



WORK + LIFE

How artists, businesses, and cultural leaders are creating a vibrant, compassionate, ambitious community in Spokane, Washington.



LIFE. WE ONLY GET ONE SHOT AT IT.

You, your employees, your kids. We each get our little chunk of space-time, so it's worth considering: *do the moments that make up these lives include enough of the stuff that matters?*

If you could live more deliberately through a change of place, and still succeed wildly, why not at least explore it? And not just in a daydreamy, grass-is-greener sort of way, but through real-life stories and a careful evaluation of place.

That's the hope for this brief report: to take a closer look at the ways people and organizations are making the most of every sane-paced, fulfillment-packed moment in Spokane, Washington.

You might know that we're a mid-sized city and the hub of a region with 30-minute access to everything that makes the Northwest legendary:

lakes, rivers, mountains — incredible, accessible natural beauty. What isn't as well known is that Spokane has spent the last decade transforming itself into an engine of community, culture, ambition, and opportunity.

The brief case studies that follow showcase the way people are making the most of every moment in Spokane.

The brief case studies that follow showcase the way people are living their best work lives in Spokane — not just homegrown Spokaneites, but transplanted West-siders and those poor non-Northwesterners who have thankfully found their way here from less amazing places.





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ROVER

CULTURE | OPPORTUNITY

Rover, a dog-sitting startup that works like Airbnb for canines, has been consistently named one of the most promising startups since its founding in 2011 — and among Fast Company's World's Most Innovative Companies in 2018.

Their service connects dog owners to over 200,000 sitters in more than 14,000 cities across America and is also available in Canada and the United Kingdom. When company executives decided they needed to grow beyond their headquarters in Seattle, they could have chosen any city in America, and that city would have likely rolled out the red carpet.

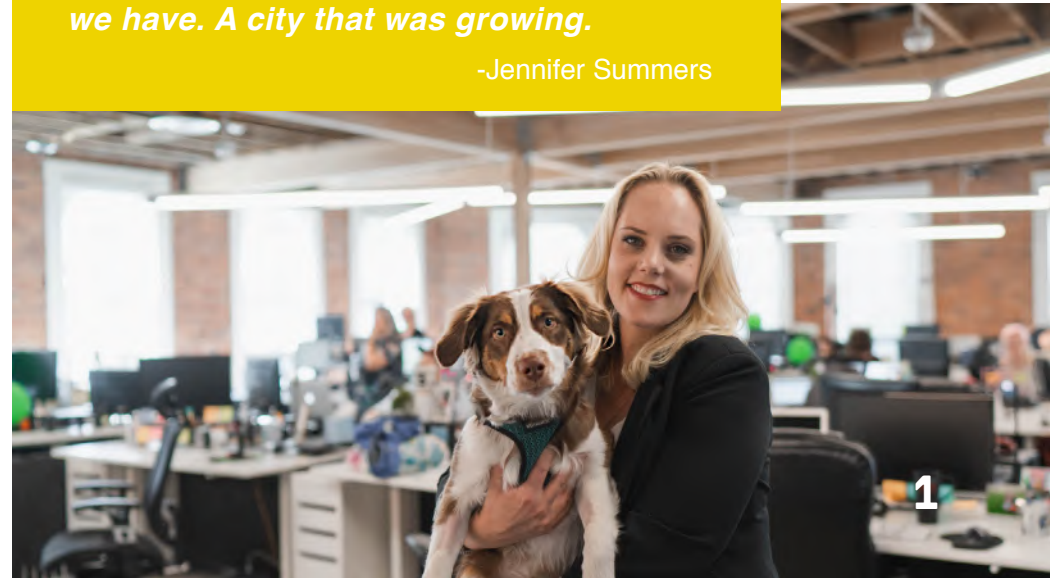
Ease of travel to Seattle and an affordable market were important factors in their decision, but equally important was the city's ethos. "We wanted it to have a dog culture, for sure. That shared the same values that we have. A city that was growing," says Jennifer Summers, Rover's Director of Safety and Enforcement, who headed up the search. The company wanted to be in the heart of a city that prioritized multi-modal transit, had great urban culture and lots of green space for Rover's two- and four-legged teammates.

Rover found all that in Spokane, along with something unexpected: a uniquely advantageous talent pool.

Five major universities — both public and private — two medical schools, and top notch community colleges are constantly churning out high-quality candidates for employers of all kinds. So, while cultural fit brought Rover to Spokane, talent recruitment and retention proved to be so strong that the company has begun to stock their main Seattle location with Spokane talent.

We wanted it to have a dog culture, for sure. That shared the same values that we have. A city that was growing.

-Jennifer Summers





There are people here doing it right, and people doing it, like, really, really right.

-Shaun Thompson-Duffy

THE GRAIN SHED

CULTURE | OPPORTUNITY

Shaun Thompson-Duffy and friends recently launched The Grain Shed, a bakery and brewery in the South Perry District with a cooperative business model and a passion for traditional methods and ingredients. But it's been a long journey for Shaun to get there. He has lived all over the country, in cities from Dallas to Austin, working in top restaurants and developing a love of commercial baking.

His love of baking led him up the supply chain to a passion for the grains themselves. While in Portland, he had looked all over the Willamette Valley and into California for farmers who were growing the right grains with the right practices but didn't find any. Then Shaun and his family moved to Spokane for his wife's career, and things

fell into place. He met Joel Williamson, one of the co-founders of LINC Foods, who introduced him to rare-variety grain growers on the Palouse, and the final piece of his puzzle came together.

"My introduction to the Palouse was like 'Wow, this is something pretty special,'" Shaun says. "There are people here doing it right, and people doing it, like, really, really right." The result is not only some incredible bread (and beer) for the neighborhood, but another story of a transplant who has found a life within what the Inland Northwest has to offer.

"I think about what it would've been like trying to start a business and buy a house and raise a family in Chicago," he says, "It's so expensive and cutthroat and just ridiculously crazy. I mean it was just ... unimaginable."



TERRAIN

CULTURE | OPPORTUNITY | AMBITION

A decade ago, a diverse group of twentysomethings formed Terrain in response to the mass exodus of young creatives they saw flocking to Seattle and Portland. “We heard so many people saying the same thing — there’s no creative community here,” remembers Luke Baumgarten, one of the co-founders. “So we asked the question: why can’t we create a community out of all the people saying that?”

What followed for Terrain has been a decade of multifaceted cultural development, instigating creative work by breaking down barriers between young artists and the arts establishment — and between local makers and the art-buying public. Today, they haven’t stopped with the establishment of a healthy 21st-century arts scene that helps young creatives stay in town. Through a host of emerging initiatives, they continue to push to be more equitable, inclusive, empowering, and ultimately a model for other cities around the world.

When the community sees it, they step up and support it.

-Jackie Caro

Today, their flagship annual event draws around 10,000 attendees and over 2,000 art submissions from over 450 artists. But art sales have grown even faster than these numbers, at Terrain (the event), at Bazaar (their massive summer craft fair), and at Pop Up Shop, a year-round cooperative brick and mortar storefront run by local makers. Terrain is quick to point to this steady growth of economic and cultural vitality as the ultimate goal: by empowering creatives to make art and make money doing it, a new generation of local patrons and participants continues to emerge.

“These artists and makers are here, and they are producing great work,” says Jackie Caro, Terrain’s Operations Director. “And when the community sees it, they step up and support it.”

PEOPLE

SANDY WILLIAMS



It takes having a place, an infrastructure, to be able to address some of the issues that are taking place right now in terms of disparities.

-Sandy Williams

Sandy Williams, East Central resident and editor of Spokane's only black-owned newspaper, *The Black Lens*, isn't waiting for developers to invest in her community. Inspired by the late Spokane civil rights lawyer Carl Maxey, she and a group of co-organizers are making their own plans.

This June, Williams announced plans for the Carl Maxey Center, a future hub of activities that will benefit the local black community and people of color, many of whom have historically lived in East Central. The center will house new job training programs, resources to learn about the history of African Americans in Spokane, special events, classes, and spaces for people in the neighborhood to rent for their own projects.

A smattering of other home-grown businesses have popped up on the Fifth Avenue corridor in recent years, including the just-opened Fresh Soul, a soul food restaurant that's both employer and mentorship program for the teens who work there. Williams says the area has finally mustered a critical mass of home-grown businesses, infusing the corridor with new energy. "It takes having a place, an infrastructure, to be able to address some of the issues that are taking place right now in terms of disparities," Williams says.



NUMERICALLY SPEAKING

DOWNTOWN

13,000

downtown residents, roughly
half of whom are 20-44

200

downtown retailers and restaurants,
from major brands to local artisans

200+

annual community events, from massive
athletic events to thriving art shows

50,000

downtown employees

100

acres just steps from work in the city
center's newly renovated Riverfront Park



500,000

available commercial/office square feet, much
of it in historic brick buildings, some ready
to plug and play, some ripe for
fresh restoration.

Sources:

State of Downtown 2018, Downtown Spokane Economic Report available at <http://downtownspokane.org/>, Realtor.com, Inrix 2017 traffic scorecard report, Spokane Historic Preservation Office, Spokane Parks & Recreation, Spokane University District, Creative Vitality Index, Spokane County 2014



I just felt there wasn't an apparel company that filled the spot that we encompass.

-Joel Barbour

THE GREAT PNW

CULTURE | AMBITION

“I just felt there wasn’t an apparel company that filled the spot that we encompass,” Joel Barbour recently told the *Spokesman Review*. A graphic designer with a love for enjoying northwest experiences outdoors, Barbour wondered why Spokane couldn’t be home to a lifestyle apparel brand that celebrates the #UpperLeftUSA in all its glory through comfortable, stylish clothing.

So he worked, and designed, and designed, and sought help, and built a team, and then did pretty well on social media: on Instagram, that hashtag has exploded to over 2.5 million posts, and The Great PNW has nearly 200,000 followers.

Sales aren’t too shabby either: you can find The Great PNW shirts, hats, socks, and more on the shelves at REI or 70 other retail locations, or in 15,000 packages per year being shipped around the world to happy online customers. In a few months, you’ll be able to just swing by the new 8,000 square foot office and warehouse they are building in East Central Spokane, complete with a skate park and gym for employees.



*But we both have a little bit
of a chip on our shoulder,
and we love Spokane.*

-Beth Robinette

LINC FOODS

COMMUNITY | AMBITION

LINC FOODS, or the Local Inland Northwest Cooperative, is a unique worker- and farmer-owned sustainable food distributor trying to do the impossible. They want to change where our food comes from, and where our money goes: the answer to both is right here.

“We export most of the food we grow, but it’s on the commodity market, so it leaves for pennies on the dollar,” says Joel Williamson. “Something like \$1.4 billion dollars per year is leaving the community.” This is not a unique circumstance in our country, but fourth generation farmers Williamson and partner Beth Robinette started LINC to address it — and perhaps be a model for other regions.

It seems like an impossibly huge problem to solve, “but we both have a little bit of a chip on our shoulder, and we love Spokane,” Robinette says. And they’re on the right track: in 2014 LINC’s first season boasted \$30,000 in sales of locally farmed goods. This year, they’re projecting more like \$1 million.





*My wife and I wanted to
be a part of helping revitalize
this neighborhood.*

-Dave Musser

BELLWETHER BREWING

COMMUNITY | OPPORTUNITY

On North Monroe Street, Thomas Croskrey and Dave Musser saw an opportunity to introduce more Old World beer styles in the exploding Northwest microbrewery scene. Three years later, Bellwether Brewing Company is serving up all kinds of Croskrey's creative braggots (made with honey in addition to malted grains) and gruits (herbs instead of hops) in a repurposed mechanic shop, bringing unique flavor and a community gathering place to a neighborhood the city is investing in through walkability and intentional placemaking. This is all nothing new for Musser, who has lived in the area since 2005.

As a neighborhood-based organizer and pastor, he helped found the popular Emerson-Garfield Farmers Market.

"When we started, we knew we'd evaluate the brewery from a triple bottom line perspective," he says, referring to the business model that looks to profits, environmental stewardship, and social/community value, rather than simply monetary earnings. "My wife and I wanted to be a part of helping revitalize this neighborhood. We live three blocks from the brewery."

PEOPLE

TARA LAWSON



*Like-minded people light my fire,
and if you look here,
you find them.*

-Tara Lawson

Tara Lawson is a newcomer from afar who has found a home within Spokane's creative scene. She's a trained designer and silversmith who creates bright, colorful clay statement jewelry through her business Ishi Studio. Her Australian-accented words are as effusive and delightful as they are expletive-riddled.

"It's like one of those scratch-and-sniff stickers when you're a kid," she says. "The creative scene in Spokane isn't so obviously in your face at first... like, oh this is just a sticker. But then you scratch it, and your little-kid mind is blown: this smells like a f---ing fantastic strawberry shortcake."

Tara's first year in Spokane has been a joyful exercise in networking and befriending as much as designing and making. She landed in Spokane as something of a compromise. After coming to the U.S. from her native Australia, her young adulthood has included a stint packed in with roommates in high-rent Seattle, then a more rural experience in a very small Washington town. In Spokane, she's finding an affordable, vital life. "Like-minded people light my fire," she says, "and if you look here, you find them. It has been wonderful to jump into it and to put my work out there."

PEOPLE

JANNA AND JOHNNY



We love the ease of life and quality of relationships we can have here.

-Johnny Stifter

When Janna Irons and John Stifter left Southern California, the two young staff writer-editors for *Surfer* (Janna) and *Powder* (John) took a year-long adventure around the country in their customized van. They had pictured Portland, Oregon as their eventual landing spot. But while resting post-trip with family in Spokane, they noticed a few things: the accessible cost of living, a work/life balance that leaves room for true friendships; an upward trend in art, culture, food & drink; very little traffic, and incredible proximity to a variety of communities and outdoor excursions. It all added up to their ideal home base.

“We love the ease of life and quality of relationships we can have here,” John says. “It just feels accessible and less saturated than other places, in a bunch of different ways. You can get in on the ground floor and impact change here, whether that’s in business, creative work, politically, or really whatever you want to develop. In many cities, it doesn’t feel that way at all.” Janna adds, “In previous places we’ve lived, something as simple as meeting friends for a beer at the end of a work day was not simple: you’re working long hours, sitting in traffic, everyone is so spread out. Here, you can have that experience, and have a big fun group of friends who actually see each other.”




NUMERICALLY SPEAKING

CITY-WIDE

19 registered historic districts within walkable, distinct neighborhoods

\$270,000
median home price,
metro Spokane

86
city parks cover 1600
acres of green space



12
Conservation Areas within
10 miles of downtown

2ND FASTEST COMMUTE

in Washington (2.6 Inrix Congestion Index,
compared to Seattle's 9.6)



The lifestyle, the cost, the culture of Spokane makes it a great place for a Washington company like ours to put down roots.

-Dean Allen

MCKINSTRY

COMMUNITY | AMBITION

McKinstry, a \$500M/year building technology company based in Seattle, has spent the last decade investing in Spokane, beginning with their Spokane headquarters, a 38,000 square-foot business incubator in the University District.

Today, McKinstry CEO Dean Allen and Avista Development are more than doubling down on Spokane by creating the 159,000-square-foot Catalyst Building, making Spokane the home of one of the most sustainably built and operated buildings in history.

Also innovative in its eventual use, the structure will sit at the landing of the brand new University District Gateway Bridge and will house a cluster of industry and academic experts in the design, data, energy, and construction sectors.

“The lifestyle, the cost, the culture of Spokane — and this new juxtaposition of academia and industry downtown — makes it a great place for a Washington company like ours to put down roots and be a strong part of the community,” Allen says. “Being an in-state company, Washington’s regulatory environment is familiar to us already, so choosing Spokane was also an advantage in that regard.”



KATERRA

AMBITION | OPPORTUNITY

Spokane is strategic because of the timber resource, the workforce, and the location.

-Fritz Wolf

Katerra, a Bay-Area-based building technology company that specializes in accelerating the building process using cross-laminated timber (CLT) wood products, is poised to set up a major production facility in the area.

This 250,000 square-foot facility will offer good pay and benefits to the city's skilled workforce, making Spokane a leader in the burgeoning high-performance sustainable building industry.

Structural CLT, an innovative wood technology which puts to use otherwise wasted (and wildfire-prone) small-bore timber harvested from sustainably managed forests, is now being put to use in next-

generation facilities like Spokane's new Catalyst Building in downtown Spokane — where Katerra will have offices alongside McKinstry, Avista, Eastern Washington University, and other building, energy, and design sector leaders.

"Spokane is strategic because of the timber resource, the workforce, and the location," Fritz Wolff, a Katerra co-founder with family roots in Spokane, told the *Spokesman-Review*. "It gives us access to the major cities of the Northwest."

PEOPLE

TRAVIS MASINGALE



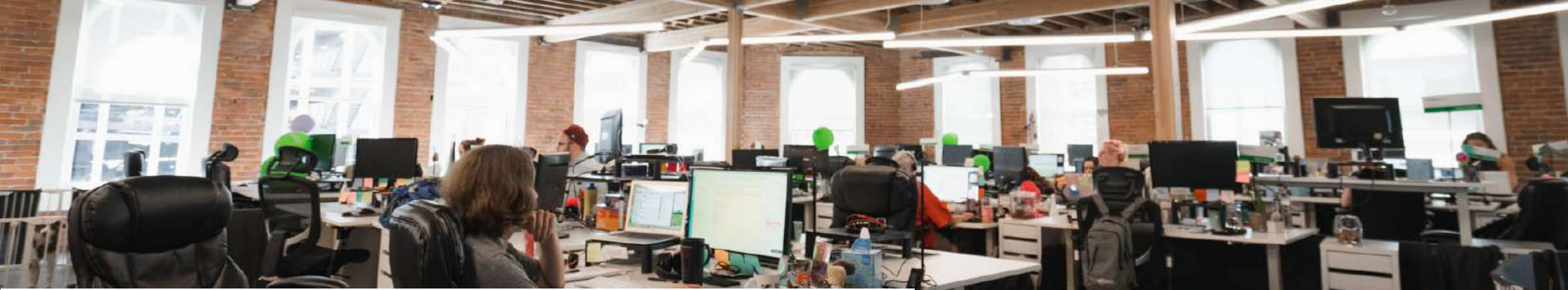
The Gateway Bridge and South Landing projects are going to change the face of downtown.

-Travis Masingale

A professor in Eastern Washington University's Visual Communication Design program, Travis Masingale has spent two decades participating in Spokane's visual arts scene. His passions include helping emerging artists and designers get their start professionally and creatively, while also instilling the importance of giving back to their community.

With EWU's VCD, Computer Science, and Electrical Engineering programs moving into the new Catalyst Building alongside top private companies, Masingale anticipates a new level of connectedness between students and industry experts — and between young professionals and the surrounding urban neighborhoods.

"The Gateway Bridge and South Landing projects are going to change the face of downtown," Masingale says. "But for our students and faculty, it radically changes the experience and opportunities. To be so close to other academic and industry experts, for shared learning, internships, guest speakers, collaboration on projects... it's a real plus."



NUMERICALLY SPEAKING

WORKFORCE



7,000
creative jobs

5
major
universities

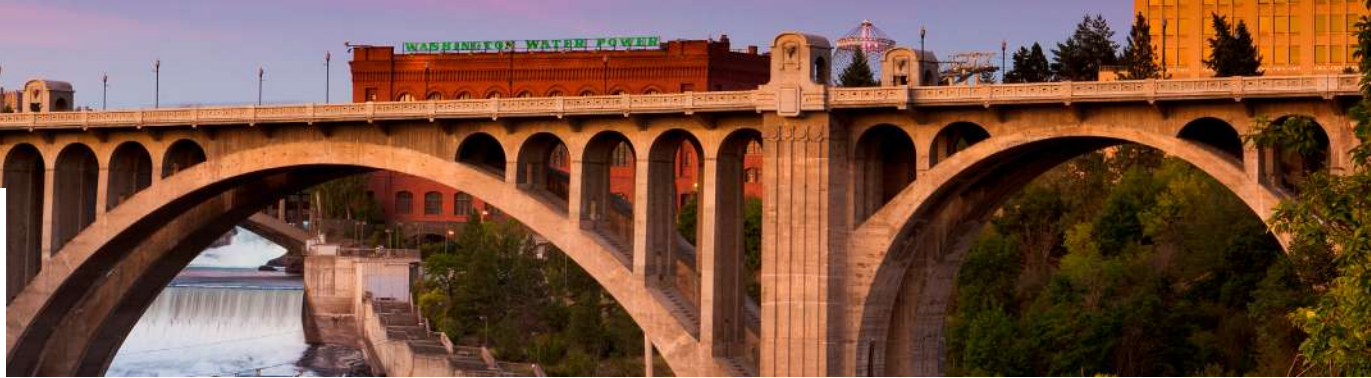
2 medical
schools



43,229
area university and college
students, ready to graduate
and join the workforce

COUNTLESS
industry & academic connections in
downtown's University District

HEADLINING



In the last few years, word about Spokane has been getting out and making its way into the national press, where comparisons to the rolling hills of Italy and the mountainous perfection of Korea run up against discussions of incredible cultural growth and surprising affordability. Whether it's the *Washington Post*, the *LA Times* or *Outside Magazine*, we couldn't have said it better ourselves.

America's Happy 700 | Get the ideal Korean Altitude in Spokane / Coeur d'Alene

Washington Post, Jan 2018



Growing Spokane, Washington
Sheds its Sleepy City Image

Los Angeles Times August 11, 2018

The Palouse, Tuscany of America

Wall Street Journal, May 27 2018



Cost-Conscious Buyers are Flocking to
These 10 Affordable, Midsize Cities

(Spokane listed #1) Realtor.com, March 1, 2018

Wine & Dine to Your Heart's Content in Horn-of-Plenty Spokane

Los Angeles Times, April 8, 2016



Spokane, Next American Ski Town

Powder Magazine, December 2017



Spokane, Outside Best Towns
Outside Magazine, Aug 2013