

For Immediate Release

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Shaping Spokane Together housing affordability coalition launches

Spokane, WA – On Wednesday, March 22nd, at 5:30 PM at The Hive Library (2904 E Sprague Ave, Spokane, WA 99202), the Shaping Spokane Together housing coalition launched their campaign for new housing affordability policies in Spokane.

The SST coalition, led by Futurewise, was first convened over a year ago to identify shared community priorities for housing action in Spokane. Michelle Pappas, Futurewise Spokane Program Manager, presented the coalition’s policy priorities and invited speakers to share their housing stories.

“As a mom who has personally experienced homelessness, I am thrilled to see the Shaping Spokane Together coalition come together to advocate for housing solutions in our community. We’ve spent years studying the issues – now is the time for action.” – Michelle Pappas, Futurewise Spokane Program Manager

The housing affordability policies advocated for by the SST coalition build on the recent passage of the landlord-tenant ordinance and include:

- Working with the community to develop a voluntary density incentive for housing developments consisting of 100% affordable units (Voluntary Inclusionary Housing - Affordable Housing Development Incentive).
- Working with the community to develop a policy allowing increased density in exchange for affordable housing units (Voluntary Inclusionary Housing - Incentive Housing Affordability).
- [Proactive rental assistance]
- Increasing [the number of disability accessible units](#) in Multi-Family Housing.
- Making permanent the [Building Opportunity and Choices for All](#), Building Opportunities for Housing.

Jesús Torres, Political Advocate at Mujeres in Action, spoke to the impacts of these policies on low-income families in Spokane:

“We want to create a diverse community where everyone is welcome, where we can ensure that economically disadvantaged people have more opportunities, where they can escape generational poverty, and they can reach their full potential.”

Paul Dillon, Vice President of Public Affairs at Planned Parenthood of Greater Washington and Idaho, gave remarks connecting access to housing and healthcare for patients in Spokane, sharing:

“We know really well at Planned Parenthood that nobody should have to choose between paying for a roof over your head and healthcare.”

Speakers also outlined the impact on people living with disabilities. Mels Felton, Program Director at Inland Northwest Disability Experience (INDEX), spoke about calls they received from people living in institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic who aspired to live independently:

“One of the things I consistently saw was people calling me and saying, I just need accessible housing. I just need somewhere I can go where I can access it with my wheelchair or I can have a grab bar. And I had to say, that doesn’t exist right now. We don’t have places for people to transition to.”

Naydelin Olalde speaking on behalf of the Hispanic Business Professionals Association shared her personal story of searching for housing, emphasizing HBPA’s priority of securing housing for people who have a language barrier:

“I was lucky to get support from a stranger but hundreds of people don’t get that. That’s why we’re here today.”

The SST coalition priorities have been endorsed by: Futurewise, Mujeres in Action, Planned Parenthood of Greater Washington and North Idaho, LOK Engineering, Northwest Fair Housing Alliance, Spectrum Center Spokane, Inland NW Disability Experience, Carl Maxey Center, Jasmin Group, Peace and Justice League of Spokane and Hispanic Business Professionals Association.

[The SST sign on letter can be found here.](#)
