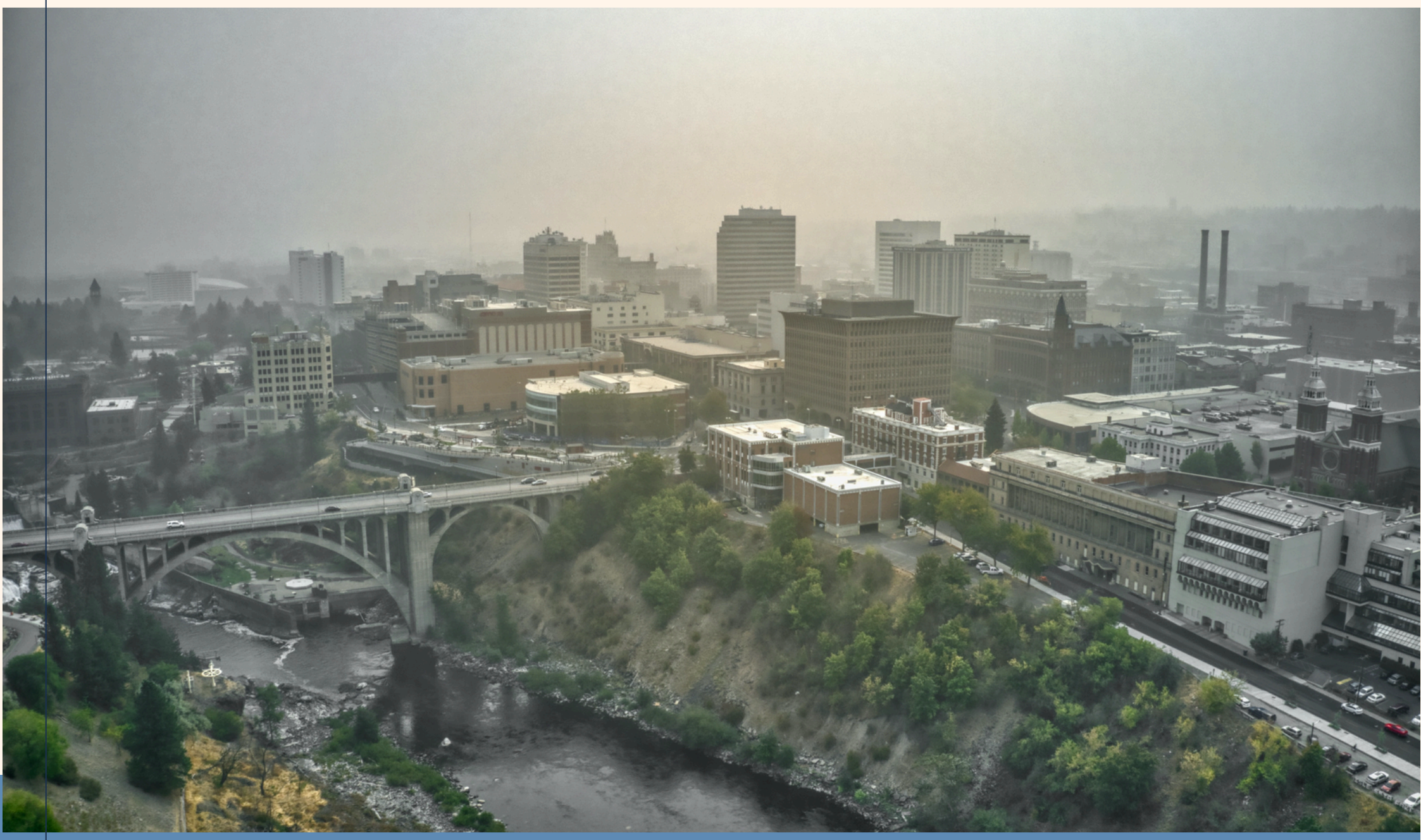

Spokane Wildfire Smoke Resilience Plan

2025-2030

A Spokane Community Resilience Collaborative project

Version 1.0 published August 4, 2025

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Acknowledgments

The Spokane Wildfire Smoke Resilience Plan was made possible by a collaboration between the Gonzaga Institute for Climate, Water, and the Environment (Climate Institute); the Spokane Community Resilience Collaborative (SCRC); and the City of Spokane Office of Emergency Management (OEM).

Logan Werdal, a 2024-2025 CivicSpark Fellow at the Climate Institute, was the primary author of this inaugural Spokane Wildfire Smoke Resilience Plan.

Members of the Spokane Community Resilience Collaborative provided consistent, invaluable feedback, thoughtful insights, and support throughout the entire development process. Their collaboration helped ensure this plan is both community-centered and actionable.

Special thanks to the City of Spokane for their ongoing partnership, and to Sarah Nuss, Director of Emergency Management, for her critical support and guidance in aligning this plan with local emergency preparedness efforts.

This plan is a *living document* and the result of a collective commitment to building a more resilient, informed, and prepared Spokane in the face of increasing wildfire smoke events.

Acronym Glossary

AQI: Air Quality Index

Climate Institute: Gonzaga Institute for Climate, Water, and the Environment

ECY: Washington State Department of Ecology

EPA: Environmental Protection Agency

OEM: City of Spokane Office of Emergency Management

$PM_{2.5}$: Fine particulate matter that is 2.5 micrometers or smaller (air pollutant)

SCRC: Spokane Community Resilience Collaborative

SMC: Spokane Municipal Code

SNAP: Spokane Neighborhood Action Partners

SRCAA: Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency

SRHD: Spokane Regional Health District

STA: Spokane Transit Authority

Introduction

Wildfires are becoming more frequent and severe across the western United States and Canada, leading to worsening air quality across entire regions, even those far from the actual fires. In Washington State, wildfire smoke has become the largest source of particulate pollution, contributing significantly to deteriorating air quality.[1]

Since 2014, Spokane has experienced a 353% increase in days where the Air Quality Index (AQI) value exceeds "moderate".[2] Climate change is expected to further intensify wildfire conditions by driving hotter, drier summers and extending fire seasons, increasing Spokane's vulnerability to smoke-related health risks. Fine particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$) from wildfire smoke is especially harmful, as it can penetrate deep into the lungs and exacerbate respiratory and cardiovascular conditions. Populations most at risk include children, older adults, pregnant individuals, and those with preexisting health conditions, along with outdoor workers and socioeconomically disadvantaged groups who may have fewer resources to protect themselves from exposure.[3]

To address these challenges, the Spokane Wildfire Smoke Resilience Plan will provide a framework for improving Spokane's resilience to wildfire smoke events. It outlines emergency response strategies for severe smoke conditions as well as long-term adaptation measures to help safeguard public health and reduce the overall impacts of wildfire smoke on the community.

Plan Development Process

It is important to recognize that this document is neither the property nor the responsibility of any individual organization. This plan has been created *by* the Spokane community, *for* the community, with the belief that different actors have different forms of agency and different levels of responsibility. To successfully protect our community from future wildfire smoke events, everyone has an important role to play. It is also worthwhile to recognize that the Spokane Wildfire Smoke Resilience Plan is a living document that will continually be improved through a community-engaged, iterative process.

History

At a research symposium held in June 2023, Spokane community leaders expressed a desire to see more collaboration between different actors working on climate resilience in Spokane.[4] In response to this need, in April of 2024, the Gonzaga Institute for Climate, Water, and the Environment (Climate Institute) founded the Spokane Community Resilience Collaborative (SCRC). By unanimous decision of the member organizations, the

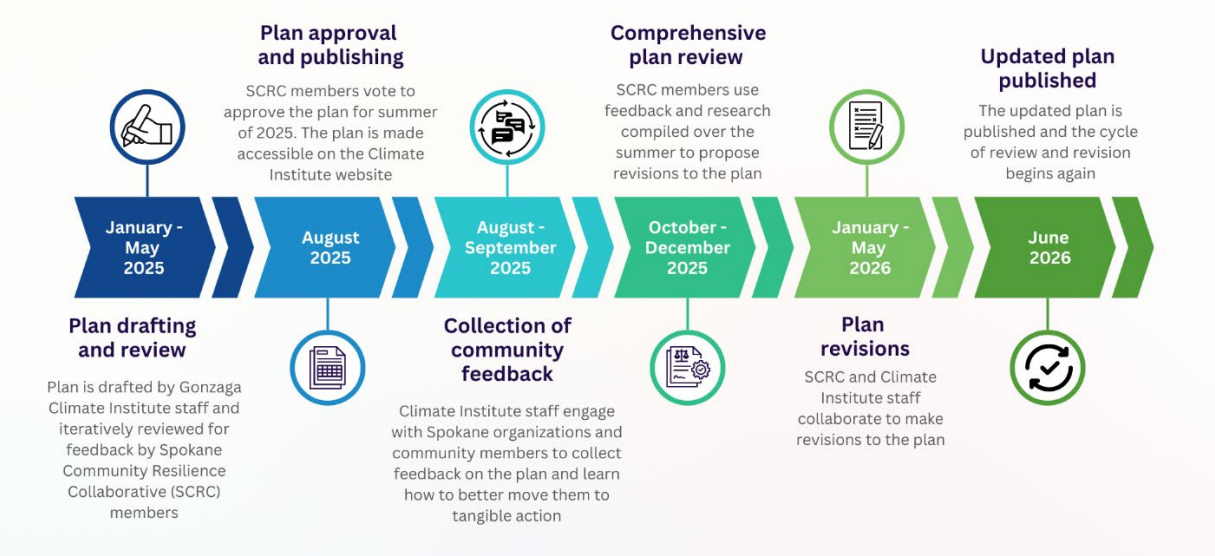
group made the creation of the Spokane Extreme Heat Resilience Plan and Spokane Wildfire Smoke Resilience Plan their first goal.

Staff at the Climate Institute conducted preliminary research for this plan in the summer-fall of 2024, after which the plan moved to the drafting phase and was regularly reviewed and workshopped by SCRC members. The contents of this plan have been informed by countless hours of academic research and community engagement as well as extensive input from community leaders representing their organizations through SCRC. The inaugural plan was publicly shared in August of 2025.

Future

As a living document, the Spokane Wildfire Smoke Resilience Plan will continue to evolve, with regular updates based on new data, community feedback, and emerging best practices. Moving forward, we are committed to refining and expanding the plan, trusting both experts and our community to help fill in the gaps and ensure it remains relevant and effective in protecting the Spokane community from the impacts of wildfire smoke.

Development Timeline



This iteration of the plan has been intentionally formatted as a proposal. Through the summer of 2025, staff at the Climate Institute will engage with local organizations to discuss the recommendations proposed in this plan and to begin transformation from hypothetical to actual.

From October 2025 through April 2026, the results of that community-engaged research will be used to shift what are now "*recommendations*" to "*action items*" and from

"*potential partners*" to "*responsible actors*." Local organizations can and should provide feedback on sections of the proposed work (1) with which they are already engaged and/or (2) which are aligned with their mission and will fall into their scope of work in the coming years. The input and specificity to be included in the second iteration of this plan will forge deeper coordination and transparency within the Spokane community and create greater ease when assessing plan efficacy beginning in 2026.

SCRC will be responsible for ongoing review and development of this plan. As of August 2025, SCRC consists of fifteen member organizations ranging from local government, non-profits, academia, healthcare agencies, mutual aid groups, and others. More information on SCRC is available on their website.

Members of the Spokane community are encouraged to be actively involved in the process of building wildfire smoke resilience locally. To make their voices heard and contribute to shaping our response to wildfire smoke, community members can complete the survey available on our website.

To contact the Gonzaga Institute for Climate, Water, and the Environment, please email ClimateInstitute@gonzaga.edu.

Assessment of Area

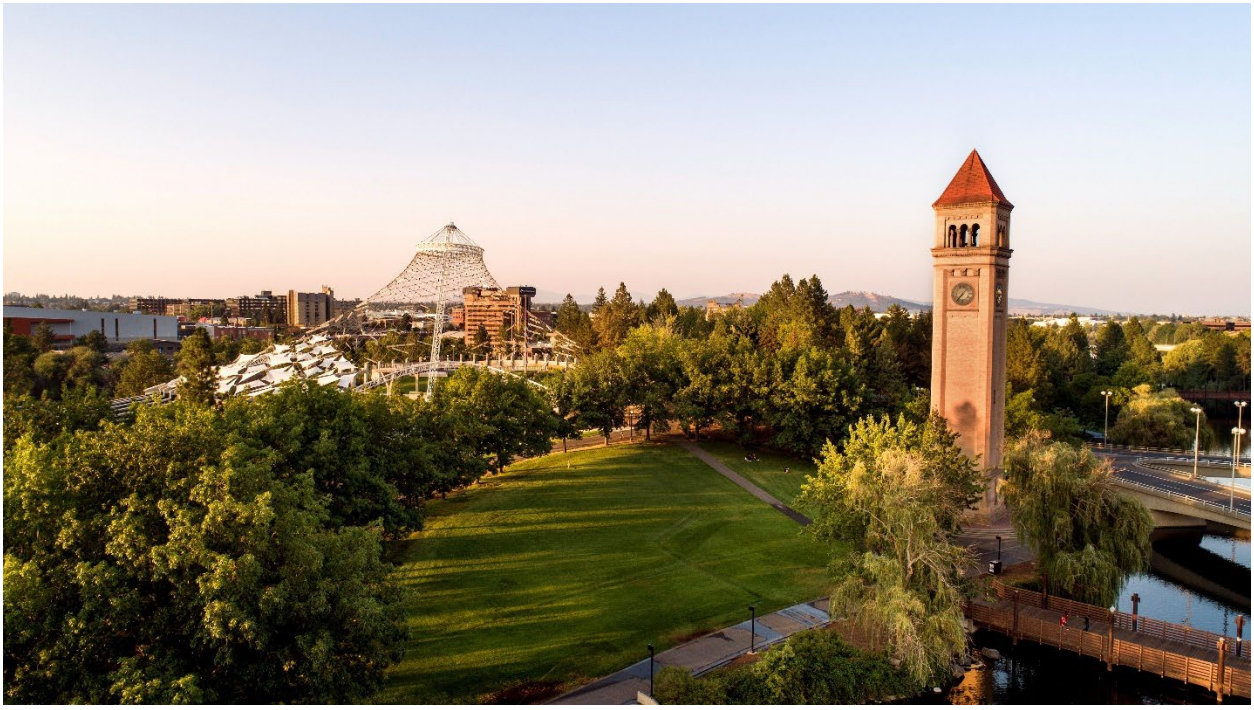


Figure 1: Riverfront Park Drone-8 © Copyright Gonzaga University / Zack Berlat

Spokane's location near multiple national forests and natural areas puts it at high risk for wildfire smoke exposure, with the city being at major risk for impacts of wildfire—higher than 86% of communities in the US[5]—and having worse air quality than 90% of cities in Washington.[6] Additionally, disparities in access—such as limited access to air conditioning, green space, and energy-efficient housing—exacerbate the health risks of some community members to wildfire smoke. Spokane has been identified as an "overburdened" community for air pollution in a recent report by the Washington State Department of Ecology (ECY), with residents living an average of 2.4 years fewer than other Washingtonians.[7] Historic practices like redlining have left lasting impacts on neighborhoods like East Central, where residents can now face poor air quality from both vehicle emissions and wildfire smoke at the same time while having low access to protective resources.[8] Together, these factors underscore the urgent need for an equitable, community-driven approach to smoke preparedness and resilience.

Wildfire Smoke Resilience Proposal

The following proposal outlines a thoughtful approach to building resilience against wildfire smoke in Spokane, with recommendations organized into four resilience categories: Preparedness, Response, Recovery, and Mitigation. These categories can be best understood within the context of a wildfire smoke event and actions that should be taken before, during, after, and on a continual basis.

- **Preparedness** recommendations focus on proactive measures to build resilience before a smoke event such as educating community members and building strong community leader networks.
- **Response** recommendations consider what is needed during a wildfire smoke event. This includes actions such as creating a comprehensive digital tool for smoke safety and providing low-cost transportation to cleaner air spaces.
- **Recovery** recommendations center on conducting post-smoke season outreach and regular planning reviews.
- **Mitigation** recommendations are long-term and ongoing actions aimed at reducing wildfire smoke exposure. Examples include distribution of air purifiers, increased accessibility for HVAC and other home weatherization options, and the creation of ventilation corridors.

For each category, high-level recommendations to build climate resilience are provided. Each recommendation includes the following supplemental information:

- The **Rationale** provides context, research, and supplemental information to support the recommendation.
- **Considerations** include additional details and tips that should be considered by actors who seek to make the recommendation a reality.
- **Potential Partners** are listed for each recommendation and refer to a class of organization(s) that could potentially support the work (e.g. “local government” or “nonprofit organizations”). In further revisions of this plan, community research will support the work of thoughtfully updating these to be named organizations.
- The **Timeline** proposed for each recommendation is based on what was known to be in progress or planned in Spokane in relation to that recommendation at the time of publication. Supporting information detailing planned or in-progress actions referenced in the timeline is provided in Appendix A.

An outline of each wildfire smoke resilience recommendation is provided below:

1. Wildfire Smoke **Preparedness** Recommendations
    - 1.1 Host wildfire smoke educational events
    - 1.2 Create wildfire smoke public awareness campaigns
    - 1.3 Establish and maintain a community leader program
    - 1.4 Establish and maintain a community resilience hub program
2. Wildfire Smoke **Response** Recommendations
    - 2.1 Lower the air quality response activation threshold
    - 2.2 Create a comprehensive digital tool for wildfire smoke safety and response
    - 2.3 Provide low-cost transportation during poor air quality days
3. Wildfire Smoke **Recovery** Recommendations
    - 3.1 Conduct post-smoke season community outreach
    - 3.2 Conduct regular wildfire smoke resilience plan reviews
4. Wildfire Smoke **Mitigation** Recommendations
    - 4.1 Conduct a comprehensive wildfire smoke resilience assessment
    - 4.2 Improve accessibility of residential air filtration infrastructure
    - 4.3 Improve air filtration and ventilation standards for Spokane buildings
    - 4.5 Integrate ventilation corridors into urban planning measures

The following is a proposed 5-year timeline for implementing the aforementioned wildfire smoke resilience recommendations. Color coding of action status is relative to the date the plan was published in August of 2025.

	2025				2026				2027				2028				2029			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1.1																				
1.2																				
1.3																				
1.4																				
2.1																				
2.2																				
2.3																				
3.1																				
3.2																				
4.1																				
4.2																				
4.3																				
4.4																				

Color key:

Action in progress
Action planned
Action proposed

1. Wildfire Smoke Preparedness

Recommendation 1.1: Host wildfire smoke educational events

Rationale

Hosting interactive workshops and forums empowers residents with knowledge, skills, and confidence to take proactive steps before wildfire smoke events occur. These gatherings provide opportunities for two-way communication between community members and resilience planners, ensuring culturally relevant education and localized solutions. They also build social cohesion—a known resilience factor—by fostering neighbor-to-neighbor connections and creating a shared sense of preparedness.

Considerations

Distribution of wildfire smoke preparedness kits could happen during these events. Educational events should cover topics including:

- Signs and symptoms of smoke-related health issues
- Home air quality improvement strategies
- Recommendations for safe outdoor activities
- Guidelines for using respiratory masks
- How to assist others who may be at higher risk

Potential Partners

- Local health agencies
- Resilience hubs
- Utility and weatherization providers
- Nonprofit organizations

Timeline*

Recommendation 1.1 Host wildfire smoke educational events																			
2025				2026				2027				2028				2029			
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4

Color key	Action in progress	Action planned	Action proposed

*To learn more about what local organizations have planned for wildfire smoke educational events, see Appendix A.

Recommendation 1.2: Create wildfire smoke public awareness campaigns

Rationale

A 2022 study by the Gonzaga Climate Institute found that, of the survey respondents, 81% consider air pollution to be a "severe" or "moderate" threat to the Spokane Community.[9] Public awareness campaigns are essential to ensuring community members understand the health risks of wildfire smoke and the actions they can take to stay safe. Strategically designed and inclusive messaging across multiple platforms helps reach diverse audiences and bridge information gaps. These campaigns can correct misinformation, encourage protective behaviors, and promote available resources, making them a powerful tool in building informed and proactive communities.

Considerations

- Educational campaigns can include both in-person and virtual components and be integrated into other planned educational events (see Recommendation 1.1)
- Community Smoke Safety Days could be hosted by different organizations, including resilience hubs (see Recommendation 1.4)

Potential Partners

- Local health agencies
- Community resilience hubs
- Nonprofit organizations who support vulnerable populations
- Neighborhood councils

Timeline*

Recommendation 1.2 Create wildfire smoke public awareness campaigns																			
2025				2026				2027				2028				2029			
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4

Color key	Action in progress	Action planned	Action proposed

* To learn more about how local organizations are distributing wildfire smoke safety information, see Appendix A.

Recommendation 1.3: Establish and maintain a community leader program

Rationale

Community leader programs build hyper-local resilience by empowering trusted neighborhood leaders to share information, mobilize resources, and support vulnerable neighbors during wildfire smoke events. This decentralized model strengthens communication channels, fosters community ownership of preparedness efforts, and ensures more timely and targeted responses—especially in areas that may be overlooked by broader outreach strategies.

Considerations

A community leader program could be integrated with Spokane's current Neighborhood Council model. Such a program should identify, train, and coordinate trusted community leaders so they are prepared to organize and mobilize neighbors during wildfire smoke events. Leaders should be trained in best practices for communication during smoke events, including using phone trees, social media, and local networks. They could organize the co-creation of unique smoke action plans for their specific neighborhood and facilitate community check-ins, especially for those vulnerable to poor air quality.

Potential Partners

- Resilience hubs
- Nonprofit organizations
- Local health agencies
- Local government organizations

Timeline*

Recommendation 1.3 Establish and maintain a community leader program																			
2025				2026				2027				2028				2029			
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4

Color key	Action in progress	Action planned	Action proposed

* To learn more about the community leader program being piloted for expansion, see Appendix A.

Recommendation 1.4: Establish and maintain a community resilience hub program

Rationale

Resilience hubs are existing community buildings run by trusted organizations that are strengthened to provide education and relief to community members before, during, and after extreme weather events.[10]

People need somewhere safe to be during poor air quality events but convincing them to use cleaner air centers can be difficult. Retrofitting existing community buildings that are already trusted places throughout Spokane could be an effective approach to meet this need and reduce hesitancy for community members. Establishing resilience hubs will provide dispersed locations where members of the community can access resources, information, and support during extreme weather events.

Considerations

Resilience hubs should be developed in tandem with a community leader program (see Recommendation 1.3). A resilience hub program should be informed by the community, adaptable, and accessible to different kinds of organizations including, but not limited to, community centers and libraries; small and large businesses; schools and colleges; and faith-based gathering places.

Potential Partners

- Nonprofit organizations
- Local health agencies
- Businesses
- Utility and weatherization providers
- Local government organizations

Timeline*

Recommendation 1.4 Establish and maintain a community resilience hub program																			
2025				2026				2027				2028				2029			
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4

Color key	Action in progress	Action planned	Action proposed

* To learn more about the planned Spokane Community Resilience Hub Network, see Appendix A.

2. Wildfire Smoke Response

Recommendation 2.1: Lower the air quality response activation threshold

Rationale

Currently Section 18.05.020 of Spokane's Municipal Code (SMC) requires the opening of cleaner air centers when the Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency (SRCAA) forecasts the AQI will reach 201 or higher.[11] ECY identified Spokane as a community that is overburdened by air pollution, with community members on average experiencing more negative health impacts (asthma, lower life expectancy, etc.) from smoke exposure than other places in Washington.[12] EPA's Patient Exposure and Air Quality Index risk assessment found that in healthy individuals when AQI is "unhealthy" (151-200), approximately 30% are estimated to experience moderate or greater lung function impairment.[13] These findings, along with the high number of more sensitive and vulnerable populations in Spokane, support a reduction in activation criteria from the current threshold of AQI=201 (very unhealthy) to AQI=151 (unhealthy).

Considerations

- Different demographic groups are uniquely susceptible to issues from wildfire smoke exposure.
- Studies should be done to assess the cost of changing the City of Spokane activation threshold for air quality response.

Potential Partners

- Local government organizations
- Higher education institutions

Timeline

Recommendation 2.1 Lower the air quality response activation threshold																			
2025				2026				2027				2028				2029			
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4

Color key	Action in progress	Action planned	Action proposed

Recommendation 2.2: Create a comprehensive digital tool for wildfire smoke safety and response

Rationale

Developing a digital tool to centralize smoke-related information—such as AQI levels, protective actions, and available resources—can help community members make quick, informed decisions during smoke events. Effective tools for wildfire smoke safety and response include emergency alert systems and a "one stop shop" digital platform with reliable information on staying safe from wildfire smoke. Spokane organizations and residents would benefit from a centralized, user-friendly digital platform to ensure consistent messaging, help residents make informed decisions, and enhance the city's overall emergency preparedness and response.

Considerations

- Several community centers in Spokane already have educational air quality dashboards that could be integrated with such a tool.
- Spokane County's existing ALERT Spokane system could be integrated with the digital tool to deliver real-time notifications about air quality, share the locations of resilience hubs (see Recommendation 1.4), and provide practical guidance.
- Local organizations should be encouraged to collaborate and promote this one digital tool rather than sharing information across competing websites.
- Accessibility should be taken into account for language and technological literacy.

Potential Partners

- Nonprofit organizations
- Local government organizations
- Institutions of higher education
- Resilience hubs
- Local health agencies

Timeline[*]

Recommendation 2.2 Create a comprehensive digital tool for wildfire smoke safety and response																			
2025				2026				2027				2028				2029			
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4

Color key	Action in progress	Action planned	Action proposed

[*] To learn more about the current development of a wildfire smoke safety digital tool, see Appendix A.

Recommendation 2.3: Provide low-cost transportation during poor air quality days

Rationale

Offering low-cost or free transportation on poor air quality days—similar to Spokane Transit Authority's (STA) approach during heat waves[14]—removes a key barrier for residents who need to access resilience hubs, medical care, or essential services. This strategy prioritizes mobility justice, especially for low-income, elderly, or disabled individuals who may otherwise be stranded in unsafe indoor air conditions. The recommended air quality threshold for such a program to go into effect is when AQI surpasses 150 (see Recommendation 2.1).

Considerations

- An accessibility assessment of resilience hubs and other smoke-related essential services could provide reporting on the extent to which they are serviced by STA.
- A study done in partnership with local research institutions could investigate the advantages, disadvantages, and associated costs of implementing such a program.

Potential Partners

- Resilience hubs
- Local government organizations
- Institutions of higher education
- Nonprofit organizations
- Local transport authorities

Timeline

Recommendation 2.3 Provide low-cost transportation during poor air quality days																			
2025				2026				2027				2028				2029			
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4

Color key	Action in progress	Action planned	Action proposed

3. Wildfire Smoke Recovery

Recommendation 3.1: Conduct post-smoke season community outreach

Rationale

Post-smoke season outreach ensures that recovery from wildfire smoke events includes reflection, gathering of feedback, and connection to longer-term support. Community outreach helps communities process their experiences, identify ongoing health or housing needs, and stay engaged in future planning efforts. It also facilitates transparency and accountability, allowing planners to build trust and strengthen partnerships for future smoke seasons.

Considerations

- Post-smoke season meetings with resilience hub representatives can be used to gather data on lessons learned and best practices.
- Community input channels should be easily accessible—especially for vulnerable populations—to assess the effectiveness of outreach, clean air resources, and overall preparedness.
- Sharing personal narratives from community members dealing with wildfire smoke can highlight the importance of community response.

Potential Partners

- Nonprofit organizations
- Local government organizations
- Institutions of higher education
- Resilience hubs
- Local news organizations

Timeline*

Recommendation 3.1 Conduct post-smoke season community outreach																			
2025				2026				2027				2028				2029			
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4

Color key	Action in progress	Action planned	Action proposed

* To learn more about planned post-smoke season outreach, see Appendix A.

Recommendation 3.2: Conduct regular wildfire smoke resilience plan reviews

Rationale

Conducting regular reviews of the wildfire smoke resilience plan ensures that strategies remain effective, relevant, and responsive to changing conditions. By incorporating community feedback, updated science, and lessons learned from each smoke season, the planning team can continuously improve outcomes, avoid repeating past mistakes, and institutionalize a culture of adaptive, community-centered resilience.

Considerations

- Interactive workshops and forums can identify any gaps or challenges in the current plan, such as issues with resource allocation, access to resilience hubs, communication, or support for vulnerable populations.
- Open discussions with community leaders can ensure transparency and accountability as the Spokane Wildfire Smoke Resilience Plan continues to evolve.

Potential Partners

- Local government organizations
- Nonprofit organizations
- Institutions of higher education
- Resilience hubs
- Transportation providers

Timeline*

Recommendation 3.2 Conduct regular wildfire smoke resilience plan reviews																			
2025				2026				2027				2028				2029			
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4

Color key	Action in progress	Action planned	Action proposed

* To learn more about the plan for reviewing and updating this document, see Appendix A.

4. Wildfire Smoke Mitigation

Recommendation 4.1: Conduct a comprehensive wildfire smoke resilience assessment

Rationale

Conducting a comprehensive wildfire smoke resilience assessment is a critical first step in identifying vulnerabilities and strengths across the community before smoke events occur. This proactive approach enables local governments, organizations, and residents to understand how infrastructure, public health systems, and vulnerable populations may be affected by prolonged smoke exposure. By mapping risks and gaps in current protections, the assessment lays the foundation for targeted interventions, informed policy development, and equitable resource distribution—ultimately increasing community-wide resilience and reducing the long-term impacts of wildfire smoke.

Considerations

Wildfire smoke resilience assessments should investigate factors such as access to in-home air filtration, relevant building and municipal codes, impact of housing status on air quality exposure, and other vulnerability factors. Much of this research already exists for Spokane but would be more beneficial compiled into one comprehensive assessment.

Potential Partners

- Local government organizations
- Homeowners and landlords
- Home weatherization providers
- Institutions of higher education

Timeline

Recommendation 4.1 Conduct a comprehensive wildfire smoke resilience assessment																			
2025				2026				2027				2028				2029			
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4

Color key	Action in progress	Action planned	Action proposed

Recommendation 4.2: Improve accessibility of residential air filtration infrastructure

Rationale

Providing financial assistance for improved HVAC with $PM_{2.5}$ filtration capabilities and/or distributing high quality portable air cleaners to low-income households can greatly reduce the health risks associated with concurrent extreme heat and smoke events. Air purifiers equipped with HEPA filters can effectively remove harmful smoke particles from indoor air, creating a safer environment for residents.[15] For low-income families who may lack access to air conditioning or struggle with energy costs, financial assistance programs can help them obtain and operate these essential devices. By addressing disparities in access to clean air, such initiatives improve public health, reduce vulnerability among at-risk populations, and enhance community resilience.

Considerations

Services aimed at increasing accessibility of air filtration equipment should consider both homeowners and renters as well as renter/landlord dynamics. It is important to factor in the cost of maintenance. Low-cost weatherization services and utility bill assistance can support income-eligible residents.

Potential Partners

- Utility and weatherization providers
- Nonprofit organizations
- Homeowners and landlords

Timeline*

Recommendation 4.2 Improve accessibility of residential air filtration infrastructure																			
2025				2026				2027				2028				2029			
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4

Color key	Action in progress	Action planned	Action proposed

* To learn more about planned programs to improve accessibility of air filtration equipment in Spokane, see Appendix A.

Recommendation 4.3: Improve air filtration and ventilation standards for Spokane buildings

Rationale

Updating building codes to require improved ventilation systems and air filtration standards for new construction in smoke-prone areas can significantly reduce the health impacts of extreme smoke events.[16] Enhanced ventilation systems with high-efficiency filters can capture fine particulate matter, improving indoor air quality and protecting occupants from harmful smoke exposure.[17] By mandating these standards, new buildings would be better equipped to provide a safer, clean-air environment during wildfire seasons. This proactive approach not only safeguards public health but also increases the resilience of communities facing growing challenges from worsening wildfire smoke.

Considerations

A preliminary cost and benefit analysis supported by local research institutions would be useful to determine the efficacy and efficiency of new standards. Changing standards would require a thorough plan for implementation that includes educational resources and financial support for those required to comply.

Potential Partners

- Local government organizations
- Institutions of higher education
- Utility and weatherization providers

Timeline

Recommendation 4.4 Improve air filtration and ventilation standards for Spokane buildings																			
2025				2026				2027				2028				2029			
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4

Color key	Action in progress	Action planned	Action proposed

Recommendation 4.4: Integrate ventilation corridors into urban planning measures

Rationale

Effective urban planning can reduce air pollution exposure by integrating green infrastructure and designing cities that facilitate natural ventilation.[18] Ventilation corridors, which preserve open spaces and natural airflow pathways through urban areas, can help mitigate the impacts of extreme smoke by dispersing polluted air and promoting the movement of cleaner air into dense city environments.[19] These corridors, often aligned with natural features like river valleys or greenbelts, reduce the accumulation of stagnant smoke and improve overall air quality during wildfire events. These approaches can bolster public health and are crucial for building resilience in the face of increasing wildfire and other air quality challenges.

Considerations

Local research institutions could conduct a feasibility study for integrating ventilation corridors and wind-friendly architecture into local transportation and building planning.

Potential Partners

- Institutions of higher education
- Local government organizations

Timeline

Recommendation 4.4 Integrate ventilation corridors into urban planning measures																			
2025				2026				2027				2028				2029			
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4

Color key	Action in progress	Action planned	Action proposed

Conclusion

Wildfire smoke poses an urgent and growing threat to Spokane's health, safety, and overall well-being. The Spokane Wildfire Smoke Resilience Plan represents Spokane's commitment to addressing these risks through coordinated action, grounded in extensive research and community collaboration.

By fostering partnerships across organizations, leveraging local knowledge, and integrating best practices, the Spokane Wildfire Smoke Resilience Plan lays a strong foundation for community resilience. It is not just a blueprint for emergency response, but a comprehensive framework focused on prevention, preparedness, and recovery. As climate change continues to intensify wildfire smoke events, this plan will serve as a living document—intentionally designed to be adaptable and responsive to new challenges and insights.

Together, Spokane's residents, leaders, and partners can build a safer, healthier future—one where the risks of wildfire smoke are minimized and community strength is maximized. The commitment to collaboration and continuous improvement embodied in this plan will be essential to protecting everyone who lives in Spokane from the impacts of wildfire smoke, now and in the years to come.

Appendix A: Explanation of Recommendation Timelines

The goal of this appendix is to provide further insight into the actions outlined as "in progress" or "planned" in the timeline proposals used throughout the Wildfire Smoke Resilience Proposal.

The color key for the timelines is as follows:

Action in progress
Action planned
Action proposed

The periods "in progress," "planned," and "proposed" are relative to the date when the plan was adopted: July 2025.

For each timeline included in the proposal, this document will list the activities that informed the timeline and provide links to further information about those activities, when available.

Recommendation 1.1 Host wildfire smoke educational events																			
2025				2026				2027				2028				2029			
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4

Actions in progress and planned for Recommendation 1.1:

- The Smoke Ready Spokane educational campaign run by a partnership between the Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency, Spokane Regional Health District, and Gonzaga Climate Institute, will be active during smoke season of 2025 and 2026. Trusted messengers will be attending events in the community to promote wildfire smoke education and safety.
- The Carl Maxey Center, in partnership with the City of Spokane, hosted a FEMA Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training for East Central community leaders in June of 2025.
- The Gonzaga Climate Institute plans to host resilience hub trainings during the summer and fall of 2025.

Recommendation 1.2 Create wildfire smoke public awareness campaigns																			
2025				2026				2027				2028				2029			
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4

Actions in progress and planned Recommendation 1.2:

- The Smoke Ready Spokane educational campaign run by a partnership between the Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency, Spokane Regional Health District, and Gonzaga Climate Institute, will be active and developing new materials during smoke season of 2025 and 2026.
- The Carl Maxey Center developed and began distribution of wildfire smoke educational materials for East Central residents in spring of 2025.

Recommendation 1.3 Establish and maintain a community leader program																			
2025				2026				2027				2028				2029			
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4

Actions in progress and planned Recommendation 1.3:

- The Carl Maxey Center and City of Spokane are partnering to pilot a CERT training program in East Central which could serve as the foundation of a future community leader program.
- The City of Spokane, in partnership with faculty at Gonzaga University's Public Health Department, will assess if the program piloted in East Central can evolve to be replicated by other neighborhoods and integrated into the Spokane Community Resilience Hub Network model.
- The Gonzaga Climate Institute plans to coordinate with the City's Office of Neighborhood Services and the Spokane Neighborhood Leadership Academy to explore a partnership aimed at achieving this recommendation.

Recommendation 1.4 Establish and maintain a Spokane resilience hub program																			
2025				2026				2027				2028				2029			
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4

Actions in progress and planned for Recommendation 1.4:

- The City of Spokane and Gonzaga Climate Institute are working with the Spokane Community Resilience Collaborative to create a training and certification program for local organizations that would like to become resilience hubs.
- Five Spokane organizations have so far agreed to join the planned Spokane Community Resilience Hub Network: Carl Maxey Center; Northeast Community Center; West Central Community Center; Spokane Public Library: Central Branch; and Spokane Public Library: Liberty Park Branch.
- The Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Family Outreach Center has also expressed interest in joining a resilience hub program and is currently working on infrastructure upgrades to their building. These upgrades are funded by a Named Communities Investment Grant from Avista, and upgrades are being overseen and informed by staff at Avista.

Recommendation 2.1 Lower the air quality response activation threshold																			
2025				2026				2027				2028				2029			
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4

No actions were in progress or planned in regard to updating the air quality response activation threshold at the time this plan was published.

Recommendation 2.2 Create a comprehensive digital tool for wildfire smoke safety and response																			
2025				2026				2027				2028				2029			
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4

Actions in progress and planned for Recommendation 2.2:

- Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency, Spokane Regional Health District, and the Gonzaga Climate Institute, using funding from the US Environmental Protection Agency, have developed the site www.SmokeReadySpokane.org and are continuing to update it so it can serve as a comprehensive digital tool for wildfire smoke safety and response.

Recommendation 2.3 Provide low-cost transportation during poor air quality days																			
2025				2026				2027				2028				2029			
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4

There are currently no known plans for providing free or low-cost transportation via Spokane Transit Authority during poor air quality days, though a similar process has been used to provide transportation during high heat days, and that model could be replicated.

Recommendation 3.1 Conduct post-smoke season community outreach																			
2025				2026				2027				2028				2029			
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4

Actions in progress and planned for Recommendation 3.1:

- Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency and Spokane Regional Health District plan to conduct community outreach during the fall of 2025 and 2026 to gather feedback on the effectiveness of their educational campaign.

- The Gonzaga Climate Institute, in partnership with University of Washington, will conduct a community survey in Spokane and Spokane Valley in fall of 2025 with the goal of gathering community members' perspectives on wildfire smoke impacts and solutions.

Recommendation 3.2 Conduct regular wildfire smoke resilience plan reviews																			
2025				2026				2027				2028				2029			
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4

Actions in progress and planned for Recommendation 3.2:

- The Spokane Community Resilience Collaborative plans to conduct annual reviews of the Spokane Wildfire Smoke Resilience Plan and make updates based on community feedback.

Recommendation 4.1 Conduct a comprehensive wildfire smoke resilience assessment																			
2025				2026				2027				2028				2029			
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4

No actions were planned or in progress regarding conducting a Spokane-wide wildfire smoke resilience assessment at the time this plan was published.

Recommendation 4.2 Improve accessibility of residential air filtration infrastructure																			
2025				2026				2027				2028				2029			
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4

Actions in progress and planned for Recommendation 4.2:

- Spokane Neighborhood Action Partners regularly provides support to low-income Spokane residents for installation of electric heat pumps and plans to continue doing so for the coming years.
- The Lands Council, in partnership with the Gonzaga Climate Institute and with funding from the Washington State Department of Ecology, will be distributing HEPA portable air cleaners to 300 households from the summer of 2025 through the summer of 2026.
- 350 Spokane regularly hands out free DIY air filter kits (box fan + MERV 13 filters) in the summers.
- The Carl Maxey Center will be distributing free MERV 13 filters to East Central residents during the summer of 2025.

Recommendation 4.3 Improve air filtration and ventilation standards for Spokane buildings																			
2025				2026				2027				2028				2029			
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4

As of the time of publication, there were no actions in progress or planned in regard to updating air filtration and ventilation standards for Spokane buildings.

Recommendation 4.4 Integrate ventilation corridors into urban planning measures																			
2025				2026				2027				2028				2029			
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4

At the time of publication, there were no actions planned or in progress in Spokane in regard to ventilation corridors in urban planning.

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Spokane Wildfire Smoke Resilience Plan

2025-2030

A Spokane Community Resilience Collaborative project

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