



2025 State Legislative Agenda



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KEY LEGISLATIVE FOCUS ITEMS

Capital Budget Request: Spokane Valley Sport Courts

The City asks the state for \$800,000 for construction of the sport courts component of the Balfour Park Expansion Master Plan. The sport courts will consist of two basketball courts and four pickleball courts with surfacing, striping, fencing and a drinking fountain.

Transportation Budget Request: Barker/I-90 Interchange

The Barker Road/I-90 Interchange needs significant improvement. Massive industrial and residential growth spanning Spokane Valley, Spokane County and Liberty Lake currently overwhelms the interchange which is operating at a Level of Service “E” or “F” during rush hours, equating to standstill traffic conditions with unstable traffic flow and extensive congestion. The City requests \$1 million in state funding to complete the design phase, with a pending \$3 million federal appropriation.

Grant Funding for Balfour Playground and Spray Park

The City supports funding for the Recreation and Conservation Office’s (RCO) grant programs. This biennium, the City is ranked 7th for a \$2 million award from the Land Water Conservation Fund and ranked 3rd for a \$500,000 award from the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program’s Local Parks program to develop a signature playground and spray park.

Clarify Administrative Fee Collected on Document Recording Fees

The City requests that the Legislature clarify that the administrative fee collected on document recording fee revenues for local governments be limited to no more than 10%, and that the administrative fee is allocated to the jurisdiction that has assumed responsibility for managing the local homelessness plan that the document recording fee revenues are allocated to implement.

Increase Cannabis Tax Revenues Distributed to Cities

The Council requests that the Legislature increase the percentage of cannabis tax revenues distributed to cities. In 2023, about \$466 million in cannabis revenue was collected; only 5% of this revenue is allocated to local governments.

SUPPORT FOR REGIONAL ITEMS OF IMPORTANCE

- The City supports a \$10 million request from the four agencies operating helicopter units in Washington State. This critical funding will allow Spokane County, Chelan County, King County and Snohomish County to better manage pursuits and provide search and rescue services for missing persons across the state without burdening their own taxpayers.
- The City supports Spokane County’s request to expand its Stabilization Center that provides 23-hour crisis relief and immediate intervention to address the opioid crisis. The program is intended to reduce the demand on emergency services, decrease recidivism and promote positive outcomes.

SUPPORT FOR REGIONAL ITEMS OF IMPORTANCE CONTINUED

- The City supports a \$1 million request from Spokane County for the Plantes Ferry Sports Complex project, a 95-acre park with numerous youth and adult sports activities. The City partnered with Spokane County on the Plantes Ferry Master Plan in 2023.
- The City is supportive of Partners Inland Northwest's \$5.1 million request for the renovation of a newly purchased commercial building to expand their food, clothing and diaper bank as well as emergency assistance program to assist the marginalized, impoverished, homeless and needy in the Inland Northwest region.
- The City supports state investment in Family Promise's Fast Leasing and Sustainable Housing Program through direct allocation or existing grant programs.

POLICY ISSUES

Public Safety & Behavioral Health

Public safety is the City Council's highest priority. The Spokane Valley City Council and its residents support a commonsense and meaningful approach to public safety policies that protect lives and property and do not erode trust in government. Examples include:

- Allowing judges the option to increase penalties for crimes perpetrated by habitual property offenders and for those who recklessly endanger the health, safety and life of others by their use of controlled substances, especially fentanyl.
- Increasing resources to hire, train, retain and protect law enforcement officers.
- Enacting policies and increased penalties to address rising retail theft and property crimes.
- Supporting efforts to reduce traffic fatalities at no additional cost to residents.
- Increasing investments in alternative response teams, such as the City's behavioral health unit and homeless outreach teams that pair an officer with either a social worker or a mental health professional in a co-responder model.
- Funding and policies that increase the availability of public defense and prosecution without creating an unfunded mandate at the local level.
- Encouraging the state to fully fund and support a comprehensive behavioral and mental health system, including quick access to treatment beds, to serve all areas of the state.
- Monitoring and supporting changes in Medicaid reimbursement that allow individuals to more effectively receive substance use disorder treatment.

Housing Affordability

The City asks for the state's partnership in increasing available affordable housing in a manner consistent with the city's 2021 Housing Action Plan.

- To preserve existing affordable housing, the city supports statewide resources to assist in the development of local programs that can help identify potential displacement risks from land use changes, provide homeowner and tenant resource assistance, ensure safe rental housing and collect key data on rental housing properties.
- To increase the stock of market rate and affordable housing, we promote policies to reduce the costs of constructing new housing through establishing a local housing trust fund, reforming condominium liability regulations, reducing state energy and building codes and offering incentives to housing developers that produce affordable and market rate housing.

POLICY ISSUES CONTINUED

Local Decision-Making Authority

A foundational belief for the Spokane Valley City Council and the residents they represent is that the most effective level of government is the one closest to the people. As such, the Council urges the Legislature to honor local decision-making, which is a product of extensive community input and involvement. Some examples include management of right-of-way and land use decisions.

Fiscal Management

The City recognizes that the State and the City are inextricably tied together financially through the distribution of statewide revenues to the City. As such, the City of Spokane Valley calls on the Legislature to utilize conservative principles in managing state finances. The City also asks for the state's assistance to ensure that the City can maximize the delivery of services at the local level:

- The Council requests that the Legislature protect and enhance local state-shared revenues to allow the City to deliver vital services to its residents. These funds include the Liquor Excise Tax Account, Liquor Board Profits, Municipal Criminal Justice Assistance Account, City-County Assistance Account and Cannabis Revenues. The City specifically requests legislation increasing the amount of cannabis revenue and opioid settlement funds being distributed to cities.
- The Council requests legislation related to the imposition or capping of sewer utility taxes when the tax is being imposed by a neighboring jurisdiction.
- The Council requests increased flexibility with existing revenues to allow the City to efficiently meet the community's needs as they arise. For example, the City requests flexibility in how revenues generated from the annexation sales tax credit can be spent.

Reducing Costs Through Reform

Like other cities across the state, the City of Spokane Valley faces rising costs and is supportive of efforts by the State Legislature to:

- Reform regulations that are causing project costs to rise, including implementing Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) goals that take into consideration the availability of DBE's regionally rather than state-wide. Additionally, the City supports efforts to encourage the state to utilize local contractors when completing projects in the community.
- Protect against liability expansion and policies that would drive additional claims and increase litigation costs.
- Reduce the impact of abusive public records requests.

The City supports AWC legislative agenda items that serve the best interests of Spokane Valley.