

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**CITY LEADS EFFORT TO ENSURE
AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPTIONS**

*Solution requires contributions from local, state, federal governments,
social service agencies, and private sector*

Mayor Dennis Hession announced that the City of Spokane will lead a multi-jurisdictional effort to address the availability of affordable housing within the Spokane region. The Mayor has established an Affordable Housing Task Force to tackle both immediate and long-term needs.

“The need for affordable housing is a community problem that requires a community solution,” says Mayor Hession. “We must work together to find a solution that meets our needs.”

The task force will be made up of community leaders from government, social service agencies, and the private sector. They are being asked:

- To create an emergency housing relocation policy and plan to meet short-term community needs.
- To develop a strategic long-term plan and policy for affordable housing that addresses needs for the next 10 to 20 years.

“We have a need—and a responsibility—to serve all residents within our community,” says Rep. Timm Ormsby, who will serve on the Task Force. “The issue of affordable housing has been a priority of mine in the Legislature. It is clear that a solution will require funding from multiple sources—local, state, and federal agencies along with social service providers and the private sector.”

In addition to Rep. Ormsby, the Task Force will include:

- Marty Dickinson, president of the Downtown Spokane Partnership, Chair.
- Joe Shogan, City Council President, Vice Chair.
- Cathy Mann, VOICES
- Marilee Roloff, Volunteers of America
- Christine McCabe, Avista Utilities and member of the City’s Human Services Advisory Board and the 2163 Task Force.
- Toby Hatley, City’s Community Development Board.

- Jeff Nave, Downtown Spokane Partnership Board of Directors
- Jim Kolva, Downtown Spokane Partnership Board of Directors.
- Chris Batten, REN Corp.
- Larry Soehren, Kiemle & Hagood Co.
- Ray Rickers, Spokane Neighborhood Action Plan (SNAP)
- Terry Lawhead, CTED.
- Christine Barada, Spokane County Community Services.
- Tom Tremaine, Northwest Justice Project.
- Randall L. Fewel, Inland Northwest Bank.
- Rev. Lonnie Mitchell, Bethel AME and representing six urban churches.
- Arlene Patton, Spokane office of the federal Housing & Urban Development Department.
- Police Chief Anne Kirkpatrick.
- Fire Chief Bobby Williams

“We have attracted over a billion dollars in new investment in our downtown, and we have succeeded in creating a place where all kinds of people want to live, work, and play,” says Marty Dickinson, of the DSP. “As a community we now need to decide how we will continue to offer a mix of housing that meets the needs of all.”

The immediate need for additional low-income housing comes from the anticipated sale and closure of both of the New Madison and Otis hotels, which have long served individuals with very low incomes. These sales are on top of the sale of the Commercial Building, which also served low-income residents.

The work of the task force also should complement the ongoing work of a separate community task force that is evaluating housing and social service needs in the West Central neighborhood. The task force was formed earlier this year by Mayor Hession in response to concerns about the impact of proposed new developments in the West Central neighborhood. The City committed to working toward a goal of adding 25 affordable housing units in the neighborhood beyond what would have been created ordinarily by 2017.