3: Conduct Stakeholder Mapping & Outreach Planning

Tasks

- Develop a comprehensive stakeholder map identifying all individuals and organizations that should be engaged throughout the process.
- Categorize stakeholders by role (developer, city agency, community group, technical expert, etc.) and level of engagement (lead, advisor, reviewer, general input).
- Design an engagement strategy that includes roundtables, one-on-one interviews, and public comment opportunities.
- Identify any underrepresented voices (e.g., small developers, affordable housing organizations, diverse community members) and develop targeted outreach approaches.

Deliverables

- Stakeholder Map & Engagement Matrix
- Outreach & Engagement Plan
- Introductory outreach materials (project summary, FAQ)

Estimated Timeline: *Weeks 3–6*

Step 1.4: Establish Data & Research Baseline

Tasks

- Compile existing ecological design benchmarks, green building scorecards, and incentive frameworks used in comparable districts and cities (e.g., Austin, Portland, Kirkland, Philadelphia).
- Review the draft scorecard developed by Measure Meant as the primary starting reference.
- Gather existing City of Spokane code provisions relevant to scorecard criteria (stormwater, landscaping, design review).
- Identify available data sources for ecological baseline mapping (urban tree canopy, impervious surface, heat island data, stormwater infrastructure).

Deliverables

- Benchmarking Report: comparative review of scorecard and incentive models
- Policy & Code Inventory: relevant City of Spokane provisions
- Ecological Baseline Summary: existing data and data gaps

Estimated Timeline: *Weeks 4–8*

Phase 2: Engagement with Interested Parties

PHASE 2: ENGAGEMENT | Months 3–6

Goal: Gather structured input from developers, city staff, and community partners to ground the scorecard in local conditions and priorities.

Step 2.1: Conduct Developer & Builder Roundtables

Tasks

- Organize 2–3 structured roundtable sessions with local developers, construction firms (including Bouten Construction, Greenstone, and others identified in Phase 1), architects, and engineers.
- Present the draft scorecard framework and preliminary incentive concepts for review and discussion.
- Gather input on: feasibility and cost of scorecard criteria; barriers to green building adoption; which incentives are most valuable; local conditions that affect implementation (e.g., basalt geology, stormwater challenges).
- Use a structured facilitation approach to ensure all voices are heard and input is documented systematically.
- Hold at least one session specifically focused on smaller and emerging developers to capture a diversity of perspectives.

Deliverables

- Developer Roundtable Notes & Summary Report
- Priority matrix: which scorecard criteria are most/least feasible
- List of identified barriers and recommended accommodations

Estimated Timeline: *Months 3–4*

Step 2.2: Conduct City of Spokane Staff Interviews & Working Sessions

Tasks

- Schedule structured interviews or working sessions with relevant City of Spokane staff, including Planning, Public Works (stormwater), Legal, and Design Review.
- Review scorecard criteria for alignment with existing codes, policies, and administrative capacity.
- Identify any incentives that would require code amendments, interagency coordination, or formal City Council approval.
- Explore opportunities to align the scorecard with the City's Sustainability Action Plan, Comprehensive Plan updates, and any climate-related policy initiatives.
- Document City staff concerns, constraints, and areas of support.

Deliverables

- City Staff Interview Summary
- Policy alignment matrix: scorecard criteria vs. existing City codes/policies
- List of items requiring formal City action or additional coordination

Estimated Timeline: *Months 3–4*

Step 2.3: Engage Utilities, University Partners & Technical Experts

Tasks

- Meet with Avista Corporation to explore energy efficiency incentives, utility rebate alignment, and technical support for developers.
- Engage university partners (WSU, EWU, Gonzaga, Whitworth, Spokane Colleges, and the University of Washington) regarding research collaboration, data resources, and potential pilot project participation.
- Convene a technical advisory session with ecological design professionals, stormwater engineers, and urban forestry or landscape architects to validate scorecard metrics.
- Identify subject matter experts who can provide ongoing technical review throughout scorecard development.

Deliverables

- Utility & University Partner Engagement Summary
- Technical Expert Panel roster and participation agreement
- Summary of potential utility or research-based incentives and partnerships

Estimated Timeline: *Months 4–5*

Step 2.4: Host Community & Public Input Session

Tasks

- Host at least one public input session open to UD tenants, residents, community organizations, and interested members of the public.
- Present the program goals, draft scorecard framework, and proposed incentive concepts in accessible, non-technical language.
- Collect structured written feedback using surveys or comment forms in addition to verbal input.
- Actively solicit input from equity-focused organizations to ensure the scorecard and incentive program does not inadvertently disadvantage small developers or affordable housing projects.
- Document and summarize all public input for Steering Committee review.

Deliverables

- Public Input Session Summary
- Survey or feedback form results
- Equity considerations memo for Steering Committee

Estimated Timeline: *Month 5*

Step 2.5: Synthesize Engagement Input & Prioritize Criteria

Tasks

- Compile and analyze all input gathered during Phase 2 roundtables, interviews, and public sessions.
- Identify areas of consensus and significant disagreement across stakeholder groups.
- Present synthesis findings to the Steering Committee for discussion and prioritization decisions.
- Produce a revised and prioritized list of scorecard criteria and incentive types based on stakeholder input.
- Document rationale for all decisions to maintain transparency and support future review.

Deliverables

- Stakeholder Engagement Synthesis Report
- Prioritized scorecard criteria list with stakeholder rationale
- Steering Committee decision log

Estimated Timeline: *Month 6*

Phase 3: Scorecard & Incentive Development

PHASE 3: SCORECARD & INCENTIVE DEVELOPMENT | Months 6–9

Goal: Develop the draft scorecard, define scoring methodology, and build a corresponding tiered incentive framework.

Step 3.1: Develop Scorecard Criteria & Metrics

Tasks

- Using the synthesis from Phase 2 and the Measure Meant draft scorecard as a foundation, finalize the scorecard categories and specific performance criteria.
- Define measurable metrics and documentation requirements for each criterion (e.g., stormwater retention volumes, green roof area, native plant percentages, energy use intensity).
- Ensure criteria are objective, verifiable, and appropriate for the range of project types expected in the UD (new construction, major renovation, infill, mixed-use).
- Align criteria with any applicable City of Spokane codes, green building standards (e.g., LEED, Living Building Challenge), and the UD's Next Generation Conceptual Plan 2065.
- Confirm criteria with the Technical Expert Panel for accuracy and feasibility.

Deliverables

- Draft Scorecard v1.0: complete criteria, definitions, metrics, and documentation requirements
- Technical Guidance Document: calculation methods, measurement protocols, examples
- Alignment memo: scorecard vs. City code and UD Conceptual Plan

Estimated Timeline: *Months 6–8*

Step 3.2: Define Scoring Methodology & Tier Thresholds

Tasks

- Determine the point structure: how points are assigned to each criterion, whether any criteria are mandatory vs. optional, and how to handle partial credit.
- Establish tier thresholds (e.g., Tier 1 through Tier 4 or Bronze/Silver/Gold/Platinum) that define levels of achievement and corresponding incentive eligibility.
- Test tier thresholds against hypothetical development scenarios to ensure thresholds are achievable, meaningful, and appropriately differentiated.
- Present scoring methodology and tiers to the Steering Committee and developer representatives for validation.

Deliverables

- Scoring Methodology Document: point structure, mandatory minimums, tier thresholds
- Scenario testing results: draft scorecard applied to 3–5 hypothetical project types
- Steering Committee validation summary

Estimated Timeline: *Month 8*

Step 3.3: Develop Incentive Framework

Tasks

- Based on stakeholder input and policy analysis from Phase 2, develop a tiered incentive menu corresponding to each scorecard tier.
- Categorize incentives by type: non-financial incentives (marketing support, recognition, branding, expedited pre-application meetings), administrative incentives (expedited permitting, design review prioritization), and financial incentives (fee reductions, stormwater credits, FAR bonuses, height bonuses) where feasible.
- For each incentive, document: eligibility criteria, administering agency, required approvals, estimated value to developer, and implementation timeline.
- Identify which incentives can be implemented immediately by the UD, which require City coordination, and which require formal code amendments or policy changes.
- Develop a phased incentive launch strategy that prioritizes near-term, lower-barrier incentives while building toward larger financial incentives over time.

Deliverables

- Incentive Menu: tiered incentives by category with administration and eligibility details
- Implementation feasibility assessment: near-term vs. longer-term incentives
- Phased incentive launch strategy

Estimated Timeline: *Months 7–9*

Step 3.4: Develop Developer-Facing Tools & Application Materials

Tasks

- Design a user-friendly scorecard application process that minimizes administrative burden for developers.
- Produce a one-page program overview and developer FAQ.
- Develop a scorecard worksheet or calculator that allows developers to self-assess their projects during the design phase.
- Create a pre-application review template to guide early conversations between developers and UD/City staff.
- Draft an application form for formal scorecard certification and incentive eligibility.

Deliverables

- Program Overview & FAQ (one-page developer summary)
- Scorecard Self-Assessment Worksheet
- Pre-application Review Template
- Draft Certification Application Form

Estimated Timeline: *Months 8–9*

Phase 4: Review, Refinement & Pilot Testing

PHASE 4: REVIEW, REFINEMENT & PILOT TESTING | Months 9–12

Goal: Validate the draft scorecard and incentive framework through stakeholder review, public comment, and real-world pilot testing.

Step 4.1: Stakeholder Review of Draft Scorecard & Incentive Framework

Tasks

- Distribute Draft Scorecard v1.0 and the incentive framework to all Steering Committee members, developer roundtable participants, City staff, and public input session participants for formal review.
- Provide a structured feedback template to ensure comments are organized and actionable.
- Host a dedicated review session with the Steering Committee and a separate session with City of Spokane staff to walk through the draft and gather detailed feedback.
- Compile and categorize all comments; present a summary and recommended revisions to the Steering Committee for decisions.

Deliverables

- Stakeholder Review Summary: compiled feedback by section
- Proposed revision log with Steering Committee decisions
- Revised Draft Scorecard v1.1

Estimated Timeline: *Months 9–10*

Step 4.2: Public Comment Period

Tasks

- Publish Draft Scorecard v1.1 and the incentive framework for a 30-day public comment period.
- Post materials on the UD website and distribute via email to all stakeholders engaged during Phase 2.
- Host one public informational webinar or open house to present the draft and answer questions.
- Compile all public comments and prepare a response document summarizing how each comment was addressed.

Deliverables

- Public Comment Summary & Response Document
- Revised Draft Scorecard v1.2 (if changes are warranted)

Estimated Timeline: *Month 10–11*

Step 4.3: Pilot Testing with Development Projects

Tasks

- Identify 1–3 development projects in the pre-application or early design phase willing to participate in a pilot scorecard application.
- Work directly with pilot project teams to apply the scorecard, document challenges, and test the incentive application process.
- Track time and effort required for scorecard completion to assess administrative burden.
- Document lessons learned and specific scorecard criteria or incentive processes that need refinement.
- Publicly recognize pilot participants and document early results for use in program marketing materials.

Deliverables

- Pilot Project Application Reports (one per pilot project)
- Lessons Learned Summary with recommended revisions
- Pilot participant recognition materials

Estimated Timeline: *Months 10–12*

Step 4.4: Finalize Scorecard & Incentive Framework

Tasks

- Incorporate all feedback from stakeholder review, public comment, and pilot testing into the final scorecard.
- Conduct a final review with the Steering Committee to confirm all revisions and approve the final document.
- Prepare a complete adoption package for the UD Board and, where applicable, for submission to the City of Spokane for any required policy or code actions.
- Finalize all developer-facing tools and application materials for public release.

Deliverables

- Final Scorecard v2.0 with scoring methodology, tier thresholds, and technical guidance
- Final Incentive Framework with tiered incentive menu
- Adoption Package for UD Board and City of Spokane
- Complete Developer Handbook (scorecard, incentives, application process, FAQ)

Estimated Timeline: *Month 12*

Phase 5: Adoption, Launch & Ongoing Monitoring

PHASE 5: ADOPTION, LAUNCH & ONGOING MONITORING | Months 12–18+

Goal: Formally adopt the scorecard and incentive program, launch publicly, train administrators, and establish ongoing monitoring and improvement processes.

Step 5.1: Formal Adoption by UD & City of Spokane

Tasks

- Present the Final Scorecard and Incentive Framework to the UD Board of Directors for formal adoption via resolution.
- Coordinate with the City of Spokane Planning Department to identify the appropriate path for any required policy, code, or administrative actions (e.g., Planning Commission review, City Council resolution, code amendment).
- Develop and submit any required staff reports, SEPA documentation, or public notice materials in support of City actions.
- Negotiate and execute any formal agreements between the UD and the City of Spokane regarding program administration and incentive delivery.

Deliverables

- UD Board Resolution adopting the scorecard and incentive program
- City of Spokane policy or code action documentation (if required)
- Interagency agreement between UD and City of Spokane (if applicable)

Estimated Timeline: *Months 12–14*

Step 5.2: Staff & Reviewer Training

Tasks

- Develop training materials for UD staff and City of Spokane reviewers (Planning, Public Works, Design Review Board) who will administer the scorecard.
- Host a training workshop covering: scorecard criteria and scoring; application review process; incentive administration; documentation and record-keeping requirements.
- Create a quick-reference guide for staff use during pre-application meetings and application reviews.
- Conduct at least one mock application review using a hypothetical or pilot project to test staff readiness.

Deliverables

- Staff & Reviewer Training Curriculum
- Training Workshop (documented with attendance records)
- Quick-Reference Guide for scorecard reviewers

Estimated Timeline: *Months 13–15*

Step 5.3: Public Launch & Developer Outreach

Tasks

- Plan and execute a formal public launch event for the scorecard and incentive program, including outreach to local media, developer organizations, and community partners.
- Distribute the Developer Handbook and application materials through UD channels, the City of Spokane's planning portal, and partner organizations (Spokane Homebuilders Association, BOMA, etc.).
- Host a developer information session to walk potential applicants through the program, answer questions, and generate early interest.
- Establish a dedicated webpage on the UD website with all program materials, application forms, and contact information.
- Identify 1–2 early adopter projects to begin the formal application process immediately following launch.

Deliverables

- Public Launch Event
- Developer Information Session
- Program webpage live on UD website
- Launch press release and outreach communications

Estimated Timeline: *Months 14–16*

Step 5.4: Establish Monitoring, Reporting & Continuous Improvement

Tasks

- Define key performance indicators (KPIs) for the scorecard and incentive program, including: number of applications received, distribution across tiers, ecological outcomes achieved (e.g., stormwater managed on-site, green roof area installed), developer satisfaction, and administrative efficiency.
- Establish a record-keeping system for all applications, certifications, and incentives granted.
- Produce an Annual Program Report summarizing applications, certified projects, ecological outcomes, and program performance for the UD Board and City of Spokane.
- Establish a formal program review cycle (every 2–3 years) to assess scorecard relevance, update criteria and thresholds, and adjust incentives based on market conditions and policy changes.
- Create a standing feedback mechanism (e.g., annual developer survey) to continuously improve the program.

Deliverables

- Monitoring & Evaluation Framework with defined KPIs
- Record-keeping system (database or tracking tool)
- Annual Program Report template
- Program Review Protocol (schedule and process for biennial/triennial review)

Estimated Timeline: *Months 15–18*

Immediate Next Steps (First 30–60 Days)

To initiate this Work Plan, the following actions should be taken within the first 30 to 60 days:

- Secure approval of this Work Plan from UD leadership.
- Designate a UD Project Lead to manage the process.
- Begin outreach to key stakeholders for Steering Committee membership, prioritizing the City of Spokane Planning Department and 2–3 local developer representatives.
- Schedule the first Steering Committee meeting.
- Begin compilation of benchmarking materials and review of the Measure Meant draft scorecard.
- Identify 1–3 potential pilot development projects for future engagement.

Appendix: About the Draft Scorecard

This Work Plan references a draft scorecard developed by Measure Meant, a Spokane-based sustainability consultancy, as part of their evaluation of green building and ecological development investments for the University District. That draft scorecard — developed through research, stakeholder interviews, and review of comparable programs — serves as the primary starting point for the collaborative development process described in this Work Plan.

Key stakeholders interviewed during the development of the draft scorecard included representatives from Bouten Construction, Greenstone, Avista Corporation, Fusion Architects, and the City of Spokane Planning Department. Their input is embedded in the draft and provides a valuable foundation for the broader stakeholder engagement process in Phase 2.

The draft scorecard should be distributed to Steering Committee members and roundtable participants at the start of Phase 2 as a concrete reference point for discussion, rather than beginning from a blank slate. This approach will make engagement sessions more productive and help stakeholders react to specific criteria rather than develop them from scratch.

APPENDIX F

EXAMPLE BUDGET

BUDGET ESTIMATES

Ecological Development Scorecard & Incentive Program

Full Work Plan (18 Months) & Fast-Track Work Plan (9 Months)

Prepared for:

University District Public Development Authority (UDPDA)

Date: 2026

Note: All figures are planning-level estimates. See Budget Assumptions section for basis and exclusions.

Overview

This document provides high-level budget estimates for two work plans developed to guide the creation and implementation of an ecological development scorecard and incentive program for the University District:

- The Fast-Track Work Plan (9 months) — an accelerated, pilot-first approach that produces a working scorecard and launches pilot projects quickly, with a streamlined engagement and review process.
- The Full Work Plan (18 months) — a comprehensive program including broad stakeholder engagement, technical validation, and optional City of Spokane coordination.

Both budgets are organized by phase and show costs across four categories: Staff & Project Management (listed as TBD — see assumptions), materials and documentation, web and collateral, and outside consultant or facilitation expenses. Phase totals and grand totals reflect all costs excluding staff.

These budgets are illustrative, and actual costs may vary based on the defined scope. The actual budget should reflect the actual scope of work and include a clear articulation of the assumptions used. Assumptions and exclusions for these budgets are described at the end of this document.

Budget Summary Comparison

The table below provides a side-by-side summary of total estimated costs for each work plan.

Cost Category	Fast-Track Plan (9 months)	Full Work Plan (18 months)
Staff & Project Management	TBD	TBD
Materials & Documentation	$13,100	$32,500
Web, Launch & Collateral	$11,000	$19,300
Consultant & Facilitation	$53,750	$88,775
TOTAL (excl. staff)	**$77,850**	**$140,575**

Full Work Plan Budget — 18 Months

Cost Category	Staff & Project Mgmt	Materials & Docs	Web & Collateral	Consultant & Facilitation	Phase Total
Staff & Project Management is listed as TBD throughout. Costs will depend on how staff time is allocated across the program. See Budget Assumptions for basis.					
Phase 1: Foundation & Governance | Months 1–3					
Steering Committee Setup & Charter	TBD	$800	$0	$0	$800
Stakeholder Mapping & Outreach Planning	TBD	$1,200	$0	$0	$1,200
Baseline Research & Benchmarking	TBD	$500	$0	$4,800	$5,300
Phase Subtotal	**TBD**	**$2,500**	**$0**	**$4,800**	**$7,300**
Phase 2: Stakeholder Engagement | Months 3–6					
Developer & Builder Roundtables (3 sessions)	TBD	$2,500	$0	$19,200	$21,700
City of Spokane Staff Working Sessions	TBD	$500	$0	$0	$500
Utilities, University & Expert Engagement	TBD	$800	$0	$3,200	$4,000
Community & Public Input Session	TBD	$1,800	$0	$4,000	$5,800
Synthesis & Criteria Prioritization	TBD	$600	$0	$0	$600
Phase Subtotal	**TBD**	**$6,200**	**$0**	**$26,400**	**$32,600**
Phase 3: Scorecard & Incentive Development | Months 6–9					
Scorecard Criteria & Metrics (Ecology Consultant)	TBD	$800	$0	$19,800	$20,600
Stormwater & Engineering Criteria Review	TBD	$400	$0	$5,250	$5,650
Scoring Methodology, Tiers & Technical Docs	TBD	$600	$0	$7,450	$8,050
Incentive Framework Development	TBD	$600	$0	$3,300	$3,900
Developer-Facing Tools & Materials	TBD	$3,500	$1,500	$0	$5,000

Phase Subtotal	**TBD**	**$5,900**	**$1,500**	**$35,800**	**$43,200**
Phase 4: Review, Refinement & Pilot Testing | Months 9–12					
Stakeholder Review of Draft Scorecard	TBD	$800	$0	$3,200	$4,000
Public Comment Period	TBD	$600	$800	$0	$1,400
Pilot Project Testing & Technical Support	TBD	$1,000	$0	$6,600	$7,600
Pilot Project Marketing & Recognition (2 pilots)	TBD	$2,000	$8,000	$0	$10,000
Finalize Scorecard & Incentive Framework	TBD	$2,500	$0	$3,300	$5,800
Phase Subtotal	**TBD**	**$6,900**	**$8,800**	**$13,100**	**$28,800**
Phase 5: Adoption, Launch & Monitoring | Months 12–18					
Formal Adoption Process (UD & City)	TBD	$1,500	$0	$3,200	$4,700
Staff & Reviewer Training	TBD	$3,500	$0	$3,000	$6,500
Public Launch & Developer Outreach	TBD	$4,500	$6,500	$0	$11,000
Monitoring & Reporting Framework Setup	TBD	$1,500	$2,500	$2,475	$6,475
Phase Subtotal	**TBD**	**$11,000**	**$9,000**	**$8,675**	**$28,675**
TOTAL ESTIMATED BUDGET	**TBD**	**$32,500**	**$19,300**	**$88,775**	**$140,575**

Fast-Track Work Plan Budget — 9 Months

Cost Category	Staff & Project Mgmt	Materials & Docs	Web & Collateral	Consultant & Facilitation	Phase Total
Staff & Project Management is listed as TBD throughout. Costs will depend on how staff time is allocated across the program. See Budget Assumptions for basis.					
Phase 1: Quick-Start Foundation | Months 1–2					
Project Lead & Working Group Setup	**TBD**	$400	$0	$0	$400
Baseline Review & Benchmarking Summary	**TBD**	$300	$0	$4,800	$5,100
Optional City Planning Notification	**TBD**	$200	$0	$0	$200
Phase Subtotal	**TBD**	**$900**	**$0**	**$4,800**	**$5,700**
Phase 2: Focused Stakeholder Input | Months 2–4					
Developer Input Session 1 — Criteria Feasibility	**TBD**	$1,500	$0	$6,400	$7,900
Developer Input Session 2 — Incentives & Motivation	**TBD**	$1,000	$0	$6,400	$7,400
Input Synthesis & Scorecard Scope Decision	**TBD**	$400	$0	$0	$400
Phase Subtotal	**TBD**	**$2,900**	**$0**	**$12,800**	**$15,700**
Phase 3: Draft Scorecard & Incentive Framework | Months 4–6					
Working Scorecard v1.0 (Ecology Consultant)	TBD	$500	$0	$19,800	$20,300
Stormwater Criteria Review (Engineering)	TBD	$300	$0	$5,250	$5,550
Pilot Incentive Menu & Technical Docs	TBD	$500	$0	$2,500	$3,000
Developer-Facing Application Materials	TBD	$2,500	$1,500	$0	$4,000
Phase Subtotal	**TBD**	**$3,800**	**$1,500**	**$27,550**	**$32,850**

Phase 4: Pilot Launch & Learning | Months 6–9					
Pilot Project Recruitment	TBD	$600	$0	$0	$600
Scorecard Application & Technical Support	TBD	$800	$0	$6,600	$7,400
Pilot Project Marketing & Recognition (2 pilots)	TBD	$2,000	$8,000	$0	$10,000
Lessons Learned Documentation	TBD	$600	$0	$2,000	$2,600
Transition Planning & Board Presentation	TBD	$1,500	$1,500	$0	$3,000
Phase Subtotal	**TBD**	**$5,500**	**$9,500**	**$8,600**	**$23,600**
TOTAL ESTIMATED BUDGET	**TBD**	**$13,100**	**$11,000**	**$53,750**	**$77,850**

Budget Assumptions & Exclusions

The following assumptions underlie all estimates in this document. These are planning-level figures intended to support program development decisions. Actual costs will vary based on staffing arrangements, the extent of City engagement, consultant selection, and any scope adjustments made during implementation.

Assumption	Description / Basis
Two UD Staff Employees	Staff costs are listed as TBD and excluded from phase and grand totals. The UD should determine actual staff time allocation based on existing workloads and budget constraints before finalizing program costs.
Staff Time Allocation	Staff time has not been estimated in dollar terms. A reasonable planning assumption is that the program will require 0.25–0.5 FTE per employee over the program duration, but this should be confirmed based on other organizational priorities. Staff costs should be added to phase totals once determined.
Materials & Documentation	Design, printing, and production costs for engagement session materials, scorecard documents, technical guidance, reports, and the developer handbook
Web, Launch & Collateral	Website page development, program landing page, launch event materials, press release production, and developer-facing digital assets
Facilitation	Billed at $200/hour. Includes preparation, session facilitation, and debrief for developer roundtables and public input sessions. Estimated at 8 hours per roundtable session and 10 hours for the public input session
Urban Ecology / Landscape Architecture Consultant	Billed at $165/hour. Primary technical resource for developing and validating scorecard criteria and metrics. Estimated at approximately 120 hours in Phase 3 for the full plan; 120 hours in Phase 3 of the fast-track plan
Stormwater / Civil Engineering Consultant	Billed at $175/hour. Provides technical review of stormwater-related scorecard criteria for accuracy and local applicability. Estimated at approximately 30 hours in Phase 3 of both plans
Technical Writing / Documentation	Billed at $125/hour. Supports development of technical guidance document and scoring methodology write-up. Estimated at approximately 20 hours in Phase 3
Pilot Project Technical Support	Billed at $165/hour. Assists UD staff in applying the scorecard to pilot projects and resolving technical documentation questions. Estimated at 20 hours per pilot project (2 pilots = 40 hours)
Pilot Project Marketing & Recognition	Covers marketing and recognition activities as the primary incentive for pilot participants. Includes: local and regional news releases, case study design and printing, social and digital assets, and a recognition event or announcement. Estimated at $5,000 per pilot project ($3,500 design/collateral + $1,500 PR and media) for a total of $10,000 per plan
Training Curriculum Development	Billed at $150/hour. Supports development of training modules for UD and City staff reviewers. Estimated at 20 hours in Phase 5 of the full plan

Contingency	Not included. Recommend adding 10–15% contingency to each phase total for planning purposes
City of Spokane staff time	Not included. Assumes City engagement (where it occurs) is absorbed within existing City budgets
Financial incentive costs	Not included. Direct financial incentives to developers (fee reductions, grants, etc.) are separate from program administration costs and depend on funding sources to be identified

Recommended next step: review these estimates with UD leadership and adjust based on known budget constraints, existing vendor relationships, and any in-kind contributions from partner organizations before committing to either work plan.

APPENDIX G

PHOTOS AND IMAGE CREDITS

PHOTO AND IMAGE CREDITS

Cover Photo - Mark Agnor, https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/spokane-washington-city-downtown-center-northwest-2382852361, via shutterstock.com

Page 4 - *Placemaking sign in UD*: Kara Odegard

Page 5 - *University District Gateway Bridge*: Kara Odegard

Page 7 - *Austin green building program is based on a cybernetic feedback model*: Fisk, Pliny. Talkington, Sarah. "Green Building in Austin, Texas. Urban Climate Change Research Network. ARC 3.3 Climate Change and Cities." https://academiccommons.columbia.edu/doi/10.7916/2vkp-8g53/download,

Page 8 - *The Catalyst (left) and Boxcar (right) buildings*: Mark Odegard

Page 9 - *Cross-laminated timber panels - Catalyst Building:* Kara Odegard

Page 10 - *Map of green building development in Austin, TX:* Fisk, Pliny. Talkington, Sarah. "Green Building in Austin, Texas. Urban Climate Change Research Network. ARC 3.3 Climate Change and Cities." https://academiccommons.columbia.edu/doi/10.7916/2vkp-8g53/download

Page 11 - *Kendall Yards Commercial Area*: Mark Agnor, https://www.dreamstime.com/spokane-maple-bridge-river-north-kendall-yards-riverfront-road-image298069607, via dreamstime.com

Page 12 - *STA City Line in UD on Spokane Falls Blvd:* Jdubman, "Spokane Transit Authority City Line Bus Rapid Transit Bus on opening day, July 15, 2023", CC BY-SA 4.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Spokane_Transit_City_Line_-_Bus_left_side_-_2023_0715.jpg, via Wikimedia Commons

Page 14 - *Green rooftop at the David L Lawerence Convention Center in Pittsburgh, PA*: Kara Odegard

Page 15 - *Roftop solar array in UD:* Kara Odegard

Page 17 - *Renovated Don Kardong Bridge*: Will Maupin, "Kardong Pedestrian Bridge across the Spokane River in the University District, Spokane, Washington seen in October 2023", CC BY-SA 4.0, https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e6/Kardong_Bridge.jpg, via Wikimedia Commons

Page 21 - *McKinstry commitment - Catalyst Building*: Kara Odegard

Page 22 - *Overhead view of WSU Spokane Campus*: WSU Health Sceinces Spokane, CC BY 2.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:WSU_Health_Sciences_Spokane_campus_2015.jpg, via Wikimedia Commons

Page 30 - *Map of green building development in Austin, TX:* Fisk, Pliny. Talkington, Sarah. "Green Building in Austin, Texas. Urban Climate Change Research Network. ARC 3.3 Climate Change and Cities." https://academiccommons.columbia.edu/doi/10.7916/2vkp-8g53/download

Page 31 - *Austin City Hall - LEED Certified Gold*: ajay_suresh, CC BY 4.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Austin_City_Hall_(54987519110).jpg, via Wikimedia Commons

Page 32 - *Austin Central Public Library - LEED Platinum Certified*: Mikerussell, CC BY-SA 4.0, https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Page 33 and 34 - *Austin Energy Green Building Commercial Rating - Scorecard Planner*: Austin Energy Green Building Commercial Rating Guidebook (2022), https://www.speakupaustin.org/Customer/File/Full/c52141f2-91ef-4e93-a9e9-4318fe15864f

Page 37 - *Flooded street in Hoboken following Hurricane Sandy (2012)*: Alec Perkins, CC BY 2.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jefferson_%26_7th_(8143744948).jpg, via Wikimedia Commons

Page 38 - *Map of Hoboken sewersheds:* Clarke Caton Hintz / EE&K a Perkins Eastman Company, Hoboken Green Infrastructure Strategic Plan, October 2013, prepared for Together North Jersey / HUD

Page 39 - *Diagram of bioswale function*: VectorMine, February 12, 2026, https://www.shutterstock.com/image-vector/bioswale-function-diagram-shows-how-planted-2738237661, via Shutterstock.com

Page 40 - *Green infrastructure best management Practices (BMP) in Hoboken*: City of Hoboken, NJ, "Chapter 166, Article II: Stormwater Management Measures and Controls," Ordinance No. B-687, 2024, https://ecode360.com/print/HO0741?guid=34911491

Page 41 - *Graden Street Lofts - LEED Green Certified*: Walter Burns, CC BY 2.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Garden_Street_Lofts_(3967970846).jpg, via Wikimedia Commons

Page 42 - *Aerial view of Hoboken*: Thomas X De Wever, https://www.dreamstime.com/aerial-view-over-hoboken-new-jersey-usa-building-house-road-image339179955, via Dreamstime

Page 45 - *View of Philadelphia City Hall*: CYSUN, "View of Philadelphia City Hall and cityscape with Skyscraper during summer in Philadelphia Pennsylvania, USA", September 30, 2020, https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/view-philadelphia-city-hall-cityscape-skyscraper-1824798461, via Shutterstock.com

Page 46 - *Diagram of permable pavement*: VectorMine, https://www.dreamstime.com/permeable-pavement-as-road-rain-water-drainage-structure-outline-diagram-permeable-pavement-as-road-rain-water-drainage-image276314243, via Shutterstock.com,

Page 47 - *Example of Bioswale*: Erica Fischer, "A bioswale in Washington DC", CC BY 2.0 February 4, 2018, https://www.flickr.com/photos/walkingsf/40369762221/, via Wikimedia Commons

Page 48 - *Five Crescent Drive, Philadelphia's first developer-owned LEED Platinum office building*: Robert K Chin, "Corporate Headquarters of GlaxoSmithKline USA inside the Philadelphia Navy Yard", https://www.alamy.com/corporate-headquarters-of-glaxosmithkline-usa-inside-the-philadelphia-navy-yard-image214126769.html, via Alamy.com

Page 49 - *CIRA Park rooftop garden in Philadelphia*: xbrchx, "City of Philadelphia Cira Green park and skyline view, State of Pennsylvania, USA", August 27, 2025, https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/city-philadelphia-cira-green-park-skyline-2671367079, via Shutterstock.com