

TRIP PURPOSE: CITY OF SPOKANE DELEGATION TO DENMARK AND SWEDEN

SEPTEMBER 9th-14th, 2018

Executive Summary:

The City of Spokane will be the host governmental agency in a professional knowledge exchange trip to Denmark and Sweden in September 2018, focused on sustainable infrastructure and the green economy. Sustainability capitalizes on the triple bottom line and is the best direction to guide Spokane's future growth to outcompete less sustainable and less resourced cities in the Intermountain West.

The trip is designed to:

- Provide a shared experience to allow for the development of a common vision for the Spokane region's emergence in the green economy—a critical growth strategy for our community.
- Explore solutions to infrastructure and environmental challenges that could be adapted in Spokane.
- Allow for expanded thinking around green business sectors and circular economy strategies that are well-suited for Spokane.

The trip is led by iSustain and partially funded by the Scan Design Foundation. Along with elected and appointed staff from the City, the trip will include key leaders outside the City from business, non-governmental agencies (NGOs), and state and local government to create a core working group to advance and execute a shared vision.

Overview & Outcomes

Securing Spokane's future through sustainable infrastructure and prosperity in the green economy:

Land, water, power and people: These are Spokane's greatest assets to our emergence in the green economy. The green economy supports growth that sustains communities and the environment. For nearly two decades, the City of Spokane has quietly led our region in innovative, practical sustainability. Today, we are focused on actions that are environmentally and financially responsible. We seek to re-define the City as a wise steward of these resources and a catalyst for our economic future. The past seven years have seen tremendous accomplishments through initiatives such as our Integrated Clean Water Plan, Link Spokane, and Vision 2020: Safer, Stronger, Smarter.

Alignment around the new Joint Mayor-Council Strategic Plan: The City of Spokane's One Voice Strategic Plan commits us to creating integrated green infrastructure, sustainable financial and business resources, a safe and healthy community and a rich urban experience. The goals of the Spokane Delegation to Denmark and Sweden comes at the perfect time to build and expand upon the Initiatives alongside our business, government and community partners.

Why now? Spokane aspires to be the most resilient, sustainable, thriving urban community in the U.S. A Spokane-specific trip will expose delegates to a greater breadth of integrated infrastructure projects involving enhancements to industrial symbiosis, waste to energy, the circular economy, place-making, public-private partnerships, green infrastructure, net zero waste, cross-laminated timber, closed-loop forestry, and energy security including microgrids as well as district heating with biomass or waste water. Sustainability, which capitalizes on the triple bottom line, is our best direction guiding growth to outcompete less sustainable and less resourced cities in the Intermountain west.

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Co-creating knowledge through shared learning travel: A professional knowledge exchange between the City of Spokane, our regional government partners and leaders from Denmark and Sweden comes at an optimal time. We have established a broad vision for our sustainability and resiliency work, but we still have multiple integrated, cross-cutting projects currently in the planning and strategy stages such as U District, Public Development Authorities, and Urbanova. Spokane's leaders, understanding the impact our development and infrastructure decisions will have on generations to come, are specifically looking for more contact with the people and agencies in Denmark who can help us advance our vision to develop Spokane. Spokane leaders wish to build on the relationships and experiences we'll encounter, extending the profile of the Danish expertise to the Eastern side of Washington State.

Expected outcomes: The key outcome is a shared vision for the Spokane region's emergence in the green economy, and concrete examples of how to align around that vision through a collaborative governance model, sharing execution among City, State, business and community partners. Like previous delegations, we will follow up with a series of events in Spokane. We will work with local leaders and the Center for Sustainable Infrastructure, Gehl Institute, and i-SUSTAIN to identify other experts who we could bring from Scandinavia - Kalundborg in particular- to Spokane to share their expertise with leaders not part of the delegation, city staff and the community.

Delegates: Scan Design Foundation understands that public employees do not often have the opportunity to engage in travel learning or cultural exchange. Recognizing the transformative impact of learning global best practices for urban sustainability, the Foundation has generously donated twelve scholarships enabling the City and our public partners to attend. Private participants will self-pay to join the trip led by iSUSTAIN, a 15-year leader in global urban design learning. To that end, the City is inviting a visionary group of individual leaders including the Mayor, Council members, State Legislators, public and private utility executives, architecture and engineering firms, educators and more.

Key Spokane initiatives this delegation will build upon:

- **Integrated Clean Water Plan.** This plan details a \$340 million investment in the health of the Spokane River. The plan manages overflows from legacy combined sewers, add tertiary treatment at the City's singular wastewater treatment plant, and builds in stormwater management features, both as separate infrastructure and as components of street projects and other infrastructure. The next step is to fully embrace low impact development and green infrastructure as a means of sustainable growth that protects our precious river and aquifer.
- **Green Bonds.** The City was one of the first municipalities in the nation to sell "green" revenue bonds, focusing the proceeds on work that improves the health of the river and protects our sole-source aquifer. These bonds were highly sought after by like-minded investors and received a very competitive 3.08 percent interest rate as a result.
- **Multiple Benefits from Infrastructure Investments.** The City has realized that public acceptance of environmental infrastructure work requires above-ground amenities that add value to their daily lives. Projects to manage wastewater and stormwater flows now include parks, river view plazas and vistas, new pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, canoe and kayak river access points and more to enrich the lives of citizens.

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- **Affordability.** A healthy community is affordable and just for all citizens. Our local median household income is far lower than the state and national median household income levels. We have committed to limiting utility rate increases to an annual inflationary figure while still delivering superior environmental results.
- **Climate and resiliency.** We like to say that Spokane is blessed to be the “blank spot” on the FEMA map. We are far less prone to natural disasters that plague places. We are just beginning to understand how that will play into a strategy that promotes and protects our natural resiliency. We know that climate change will bring change, including more frequent and intense storms. But if protected, our natural setting, at the center of three converging ecosystems, provides a natural buffer while supporting recreation, forestry & farming. We are working to adapt our infrastructure to accommodate this change and seek the innovation we’ll need.
- **Waste to Energy Facility.** Spokane is the only community in Washington State with a Waste to Energy Facility; we chose this approach in the late 1980s when faced with the prospect of closing leaking landfills. Because of the lack of other similar facilities, our facility is misunderstood and mischaracterized by many in our state, who don’t understand the benefits of WTE over landfill. We need third-party affirmation on the quality of this technology.
- **Smart Cities.** Just as infill development protects land for growth, smart technologies save energy and water for sustainable growth. Pumping and treating water are two of the City’s largest energy costs as is lighting our night for safety and travel. By employing innovation in cost-effective smart metering, we can save energy, air quality, and water for the future.

Ideas and experiences we wish to explore in Denmark:

- **Use of Energy Assets.** The City generates its own hydro power, biogas and steam/electricity from WTE. While we have determined we are a net positive energy generator, we haven’t realized additional benefit from this energy capacity for citizens. We seek businesses that might use steam from WTE and other approaches to maximize energy security and value for citizens.
- **Promotion of Zero Waste, Circular Economy business development.** Because of our WTE asset, we also have the ability to offer businesses zero-landfill opportunities. We need a way to expose potential customers to this opportunity.
- **Quality of Life Experience.** We want to share our vision and our commitment to a sustainable, resilient community with those who share those values. We believe we are positioned to attract businesses that value a vibrant, walkable, urban experience intertwined with our natural environment.
- **Green Economy.** Given our regional agricultural and timber resources, we would like to explore circular economy opportunities like Cross Laminated Timber, co-generation from agricultural waste, and other ideas.
- **Community Value.** We seek to experience first-hand how the lives of the Danish people are changed by an integrated, sustainable, healthy lifestyle, supported by the choices of their government. We want to know what they value, how they perceive their assets, and how their acceptance of these concepts developed.

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