



## U Incubation Village IRFP Q&A

As of February 6, 2025

### Questions via Email

**Question: Your IRFP includes this language, “All work to build upon and be informed by earlier and concurrent U Incubation Village studies, including but not limited to: ‘Grain and Produce Processing Center Feasibility Analysis’ by Crossroads Resource Center; ‘U Incubation Village Cooperative Ownership Structure Analysis’ by The Grain Shed; and ‘U Incubation Village Market and Needs Assessment’ by D&B Creative. Please provide links to those studies.”**

Answer: These studies are underway: Crossroads (Feb-Aug), D&B (Feb-June), and The Grain Shed (July-Nov). We will share links to the final reports once they are completed, but until then, the scopes of work for each are provided at the end of this document.

**Question: What is the nature of the activities that will go on in the 22,700 square foot “Regional Agri-Economy Center”? Will this be affiliated with any institution that has credit strength or can otherwise enhance the financing of its portion of the premises?**

Answer: This is the food processing center Spokane Workers Cooperative is interested in leading, as well as the feasibility analysis that Crossroads Resource Center will do. Yes, but it will depend on the outcome of the Crossroads study. LINC Foods will be included.

**Question: Will the Regional Agri-Economy Center be the same or different from the “Center for Urban Agriculture Research” mentioned in the Next Generation Conceptual Plan for north of the river near Trent and Hamilton? Is it still the intent that this “Incubation Village” be located in the “Multicultural Maker District”?**

Answer: These were parallel efforts. Generally, we want to celebrate workforce and economic development in these areas, but nothing is set in stone regarding location.

**Question: Will your market and needs assessment for the U Incubation Village identify comparables for the case studies you request? If so, when might that identification be made?**

Answer: The market and needs assessment that D&B Creative is doing is very local, looking at Spokane organizations and small businesses. Whereas the case studies would be national, looking at what other folk markets are doing and how they are thriving, operating, and funded.

**Question: Will the Folk Market be a retail market for the makers and a food hall?**

Answer: Yes, up to 20 stalls for start-up businesses, makers, and food incubation.

**Question: “Have you budgeted funds for this, and if so, how much?”**

Answer: Yes, \$68,000 is budgeted.



**Questions from February 4, Optional Zoom Information Session**  
Zoom [recording link](#) and [PowerPoint Deck](#).

**Question: Regarding national case studies to inform best practices and “four case studies around finance strategy,” are the latter conceptual models to evaluate feasibility?**

Answer: Correct regarding the national case studies. The other set of case studies focuses on financing and how we start to think holistically about how to fund development in the whole district, so on a district level, how we pay for this.

**Question: To what extent has programming (area, need, staffing) been fleshed out regarding the financing model needed for this project?**

Answer: The U Incubation Village has a good concept program space listing informed by 18 months of community engagement. We also have a pre-design study underway (with Mithun) for a significant development at the south landing of the University District Gateway Bridge. We have not touched on other ideas like life sciences or innovation commons. The overall goal is to start understanding what’s worked and hasn’t worked for similar projects nationwide. The feasibility study for the actual U Incubation Village will involve some number crunching at a conceptual level. See also pages 12-13 of the IRFP.

**Question: You have some TIF runway, but what other capital tools are you considering implementing for this?**

Answer: We can bond as a PDA (in partnership with the city) against what we know we will receive (approx \$16M before 2039). Per past work with Michael Shuman, we have considered creating a UD Investment Fund. We can pursue legislative appropriations at the state level. The federal level is uncertain, given the current administration. Low-interest (2%) construction loans from folks like CERB and Commerce are possible. We could partner with the Spokane Treasurer’s office. Part of the case study work will include understanding how other communities financed a project like this.

**Question: Are there any specific sites in mind for the U Incubation Village project? Have those three sites been identified? How set in stone is the programming outlined in the IRFP? How committed are you to that total square footage?**

Answer: Many properties in the UD are not listed for sale, but some could be available. We seek guidance and a bubble diagram-level analysis of the pros and cons of 2-3 sites to evaluate.

Re programming, see the chart on pages 12-13 of the IRFP. This is a high-level, conceptual listing, and we are open to reasons to amend.

**Question: Although no architectural studies are involved, you are open to 3D massing/simple block diagrams.**

Answer: Yes.



**Question: Who developed the program? Are you interested in testing the program or refining it?**

Answer: I did (Juliet). If the testing concerns feasibility, yes. That's the purpose of the study: Given the wish list, what makes sense, and how could we do it?

**Question: Can you explain more about the other three consultants?**

Answer: Please see the following scopes. We are under contract with these three organizations.

**SCOPE – CROSSROADS RESOURCE CENTER**

**1. Update the Agriculture System Landscape for Eastern Washington State (8 counties).** *This Landscape Analysis will update a previous assessment performed by Ken Meter (2013), summarizing data from the following sources:*

- US Federal Census
- USDA NASS Census of Agriculture
- Bureau of Economic Analysis
- Bureau of Labor Statistics
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Spokane City and County
- Washington State University
- Interviews with food system practitioners (listed below)
- Others that may be identified

**2. Feasibility Analysis for Food Processing Center**

*Determine the feasibility of opening an eastern WA food processing facility to process grains and produce with a public destination component, which will be based at University Incubation Village.*

- Review prior written studies.
- Interview 10-12 regional stakeholders/farmers chosen in collaboration with Spokane University Incubator and LINC. *For example:*
  - Eastern Washington farmers who may supply raw products for processing
  - Potential purchasers of milled grain products and processed produce (school food services, millers, brewers, bakers, processors, etc.)
  - Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center (Ronan, MT)
  - Food Business/Food Safety analysts/seasoned observers
  - WA Cooperative Development Center
- Identify potential buyers for processed produce or milled grain.
- Assess broader markets for both processed produce and grain.
- Project construction and operating costs.
- Project jobs created.
- Identify workforce needs/support.
- Assess the potential for cooperative ownership.



- Assess the potential for Spokane to serve as a regional nexus for food trade.
- Assess the overall feasibility of strengthening regional farm and food economy.

### **3. Write case studies of relevant precedents in other regions.**

- Initial suggestions (may be revised as we learn more)
  - Oneida Nation produce processing (WI)
  - Janie's Mill Grain Collaborative (IL)
  - Produce and grain processing (NY)

#### **SCOPE – D&B CREATIVE**

- The D&B Creative team will begin the project with a kick-off meeting with the University District's (UD) Project Manager and other relevant participants. We will schedule the meeting in person, via Zoom, or a hybrid – whichever is the most convenient for the team. We will develop an agenda and provide notes for all meetings under this project. We will also schedule regular check-ins with the UD Project Manager.
- Upon receipt of the existing research and collateral materials, we will conduct a review and include our summary in the final report. All materials created under this project will be branded according to UD standards and undergo D&B Creative's established quality control process to eliminate errors.
- Our team will compile summaries of data and initiatives related to regional workforce development, employment, education, and job creation. We will use various sources, including but not limited to the Spokane City and County Library Systems, Spokane Workforce, WorkSource Spokane, the Department of Commerce, and the City of Spokane. To research and compile existing food markets and business incubation services, we will use the above sources: Spokane Arts, The Hive, and social media.
- While reviewing materials and researching, we will schedule up to 30 one-on-one interviews, including the organizations provided by the UD. We have also suggested potential interview organizations, including local indigenous tribes. The D&B Creative team will develop questions for and conduct and document all interviews. Based on the interviews, we will create an outreach plan and engage with stakeholders. At the end of the project, we will submit a Final Report summarizing the research, outreach, and community recommendations. We will provide up to two presentations to the UD.
- Executive Advisory Committee: our findings from the General Market Assessment and summarizing research, outreach, and community recommendations. All presentations will include a slide deck, and we will provide a summary one-page document of the final report.

#### **SCOPE – THE GRAIN SHED**

##### **Project Deliverables**



**UNIVERSITY  
DISTRICT**

1. A presentation for all interested local stakeholders on learnings from the Mondragon Cooperatives and the potential implications of pursuing a similar model in Spokane
2. Create and provide a background summary of the Mondragon Cooperatives and worker-owned cooperatives in Spokane
3. Create and provide a GAP analysis for the current U District vision for the Food Processing Center and U Incubation Village
4. Propose a cooperative structure that will be most beneficial for this vision and its stakeholders
5. Provide a list of next steps for taking action on this proposal