



For Immediate Release
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\$2.6 million TIB grant awarded to West Plains Connection

Slated for 2022, Phase One to link Garfield and South Hayford via 10th Ave

Airway Heights, Washington – (Nov. 23, 2020) – Today local officials celebrate a big win for the city of Airway Heights having received word that approximately \$2.5 million in [Transportation Improvement Board](#) (TIB) grant funding will be awarded to the [West Plains Connection](#) project.

The grant will be used by a consortium of local agencies, including Spokane County, City of Airway Heights, City of Spokane, the Kalispel Tribe of Indians and [S3R3 Solutions](#), to kick off phase one of construction for the multi-phase project. Construction is slated to begin in 2022.

“As a whole, the West Plains is expanding swiftly,” said Kevin Anderson, public works director for the City of Airway Heights. “We are working to design ‘smarter’ solutions to rapidly meet rising demands on our transportation system. Projects such as the West Plains Connection do just that – they leverage current resources in the street grid and improve them. Grant funds from the Transportation Improvement Board are the catalyst to making this happen and we are grateful for their partnership and support.”

The first phase centers on the continuation of 10th Avenue, from Garfield Road to South Hayford Road in Airway Heights, a section of the street grid, which currently does not connect. The improved route will include two travel lanes, a landscaped or hardscaped center median with turn-lanes at major and future intersections, and a multi-use pathway with a sidewalk on the opposite side of the road, all of which are shown in [these renderings](#). The project area runs from Craig Road to Campus Drive, and a map of the project area can be viewed [here](#).

Experts anticipate that by improving the transportation grid through the West Plains Connection project, numerous benefits will be generated for the community. Economic development group and lead agency for the preliminary design of this project, S3R3 Solutions, forecasts improvements will serve as a catalyst for significant area economic development.

“Connecting the grid will deliver improvements for emergency response times, multimodal transportation options, access to workforce housing, reduced congestion, and increased safety,” commented Spokane County Commissioner Al French, Board Chair for S3R3 Solutions. “Over the life of the project, these advances have the potential to spur as much as \$1.4 billion in development along the corridor.”

S3R3 also anticipates that the development will bring many good-paying jobs to the community. Early indications show that upon completion, the corridor development could ultimately create more than 3,300 jobs with annual wages of roughly \$132 million. Along with jobs, improved access will allow key partners such as the [Kalispel Tribe of Indians](#) to institute new housing, hotels, and retail opportunities on their land located adjacent to the project area.

Brandon Haugen, Executive Director of Real Estate for the [Kalispel Development Company](#), commented on the grant announcement, “We couldn’t be more pleased to see this grant awarded to the West Plains Connection project and look forward to the doors we can open together. The West Plains continues to be a hub for economic growth in our region. A project of this scope allows all entities to master plan for the future.”

In addition to the Kalispel Tribe, the West Plains Connection is supported by a robust group of area stakeholders, including the Cities of Spokane and Airway Heights, the Kalispel and Spokane Tribes, Spokane County, Spokane Regional Transportation Council, Spokane Transit Authority, Fairchild Airforce Base, and the Transportation Improvement Board.

“By working together, we’re ensuring that growth does not just happen to us,” said Airway Heights Mayor, Kevin Richey. “Instead, we are using the momentum to thoughtfully and intentionally create a better community both now and in the future.”

With construction slated to start in less than two years, teams will get to work immediately laying the groundwork for phase one. First steps include full design plan development, confirmation of right-of-way, and initial geotechnical assessments for the 10th Avenue completion. For updates on this project’s progress, please visit the West Plains Connection’s project website: <https://www.westplainsconnection.com>.

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