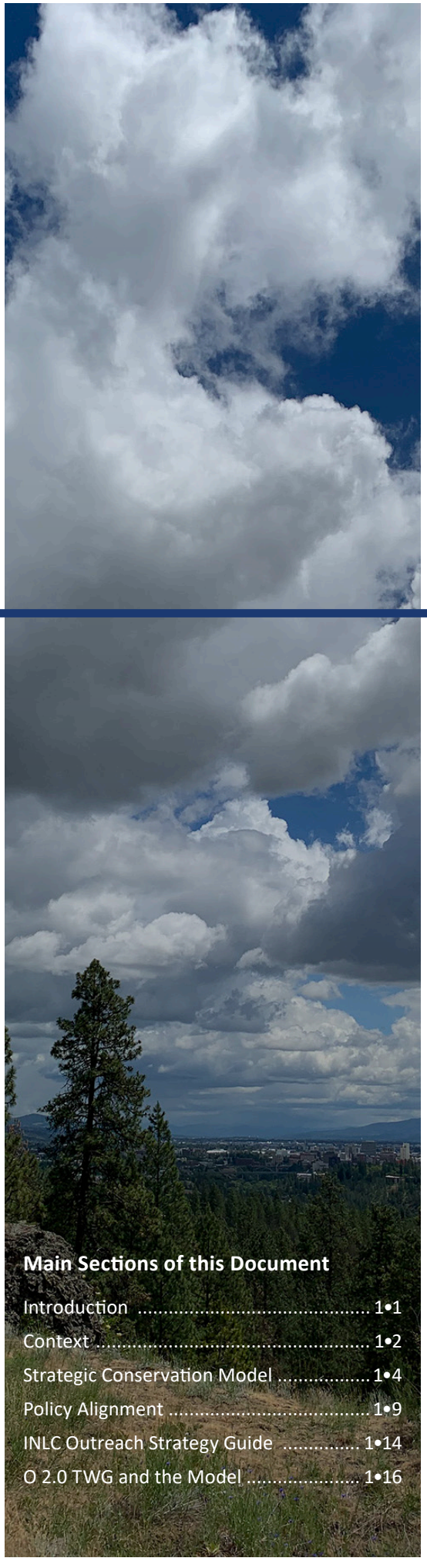

INLC & Olmsted 2.0: Mission Support Memo

Introduction

The contents of this memorandum and associated work were initiated by the Inland Northwest Land Conservancy (INLC), a nonprofit founded in 1991 "... to connect people to nature by conserving the lands and waters essential to life." INLC envisions a region of thriving natural habitats enjoyed and respected by the people who live in and visit the Inland Northwest. In support of its mission, INLC fostered the creation of an independent group to lead development of a long-range open-space plan for much of Spokane County, much as the famous Olmsted Brothers landscape architecture firm had done for the City of Spokane in 1908.[1] This group and its namesake project, the Olmsted 2.0 Technical Working Group (O2.0 TWG), began with its own mission to "...build enduring connections between protected lands, trails, and people in Spokane County for the benefit of our environmental and community health."

This document provides a number of important elements key to advancing the objectives of both INLC and the O2.0 TWG and the future Olmsted 2.0 plan, including:

1 *Report of the Board of Park Commissioners, Spokane Washington; Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects, Brookline, MA, 1913.*

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- **A policy analysis** – This document lists and compares parks and open space policies adopted by Spokane County with those championed by the O2.0 Group, noting how policies align;
- **A GIS mapping toolkit** – This document introduces the Geographic Information System (GIS) data sets and methodologies used to produce a model land acquisition map for INLC. By intent, this model's configuration serves both entities, guiding strategic development and garnering support. It also is dynamic by design, anticipating that its outputs evolve as conditions and available data sets change;
- **An outreach strategy guide** – This document provides a basic "how to" table for public outreach, associating numerous techniques for engaging participants with key reasons to do so, providing INLC and the O2.0 TWG improved means to optimize outreach outcomes.[2]

Together, the above items provide INLC and the O2.0 TWG important strategic decision-making, fund-raising and outreach tools, supporting immediate and ongoing efforts to conserve open space lands and waterways in the Spokane region.

Context

Current development and population trends indicate that Spokane County is and will likely continue to experience high rates of growth. While a growing population can boost economic and cultural prosperity, such energies will almost certainly result in the transformation of un-developed lands, creating an ever-widening urban footprint. Ironically, these "natural" lands sublimated by growth – including the numerous lakes, streams and rivers, forested ridge-lines and verdant farmlands – are widely recognized as among our County's greatest assets, at once valued as-is and as a catalyst for growth. Effective policies recognize a larger, long-term picture, balancing considerations including economic vitality, personal and community health benefits, provision of clean air and water, and crucial habitat for native plants and animals. Careless, unchecked development risks all of these, undermining quality of life for current and future residents while permanently eroding the very features that attract (and sustain) local economic growth.

Regional policies seem to acknowledge this, but given the scores of agencies, interest and owner groups involved, coordination and implementation presents substantial, ongoing challenges. Organizations such as the INLC exist to address these issues, recognizing the essential value of intentional forethought and planning to support growth and development joined in concert with the protection of natural lands for traditional needs such as farming and forestry, recreational needs such as

2 *This section references two template exercises for future community engagement.*

Figure 1.1 – *Though typically far smaller in scope than that envisioned by the Olmsted 2.0 project, similar plans like the 2010 plan for the Wenatchee Foothills provide case-study examples for progress.*

hiking, biking and horseback riding, and conservation and climate needs that preserve habitat and support clean air and water.

Olmsted 2.0

Inspired by the 1908 Olmsted Brothers Park Plan for the City of Spokane – a plan that has resulted in a robust park system that delivers equitable access to green space for a large number of City residents – in 2018 the INLC began promoting the creation of an ambitious, county-wide plan for open space conservation, framed the "Olmsted 2.0 Plan" (O2.0). As initially envisioned, O2.0 would reveal opportunities to expand, connect and enhance natural lands and open space throughout all of Spokane County, benefitting residents for the next 100 years.

As interest in O2.0 grew, INLC began convening a stakeholder group called the Olmsted 2.0 Technical Working Group (O2.0 TWG).[3] Initial meetings solidified the group's mission, captured as:

> *From river to ridges, creating a connected parks and trails system in Spokane County.*

The O2.0 Group also established the following vision:

> *Inspired by the Olmsted brothers' original plan for Spokane's park system, we envision an interconnected trail system, used and supported by the community, connecting public*

3 *The Olmsted 2.0 Technical Working Group is now an official program committee of INLC.*

lands, parks and waterways now and for the next hundred years.

INLC conceived Olmsted 2.0 as an initiative to help rally conservation, recreation, business leaders, land managers, policy-makers, and open space organizations around a common cause. But because (as imagined) Olmsted 2.0 will encompass more than conservation, the INLC envisions a future where its leadership role transitions to something more akin to that of other, supporting and allied organizations.

Strategic Conservation Model

One of the INLC and O2.0 TWG's first initiatives involved development of a strategic "tool-kit", including the means to identify, map and inventory current and potential future trail corridors and conservation lands, as well as large-scale wildlife corridors in Spokane county. The TWG's intention also envisioned that this model be used by local jurisdictions – in potential partnership with nonprofit and community organizations, public agencies, and private citizens – to select and pursue acquisition or securing of lands most suitable for conservation, preservation, and connectivity.[4]

With grant support from the Innovia Foundation and other funders, and on behalf of the TWG, INLC contracted with regional planning firm SCJ Alliance to create a preliminary GIS (Geographic Information Systems) model for evaluating conservation opportunities in Spokane County, assisting INLC with its own interests in addition to O2.0 objectives.

The resulting "strategic conservation model" (GIS model) identifies and prioritizes individual land parcels based on four main criteria, identifying lands that are:

- Contiguous to land already protected;
- Within or near open space areas;
- Vulnerable to imminent threat of development or land use conversion;
- Already consolidated in large ownership.

A preliminary output based on the above and subsequent details is included as Figure 1.2. Actual GIS files and operational instruction has been provided to the INLC as part of the project's deliverable set.

GIS Model Details

The GIS model developed for INLC and O2.0 was designed to be open-source and adaptive to evolving priorities. For example, stakeholders interested in trails may overlay spatial trails data on the model,

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4 Funding for conservation may include private and community foundations, county and state sources, bonds/ levies, corporate partnerships and private philanthropy.

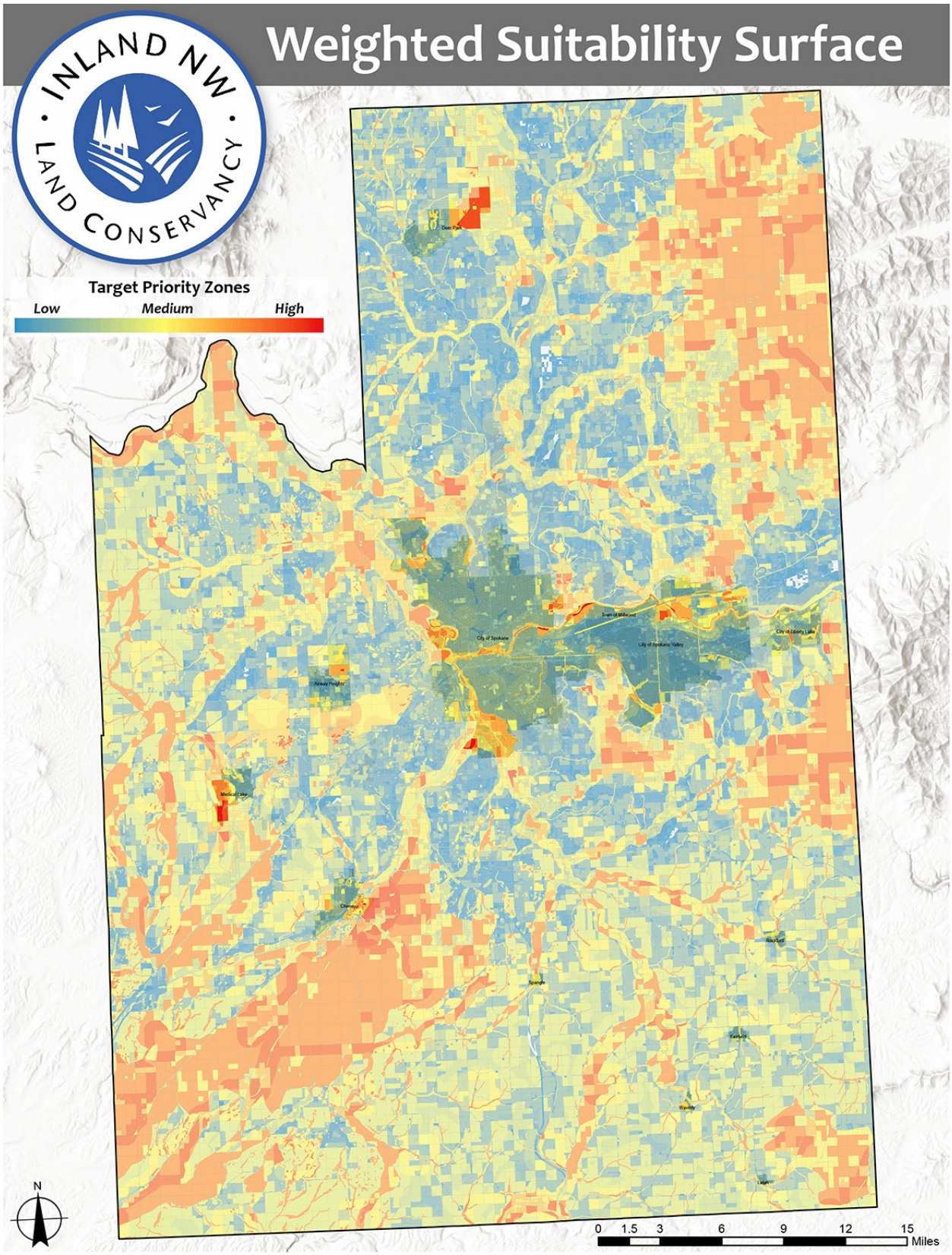

Figure 1.2 – *A draft map, illustrating the type of output generated by the data and weighting rubric developed for INLC's conservation objectives.*

demonstrating how conservation and trails objectives may align. With input from additional stakeholders, the model is expected to evolve as a result of this functionality, allowing new interest-specific data to illustrate converging interests – and potential opportunities.

Model output may be used as a static reference, illustrating, for instance, conservation-specific priorities. It may also be used as an open source tool, accepting new data layers and made available for adaptation and analysis by partners looking to create their own “heat maps” and geographically-based lists of priority actions.

As listed earlier, the GIS model was developed to spotlight those land parcels that are contiguous with existing open spaces; are potentially threatened with development or other degradation of conservation value; and are of a size that a significant addition to the conservation inventory can be made by dealing with a minimal number of legal transactions and land deals.

Serving these purposes, the GIS model focuses on four essential topics for evaluation. Layers associated with "Protected Lands" and "Open Spaces" are considered “qualifiers,” meaning that any candidate land parcel must fulfill criteria associated with these layers to be considered for acquisition. Two other layer sets – "Urban Growth Areas" and "Parcel Sizes" – allow evaluation of respective “Threat” and “Opportunity" topics to help prioritize acquisition. Layer categories are detailed as:

Protected Lands (Qualifier)

This layer represents land that surrounds areas already protected for conservation by INLC. Prioritizing these areas allows INLC and other conservation organizations to add value to existing investments, supporting the formation of a more contiguous and connected network of conservation land. As configured, the model establishes a half-mile buffer around existing permanently protected lands, designating land within these buffers as a priority for future conservation.

Open Spaces (Qualifier)

Similar to protected lands, open spaces are recognized as valuable for conservation, providing connectivity for natural processes such as wildlife migration and water flow. As these lands are already designated open space, their conservation and expansion allows for greater contiguity of existing natural lands and provides a healthy buffer from development or other disruptions. Thus, this layer group and weighting scheme identifies open space corridors and land within one-half mile of existing open space corridors as a priority for future conservation.

Urban Growth Areas (Threat)

Urban growth areas (UGAs) are lands that the County designates for future growth and development. These lands have a high likelihood of being

developed in the near future due to their designation as part the UGA. This model establishes a priority level based on whether lands are within incorporated areas, in the UGA, or are just outside the UGA. The highest priority in this set was given to incorporated areas because they have the highest probability of being developed. UGA areas were provided a slightly lower priority, commensurate with their slightly lower probability for development. Finally, land within a one-mile buffer of the UGA were included in the model analysis, but given less priority than land within the UGA, since development in such areas is typically slow and minimal.

Parcel Sizes (Opportunity)

Parcel sizes are important to consider in the acquisition process. Larger parcels were prioritized in this model due to their ability to offer greater cohesion to protected conservation lands.

Aspirational Layers (Opportunity)

Additional advisory layers could include (but not be limited to):

- Urban parks
- Wildlife territory/habitat
- Trails (soft surface, hard surface, urban)
- Agriculture
- Rivers, lakes & waterways
- Social justice considerations

Table 1.1 below summarizes the value rubric applied in the GIS model, reflecting the range of priority applied in weighting relevant features across the geo-spatial layers.

Table 1.1 – *Strategic Conservation Model (User outline)*

Layer	Category	Value	Reasoning
Protected Lands	Within one-half mile	10 points	*There are thousands of acres already in "protected" status, owned by public agencies and dedicated to open space use. Some of these parcels are also subject to conservation easements, restricting development opportunity. This layer is based on information provided by INLC and augmented with the addition of public parkland and other public land holdings not included in the INLC data. Weighting of this layer places priority on land that is proximate to the existing protected lands, making clear the desire to connect open space lands and increase their contiguity.*
Open Spaces	Within designation	35 points	*This layer places high priority on land that is either within the County's Open Space designation or nearby. By prioritizing acquisition along open space corridors, this model emphasizes ecological and habitat continuity and builds on the County's existing conservation policies. Acquiring land either within or near these designated open spaces will also ensure that conservation acquisitions protect sensitive corridors and provide opportunities to control access to them.*
	Within one-half mile	10 points	
Urban Growth Areas	Within city limits	15 points	*Land conservation is equal parts location and timing. A priority for the TWG is to find land that has strong visual impact, is accessible to the public, and sets in motion a spirit of popular appreciation for the value of land conservation. For Olmsted 2.0, this translates to prioritizing land protection proximate to the County's population. This is also land that may be at highest risk of conversion from open space or rural landscape to an urban context. Acting quickly to acquire land near urban areas is a high priority.*
	Within UGA	10 points	
	Within one mile of UGA	5 points	
Parcel Sizes	Greater than 100 acres	40 points	*Larger parcel sizes can make the acquisition process more manageable, allowing conservationists to preserve more acres and deal with fewer landowners. A single, large-parcel acquisition can achieve a great degree of continuity, too, in a single move. This layer prioritizes large parcels over smaller ones, realizing that cobbling together significant acquisitions involving smaller landholdings can be a real challenge, with no real guarantee that all parcels will fall in line.*
	25 to 100 acres	20 points	
	15 to 25 acres	10 points	
	5 to 15 acres	5 points	

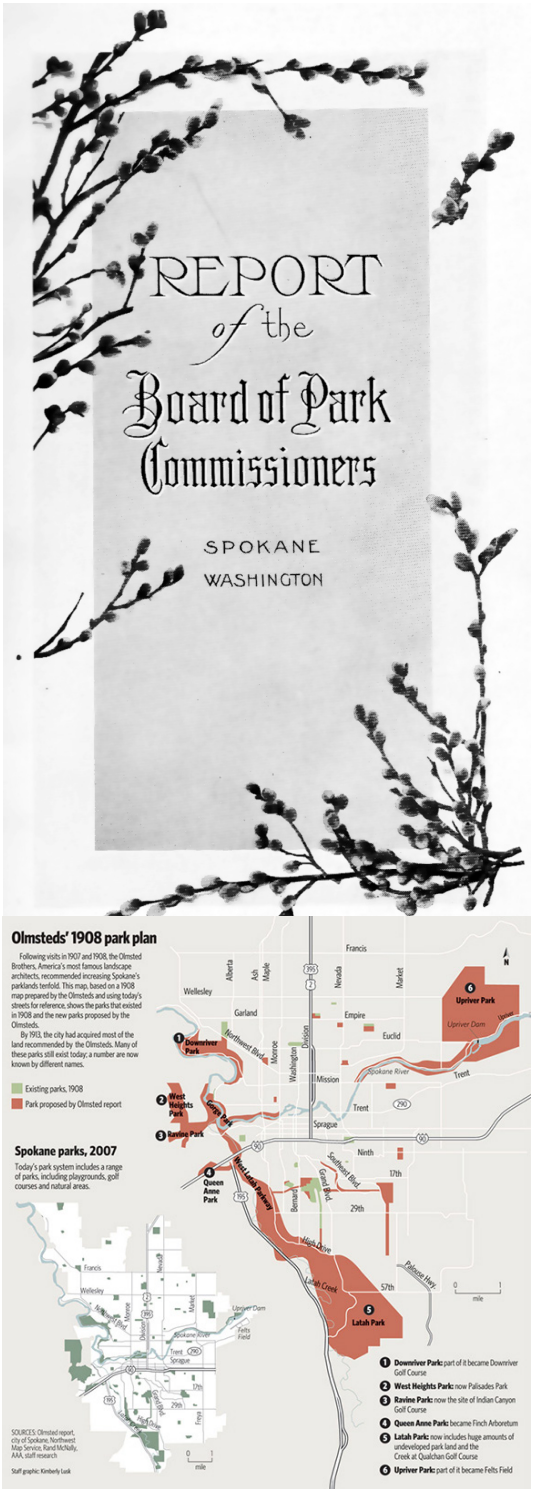

Figure 1.03 – *Spokane's 1908 Olmsted report (1913 release) was one the City's most transformative plans, directing conservation of what are today many of Spokane's most cherished landscapes and parks.*

In addition, other layer models were provided that represent the analysis of others, illustrating heat maps that may be used for reference or validation. These allow INLC to compare the results of its modeling with those of others, potentially helping cement partnerships where the strategic objectives of other groups coincide with INLC's.[5] These models include:

Parks to Peaks (2003)

This heat map was prepared by Dr. Kerry Brooks of EWU using a combination of data layers blending habitat, land ownership, terrain, and other factors to illustrate how land in Spokane County can be aggregated to achieve continuity of open space to satisfy ecological, watershed and recreational objectives. These objectives coincide in many ways with those of INLC, but the model's 2003 "point in time" may not necessarily represent the latest in geo-spatial status. Still, it provides an excellent high-level look at how aggregation of various properties can contribute to conservation efforts and an initial guide to help potential partners work together to achieve shared priority outcomes.

Conservation Priorities

The Washington Biodiversity Council (WBC) has developed a Spokane County heat map comparing a variety of factors that balance biodiversity significance and risk of biodiversity loss. The WBC model produces a heat map that identifies where species diversity and vulnerability are greatest, targeting hexagonally-shaped regions for priority action. While ecological function and value is an important element of land conservation, this heat map may best serve as a comparator to INLC's model. As with Parks to Peaks, it can guide strategic and tactical coordination with conservation partners.

5 *These secondary models were built using many of the same data already incorporated into the INLC model, so direct inclusion of these in INLC mapping may result in double-counting of criteria.*

Policy Alignment

Spokane County adopted its most recent Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan in 2020, supporting its current Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2013. Both plans, among many other things, establish goals and policies to guide and shape the parks and open space system in Spokane County. These goals and policies are coordinated with and are intended to influence nearly everything the County does, including zoning, capital programming, public lands management, and road and trail access networks. They form the basis for conservation efforts at a regional scale. These set the context within which INLC and its partners may implement the O2.0 vision, acknowledging how the County will look at conservation and dedicate its resources to achieve common objectives.[6]

The O2.0 TWG has developed and adopted its own set of goals and policies, unique to its mission and needs. Yet because the County will almost certainly be a critical partner in achieving O2.0 goals, the TWG recognizes the importance of demonstrating how and where its policies align with the County's.

The following presents the (applicable) goals adopted as part of the 2020 Spokane County Parks Plan:

- *Goal PO.1 – Provide an inclusive park system that benefits the broadest range of age, social, economic and special group interests and abilities.*
- *Goal PO.2 – Continue to develop a sustainable and efficient park system that meets the growing needs of a growing population while recognizing historic budgetary trends and other long-term trends.*
- *Goal PO.3 – Monitor and support efforts to maintain a level of service goal for developed community parks of 1.4 acres per 1,000 population for the Urban Growth Areas (UGA) and update /enchance existing County community parks.*
- *Goal PO.5 – Support and pursue the expansion and connection of open space areas and corridors that ensure long-term viability and connectivity for wildlife & trail-based recreation in Spokane County.*
- *Goal PO.6 – Manage open space area lands to balance wildlife, recreation, and community needs.*
- *Goal PO.7 – Utilize the Spokane County Regional Trails Plan that envisions a county-wide system of multipurpose non-motorized trails to secure, preserve, and develop a network of*

6 Notably, Spokane County's own conservation efforts are supported by the Conservation Futures Program, which as of 2019, has led to the acquisition of more than 8,875 acres.

trails throughout Spokane County that connect communities and provide easily accessed recreational opportunities.

These goals are consistent with the new ones established in this plan in (Table 1.1). Goals PO.1, PO.2, and PO.7 support creating a network of trails and open space for the benefit of the residents of the Spokane County community, recognizing the importance of parks and open space to the community's quality of life and well-being. Goals PO.5 and PO.6 protect and conserve valuable natural habitat and resources for the continued healthy functioning of the ecosystems and natural processes within Spokane County.

Each of these Spokane County parks goals is supported by a set of conservation policies from the parks plan (Table 1.2). Because of their relevance to Olmsted 2.0, they are used here, too, as the foundation for the values and weights incorporated in the geospatial strategic Conservation model.

A review of comprehensive plans and parks and open space plans for the jurisdictions of the City of Spokane, City of Spokane Valley, City of Millwood, City of Liberty Lake, City of Airway Heights, City of Cheney, and

Table 1.1 – *Olmsted 2.0 Goals*

Goal No.	Goal	Spokane County Policy Reference
1	*Identify and expand the variety of conservation tools, methods, strategies and actions available to communities and individuals for protecting a variety of open space resources.*	1.5, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.5, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9, 5.10, 5.11, 5.12, 5.13, 5.18, 7.1, 7.2
2	*Deal fairly and openly with property owners and work cooperatively with local governments, citizens, and partners to achieve conservation goals.*	2.1, 2.2, 5.1, 5.2, 5.10, 5.11,5.12, 5.15, 5.18
3	*Establish conservation priorities through evaluations of urban and rural land conservation needs and informed by public input.*	1.1, 1.5, 1.6, 1.10, 5.1, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9, 5.10, 5.12, 6.6, 7.2, 7.3, 7.5
4	*Establish priorities for governmental action to conserve specific open space parcels and cultural resources.*	1.11, 2.1, 2.2, 2.5, 3.5, 3.6, 5.1, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9, 5.10, 5.15, 5.17, 5.18
5	*Identify future funding needs and stewardship expenses.*	3.6, 5.2, 5.3, 5.11, 5.13
6	*Recruit and involve a range of stakeholders with the intent of creating a vision that is fair and equitable and serves a broad base of constituents.*	1.5, 1.6, 1.10, 5.1,6.6, 7.2
7	*Protect wildlife habitats for diversity and the sustainability of flora and fauna.*	1.3, 2.5, 2.7, 5.2, 5.14, 6.1, 6.3, 6.6, 6.7
8	*Improve the quality of life and the health of our communities.*	3.5, 5.16, 5.17, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5, 7.6
9	*Protect and enhance scenic, historic, and cultural resources*	1.2, 1.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9, 5.10, 5.18
10	*Provide access to high quality outdoor recreation that provide appropriate levels of service as established by Spokane County.*	1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 2.2, 3.5, 3.7, 5.17, 6.2, 6.4, 6.5, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5

Table 1.2 – *Conservation-Related Policies in the Spokane County Parks Plan*

SPO Policy No.	Policy Statement
1.1	*Development of new parks and recreation facilities shall be consistent with the Spokane County Comprehensive Plan and the Spokane County Park Plan.*
1.3	*Locate parks to provide for a variety of outdoor activities and to preserve and protect important habitat areas, corridors and linkages, natural amenities (e.g., wetlands and shorelines), unique landscape features (e.g., cliffs and bluffs) or other outstanding natural features.*
1.7	*Target waterfront areas (lakes, streams and rivers) to provide public access within the carrying-capacity limits of water resources and adjacent natural systems.*
2.1	*Coordinate and cooperate with both public and private sector interests to further park and recreation opportunities.*
2.2	*Coordinate park planning and land acquisition efforts across jurisdictional boundaries and consider existing and planned infrastructure, population served, environmental constraints, and available resources.*
2.5	*Acquire and develop regional parks outside of the UGA that support numerous recreational activities and natural resource protection benefits. Such parks shall be sited and designed to attract regional visitors.*
2.7	*Acquire and preserve open space areas proximate to the UGA that preserve viewsheds, provide easy access to the core of Spokane County's residents, and provide numerous natural resource conservation benefits.*
3.5	*Future community parks should be greater than 10 acres in size to adequately serve current and projected population and provide a diverse range of recreational opportunities unless opportunities arise (i.e. through donation, etc.) to obtain smaller sites at little to no cost to County Parks or current land use patterns prevent a larger property from being acquired in an area of need.*
3.6	*Monitor the availability of state, federal, and other sources to fund the acquisition and development of community and regional parks. Work with other departments, jurisdictions, non-profit organizations, and private individuals to secure local match.*
4.4	*Sustainable design principles should be considered in the design of County parks and recreation facilities to promote resource conservation and reduce long-term costs of managing such facilities.*
4.6	*When determined appropriate, retain the natural features of proposed parks and recreation areas and whenever feasible, designs should incorporate the use of native vegetation to reduce overall maintenance costs.*
5.1	*Continue to work with citizens, agencies, jurisdictions, and non-profit groups to identify priorities for open space preservation within Spokane County.*
5.2	*Utilize the Conservation Futures Tax (CFT) to purchase, preserve, and protect critical habitat and open space corridors throughout the County.*
5.3	*Continue to acquire and preserve land around Tower Mountain/Krell Ridge to connect Dishman Hills Natural Area with Dishman Hills Conservation Area and provide access to the public through a system of developed trailheads designed to serve multiple communities.*
5.4	*Continue to acquire and preserve land along the Lower Little Spokane River to expand the Little Spokane River Natural Area and the current water trail system therein.*
5.5	*Acquire and preserve land around Mica Peak to expand existing Liberty Lake Regional Park and preserve existing trails utilized by the public that currently traverse private property.*
5.6	*Work with other jurisdictions to meet shared goals for preserving open space lands and corridors throughout Spokane County.*
5.7	*Whenever possible, identify and apply for grant opportunities using CFT as match to facilitate acquisition of properties on the Conservation Futures Prioritized Acquisition List.*
5.8	*Develop additional and continue current revenue sources for the funding of open space preservation. Funding sources may include, but are not limited to, bond issues, additional levies, Conservation Futures Tax, land dedication, and the use of impact fees.*
5.9	*Utilize the Spokane County Critical Areas Ordinance, the Spokane County Comprehensive Plan (and Zoning Code), the Spokane Regional Trails Plan, and other agency plans or data sets to help prioritize areas for open space acquisition/ preservation.*
5.10	*Consider additional means for funding and preserving open space within Spokane County such as the transfer of development rights (TDR), donations (land and monetary), development impact (mitigation) fees, Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Trust Land Transfer Program, formation of a park district, acquisition by other jurisdiction/ organization.*

Table 1.2 – *Conservation-Related Policies in the Spokane County Parks Plan*

SPO Policy No.	Policy Statement
5.11	*The Conservation Futures Program should be flexible enough to take advantage of unforeseen opportunities as they become available. Such unforeseen opportunities may be of local, regional, or of state significance and/or provide a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to preserve and provide connectivity, high quality wildlife habitat and passive recreational opportunities.*
5.12	*Encourage the preservation and enhancement of open space by nonprofit organizations and private individuals.*
5.13	*Encourage the retention of all publicly owned open space areas.*
5.14	*Encourage the inclusion of functional open space within planned unit developments for residential, commercial and industrial development.*
5.15	*Level of service for open space should be maintained at 115 acres per 1,000 residents and increased when feasible.*
5.16	*Work with other agencies to acquire, preserve, enhance, and connect geologic sites identified on the Ice Age Floods National Recreational Trail.*
6.1	*Ensure that recreational uses are consistent with the protection and preservation of environmentally sensitive open spaces and wildlife corridors.*
6.2	*Manage all open space areas to maintain a balance of recreational uses that maintain a positive user experience for all public users.*
6.3	*Close, rehabilitate, or relocate trails that are determined to be unsustainable, promote erosion, and/or bisect critical sections of wildlife habitat within open space areas.*
6.4	*Provide when feasible trail heads that allow safe parking for visitors that helps promote legal, passive recreational uses within open space areas.*
6.5	*Review development (subdivision) proposals to evaluate potential impacts on Levels of Service and to identify opportunities for multiple use of proposed open space set aside through development regulations.*
6.6	*Utilize the Conservation Futures Best Management Practices (See: Appendix D) to help guide future stewardship of open space areas.*
7.1	*Provide trails for pedestrians (including, where feasible, access for persons with disabilities), bicyclists, equestrians, cross-country skiers and other non-motorized vehicle users.*
7.2	*Provide for linkages of communities, community facilities, workplaces, neighborhoods, schools, recreation areas, open space and cultural/historical areas.*
7.3	*Separate recreational trails from motorized vehicle traffic where feasible. Where separated trails are not feasible, then priority should be given to pedestrian safety.*
7.4	*Inventory, analyze, and preserve when possible existing rights-of-way (including abandoned rail and utility easements) for possible use as multipurpose non-motorized trails.*

City of Deer Park indicates overall jurisdictional consistency in appreciating the value of open space lands, conservation of sensitive habitats, and, where practical, facilitating recreational access to public open spaces.

Table 1.1 articulates Olmsted 2.0's goals, consistent with INLC's values and mission, indicating how Olmsted 2.0 goals are supported by County policies. Policies in Table 1.2 confirm INLC's core principles and Olmsted 2.0 goals are consistent with the County's priorities,assuring a continuing, productive partnership between the two bodies.

INLC and Spokane County have a long history of cooperation. Embedding County policy into the Olmsted 2.0 vision, values, and goals provides an easy reference to benefit this relationship for years to come. It also emphasizes that Olmsted 2.0 is a project of regional significance, reliant on partners for its success. County policy serves as a universal touchstone.

Still, Olmsted 2.0 can achieve things beyond those called for in the County's goals, empowering INLC and its partners in its actions and ensuring that, over all, the County's goals are advanced.

INLC Outreach Strategy Guide

INLC has commissioned this project to serve multiple organizational objectives, many of which will shape, guide and help interpret outreach to conservation partners, governmental agencies, and the general public. And part of the model's outreach value is internal, serving to update board members on acquisition activity and vet individual actions according to higher-level acquisition strategy.

The strategic conservation model's design can also adapt to reflect a variety of needs and audiences, and its structure welcomes updated data as conditions change. As a visual, it can quickly communicate priority acquisition areas based on relative wieghting of its criteria. As a relational, spatial data base, it can stretegically direct acquisition effort on a parcel-by-parcel basis. Its flexibility and dynamic nature make it a powerful outreach and engagement tool. And its fine-grained detail make it extraordinarily effective for direct acquisition action.

In immediate practice, the model can be used to:

Illustrate and monitor conservation strategy

INLC staff will use this model to work with the board on land acquisitions. Staff can use the model as an internal engagement tool to update the Board on negotiations with individual property owners, or demonstrate how INLC acquisition objectives align with agency policy and initiatives. The strategic conservation model may be a principal interface the Board has with acquisition strategy, providing a high-level perspective on acquisition priorities in a quick, accessible – but still conceptual – graphic.

Staff can also periodically check in with the Board to verify that the model's values used to set priorities are on target. As INLC staff updates it, the model will reflect changes in land ownership and division, agency acquisitions, urban growth area amendments, and regulatory restrictions. But it can also be used to reflect changes in values, allowing the Board to revisit and revise the weighting criteria used in the prioritizing scheme.

The map can be printed at a large scale and mounted in a prominent position, updated occasionally as conditions change. It can also be featured in the INLC annual report, serving as a continued reminder of Olmsted 2.0's regional significance and the importance of the Board's involvement in promoting the program and in ensuring the values held by the Board remain currently reflected in the model.

Identify priority acquisitions

At a finer grain, this model produces a parcel-specific list of priority acquisitions. This is something that staff can use as a internal resource, guiding work programs to contact property owners, build coalitions, negotiate easements, and work with agency partners.

Support development

This Olmsted 2.0 model – and the map accompanying it – can be a powerful fund-raising tool. The same map used by the Board as a daily reference can be part of a compelling INLC brochure, a component in presentations to partners or granting organizations, or the centerpiece of a dedicated campaign. (Technical working group will work to develop a robust funding section that is much more meaningful than this paragraph.)

Align Olmsted 2.0 working group activity

Collaboration and strategic partnerships will be essential to advance conservation at this scale. The working group's membership represents the interests of multiple organizations and agencies with similar objectives. This model is an important component in collaborative work, focusing efforts in those areas identified as priorities to stimulate and support action.

In addition, this model serves as a foundation for strategic acquisition. Members of the working group will have access to the data layers within this model and can augment them as they need to reflect their own objectives, too. Those focused on recreation may wish to map and model impacts and opportunities for trails and specific recreational characteristics keyed to their needs and directives. Those focused on habitat and species conservation may wish to integrate data from the Department of Fish and Wildlife, producing a heat map that adds to the model's dimension based on priorities important to them.

INLC staff and the O2.0 TWG will likely develop other outreach applications for this model, using it as a tool both to communicate acquisition needs and objectives and to target acquisition-related efforts strategically.

O2.0 TWG and the Model

The Working Group was initially assembled to discuss trails in Spokane County and advocate for their improvement, access, and maintenance. It has since evolved into a group with an expanded focus. While still trail advocates, group members now represent a wider range of open space, recreation, economic development, environmental, and public lands interests. They share a common appreciation for the role of land conservation in achieving their individual, shared and collective objectives, and they look to INLC for facilitation and leadership.

Working Group members include those identified in the table below. The group is somewhat informal, formed by a collection of interested groups and agencies, so there are no elected positions, guidelines for meeting protocols, or requirements for membership.

Table 1.3 – *Olmsted 2.0 Technical Working Group (2019)*

Member	Affiliation
Carol Corbin	Recreational Equipment Inc.
Todd Dunfield	Inland Northwest Land Conservancy
Charlie Wolff	City of Spokane
Angel Spell	City of Spokane
Scott Shell	Spokane Bike Club
Lara Gricar	Riverside State Park
Dan Webber	Recreational Equipment Inc.
Jake Buell	Evergreen East MTB Alliance
Drew Redman	Recreational Equipment Inc.
Paul Knowles	Spokane County Parks and Recreation
Holly Weiler	Washington Trails Association
Pat Keegan	Friends of the Bluff
Jeff Lambert	Inland Northwest Trails Coalition
Gina Claeys	Spokane Mountaineers
Ken Carmichael	Back Country Horsemen of Washington

Working Group use of the model

The model developed for this process and described in this report is intended to establish general conservation priorities. Individual members of the working group may wish to use the model to serve their own interests. For instance, those working group members focusing on trails may overlay their own trails maps – complete with their own analysis of trail system deficiencies – on the model. This trails overlay can then indicate how trails interests and conservation interests converge, leading to collaborative efforts to acquire and improve targeted properties

for mutual gain. Members interested in habitat conservation, wildland interface management, or historic preservation may similarly apply their own data layers, again prioritizing properties for collaborative efforts.

This model is based on the presumption that it will serve as a common backdrop for more specialized conversations. It may also evolve in the future to incorporate some of these other data layers into the overall model rubric, particularly where the interests of the other working group members seem to closely align with those of INLC. Or it may generate a series of other models of similar construct, creating specialized priority acquisition areas to serve the needs of individual working group members. It is designed for maximum flexibility, able to incorporate or augment data developed by others to serve any Olmsted 2.0 application where land conservation is a primary consideration.

Working Group and public engagement

Engaging the public to achieve conservation objectives is a critical consideration. But any engagement approach must be mindful of the purpose underlying it, the audience it is intended to address, and the link between the engagement results and their influence on the plan, strategy, or project under consideration. The table below identifies the various purposes INLC and the Working Group may serve with its engagement approach, along with various engagement tools and techniques the group may employ. Techniques to elevate public awareness are different than those to generate community support or engage the community's imagination.

It is likely that any engagement process will serve multiple purposes. This table helps to clarify the applications of the various types of strategies and the expectations for each. Olmsted 2.0 will likely need to draw from each of the purpose types over the plan's development, strategically timed to optimize engagement results.

One particularly helpful tool that serves multiple engagement purposes is the "Vision Gap" exercise. Suitable for workshops and online applications, it explores today's condition in comparison to that envisioned for tomorrow and assigns priorities to investments in time, energy and money. Participants can work through the exercise in small groups together in a room or individually online.

Appendix A includes a Vision Gap template that focuses on trails. It follows a four-step process, breaking down the topic of trails into 10 individual facets, each one of which is subject to evaluation. In the trails exercise included here, for instance, one facet addresses how well cyclists today are served by backcountry trails. Another addresses how well connected urban trails are to natural trails. Participants are asked first to assess the quality of the existing condition for each facet, scoring on a 1 – 10 scale how well each facet is performing against overall expectations. The second step asks participants to note how well they hope the trail system will perform in each facet, targeting their aspirations over the next 20 years. Participants then find the

Table 1.4 – *Outreach techniques*

Purpose	Technique	Comments
Information to elevate public awareness	Website	Relatively static, with easy-to-follow links to project calendar, reference documents and project information, with accessible project contact
	Mailers	Extensive distribution to project area, with website link, identifiable project brand & essential information
	Open houses	Opportunities for public to learn more about project information & review with representative staff
	Social media	Opportunities to highlight project progress, reassure the community, provide limited forum for discussion, and generate enthusiasm
Private investment, demonstrating how economic interests can be served	Focus groups	Forum to discuss essential ideas, concerns and influences related to reinvestment and transformation
	Stakeholder interviews	One-on-one conversations with property owners, agency representatives, community members to reveal individual needs and opportunities to leverage change
	Design studio	A collective design exercise, allowing stakeholders to influence planning ideas and strategies to complement opportunities for investment
	Seminars	Collaborative learning sessions among stakeholders and the community to explore interdependencies, test implementation strategies and assumptions, and learn how individual and collective action can influence transformation
	Advisory committee	Periodic check-ins with group empowered to comment and make suggestions to ensure recommendations are in line with stakeholder needs
Community support for budgeting, political leadership, and initiatives	Orientation interviews	One-on-one conversations with agency representatives, community members, and property owners to reveal topics of concern, opportunities, and sensitive issues the study must address
	Studio series	Tailored multi-day, transparent storefront or pop-up series actively engaging community in evolving design and strategic options in response to interview results and project needs
	Public workshops	Presentations and small-group exercises providing meaningful opportunity to expand civic discussion, debate issues and tradeoffs, consider underpinning values, propose and refine courses of action, and prioritize implementation strategy
	Interactive website	Fully interactive, dedicated, branded, memorable, sharable project online presence, with links to every imaginable relevant resource, range of staff contacts and interactive exercises
	Steering committee	Appointed group empowered to make direction-setting decisions, transparent, with open public meetings
	Neighborhood councils	Periodic check-ins with established community groups to ensure openness in communication and additional opportunity to enhance neighborhood council credibility and relevance
	Social media	Moderated forum for project-related updates, conversations and continual acceptance of public ideas, comments, criticism, and suggestions

Table 1.4 – *Outreach techniques* *(continued from pg.1•18)*

Design/strategy guidance tapping into participant creativity and imagination	Technical committee	Appointed group representing diverse interests related to plan implementation at policy and capital improvement levels, charged with reviewing process at various points to ensure practicality and appropriateness
	Advisory committee	Periodic check-ins with group empowered to comment and make suggestions to ensure recommendations are in line with stakeholder needs and take advantage of specific design and strategy opportunities
	Design studio	Tailored multi-day, transparent storefront or pop-up series actively engaging community in evolving design and strategic options in response to interview results and project needs and staffed with spectrum of technical staff to produce, refine and present design and strategic ideas through continuum of creation
	Public workshops	Presentations and small-group exercises providing meaningful opportunity to expand civic discussion, debate issues and tradeoffs, consider underpinning values, propose and refine courses of action, and prioritize implementation strategy
	Stakeholder study groups	Intensive exploration of specific issues relative to project implementation anticipating opportunities and challenges and considering approaches with those responsible for making implementation happen
	Interactive website	Fully interactive, dedicated, branded, memorable, sharable project online presence, with links to every imaginable relevant resource, range of staff contacts and interactive exercises including opportunities for visual communication, visual preference exercises and other formats appropriate for design conversation
	Questionnaires	Short, issue-specific tools to probe general community thoughts on priorities, tradeoffs, values, and preferences, with little concern for statistical validity and more focus on generating helpful information for the design process.
Defense to "armor" process results by demonstrated quantifiable or credible engagement	Technical committee	Appointed group representing interests crucial for plan adoption and overall credibility, charged with reviewing process at various points to ensure the bases are covered
	Statistical survey	Quantitative instrument to gauge community opinion on project options and priorities, designed to produce results that can demonstrate rigor in outreach and assure mediocrity in project decisions with little threat for real transformation
	Public open houses	Opportunities for public to learn more about project information & review with representative staff

difference between the scores for each facet, identifying the size of the "gap" needing to be closed. In the next step of the exercise, participants allocate a fixed budget among the 10 facets, essentially prioritizing where resources should be dedicated to close the gaps. Those items of equal consideration will receive equal dedication of resources, but those of greater concern or urgency may receive more.

This exercise is of great strategic value, in this example helping participants and stakeholders recognize the complexity of the trails system and the importance of allocating scarce resources of time, energy and funds to achieve multiple objectives. Vision Gap results will inform future planning and establish a foundation for short-term implementation, even while longer range plans are developed. The priorities generated through this exercise will also assist in writing capital programs, directing fund-raising efforts, and revealing areas of consensus for future public policy advocacy.

Appendix A also includes a template for a Minipoll. This instrument is designed to generate conversation and to quickly ascertain respondent inclinations on topics relevant to conservation objectives. Its design poses pairs of opposing policy statements, asking respondents

to indicate their relative degree of agreement with either one. Results produce a median inclination for each policy, indicating how respondents tend to lean toward one policy option or another. If the response rate is high enough, the results may also produce a useful measurement of standard deviation. The standard deviation measurement helps describe the spread of responses providing a hint of the diversity and strength of opinion. This can guide strategic response, alerting INLC and others to which policy proposals may elicit vocal or extreme reactions.

Working Group partnership commitments

As the various Working Group members engage in their individual and collaborative public engagement efforts, they can determine the degree of unilateral or shared commitments to act on the results generated in the engagement work. The vision gap exercise may identify compelling reasons for members to work together to achieve common objectives supported by the public. An example might be a system of backcountry multi-purpose trails along the urban fringe, where trails advocates and habitat groups commit to work together in fund raising, land acquisition, trail design, trail construction, and land management.

The Working Group exists to achieve open space, conservation, economic development, recreation, and ecosystem enhancement objectives. While the model incorporated in this report provides a priority model for conservation acquisitions, the working group's overall objectives are more numerous and complex. The public engagement activities, using exercises like the Vision Gap, Minipoll, and others, will help articulate these overall objectives and provide a foundation for a more evolved strategy, identifying targets, priorities, responsibilities, timelines, and funding opportunities.

The Working Group can then establish a set of indicators to monitor its progress and report back to the various agencies and groups each member represents. This will provide detail and an accounting of the group's work, demonstrating how members performed to achieve the community's overall Olmsted 2.0 objectives.

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Appendix: Ackowledgements & Engagement Templates

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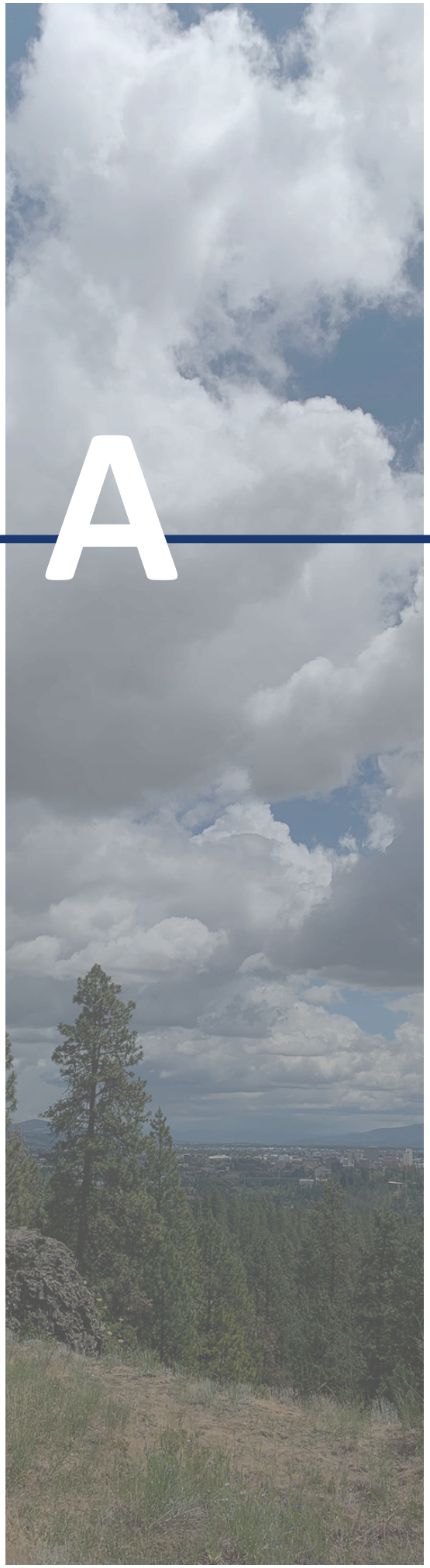

The following page presents a draft Vision Gap exercise and Minipoll as described in the memo. Both are developed in InDesign and have been provided to the client for possible use in engagement and outreach activities. The exercises here are built based on information and topics revealed during this process and will almost certainly vary from what INLC and the O 2.0 TWG ultimately use in their outreach efforts.

Thank you

Include technical working group supporting organizations, grants and SCJ Alliance for their contributions

Vision Gap

This worksheet is designed to print on 20 x 30" bond, suitable for small-group conversation and large enough to accommodate notes.

Minipoll

Shown here in "2-up" format, the Minipoll works as half-sheet slips for individual participant use. Participants can return the completed form to attending staff, mail them to INLC or go online to complete a similar version of the Minipoll available at the INLC website.

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Vision Gap Worksheet

Comparing today's condition and tomorrow's hopes

	Lowest					Neutral					Highest		
Scoring	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**Gap**	**Weight**
Existing				*We have a network in our metro area with abundant*		**Urban trail connections**							
Envisioned													
Existing				*Our trails welcome all comers by providing for*		**Universal access**							
Envisioned													
Existing				*Serious riders are served by single-track and equestrian*		**Backcountry trails**							
Envisioned													
Existing				*Outdoor access for families is provided for with*		**Backcountry trails**							
Envisioned													
Existing				*Trails are aligned, designed, built, and managed for*		**Habitat compatibility**							
Envisioned													
Existing				*Keeping trails in good condition motivates excellent*		**Trail maintenance**							
Envisioned													
Existing				*Trail users choose to access the network because of*		**Convenience & practicality**							
Envisioned													
Existing				*Trails prioritize and provide for*		**Safety**							
Envisioned													
Existing				*Trails are an attracive and popular resource because of*		**Navigability & wayfinding**							
Envisioned													
Existing				*Local jurisdiction plans and programs demonstrate*		**Policy support**							
Envisioned													
												Total: *(Must equal 10)*	
Existing						**Other (Specify)**							
Envisioned													

Instructions:

Spokane County's trails network is varied and expansive, including land in both public ownership and private. INLC and its partners are working to find ways to increase use of the region's trails systems and to ensure the trails get the improvement they need over the long haul. Your efforts can play a key role, ensuring trail policy and investments reflect the values of folks that live and work here. For this **four-part** exercise, tell us:

1. On the "Existing" scale, tell us how well you think the trail system qalready performs for each of ten character featues. What's the network's current status or reputation?
2. On the "Envisioned" scale, tell us how well you'd like the trails system to perform in the future - how critical to you think each factor ought to be in realizing the system's greatest potential?
3. Comparing your existing and envisioned scores for each factor, calculate the **total gap** between them - for instance, scores of 2 and 8 should equal a gap of 6.
4. Finally, tell us how much of an investment in resources we all ought to make to support each factor. Using a "budget" of 10, allocate among the categories as you'd craft an investment strategy. Make note of your resource expenditures in the "Weight" column, and total them below. Remember not to exceed 10 units!

Make notes as needed to explain your scoring. We've provided an "Other" category to fill in too - and though we won't include fill-ins in tallies today, they will be reviewed as part of the results. ***Thanks!***

SCJ Alliance
CONSULTING SERVICES

Sheet No.

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Mini-Poll: "Conservation Priority"

The Inland Northwest Land Conservancy is looking to prioritize efforts and investment in conserving land in Spokane County. This questionnaire explores the community's priorities on several concepts, each important to investing time, energy and resources. Consider these five potentially opposing policy perspectives and use the sliding scale between them to let us know which way you lean and to what extent. You can add more comments on the back if these questions get your juices flowing.

I reside in: *(check one)* ☐ - Spokane County ☐ - In another county ☐ - Other/Don't Know

Concept	*Mark the box most closely matching your priorities*	Concept
Backcountry trails are crucial, and acquisition efforts should focus on these opportunities.	A1 A2 ? A3 A4 A5	Consdrevation acquisition priorities should focus less on outdoor recreation.
Rules and policies that exist today are adequate to ensure habitat conservation.	B1 B2 ? B3 B4 B5	Acquisition priority should emphasize habitat conservation, protecting sensitve areas by buying them
It's most important to acquire and protect land either within or adjacent to urban areas.	C1 C2 ? C3 C4 C5	We should focus acquisition in remote, unspoiled areas to maximize what we can get.
Hillsides surrounding our urban areas are already too steep to develop, so buy in other places.	D1 D2 ? D3 D4 D5	We must ensure our hillside backdrops never develop, acquiring land in our viewsheds.
Get land where you can, even if it isn't necessarily connected to other conservation areas, sensitive habitat corridors, or trails.	D1 D2 ? D3 D4 D5	Connection and continuity is critical, and we should acquire land to reinforce habitat and recreational corridors.

[MP1] Please complete and leave with staff, rmail to 35 W Main Ave, Ste 201, Spokane 99201, or go online at: www.inlandnwland.org

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