



2026 State Legislative Agenda



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CAPITAL FUNDING REQUEST: Balfour Park Lighting and Audio

The City asks the Legislature for \$250,000 to provide lighting for basketball and pickleball courts and audio equipment within Balfour Park that will be under construction in 2026. The park serves nearly 13,000 residents within a one-mile radius including 2,300 seniors, 750 households below the poverty line and 1,400 households with disabilities. The Housing Authority is currently constructing a 240-unit affordable housing project within 0.2 miles from the park. This park component could be delivered rapidly and efficiently in conjunction with the Sport Courts construction.

TRANSPORTATION FUNDING REQUESTS:

Barker Road/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. \$4 million is needed to complete the design phase.

Sullivan/Trent Interchange

The City encourages support from state agencies for the Sullivan/Trent Interchange project. The Sullivan Road Bridge over State Route 290 (Trent Avenue) was built in 1960 and is rated today as “structurally deficient, high risk, and in poor condition,” Washington State Department of Transportation’s (WSDOT) lowest rating. Further, the failing interchange creates extensive congestion for one of the region’s busiest freight corridors.

The City has secured \$17.8 million to complete funding for the engineering and right-of-way phases and \$36.4 million is still needed for construction.

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 common sense 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.
- Prioritizing prevention, treatment and recovery services in lieu of government-funded “Safer Supply” models that directly distribute addictive substances.
- Increasing resources to hire, train, retain and protect law enforcement officers, including modifying existing grant programs to ensure that the City is an eligible applicant.

Public Safety & Behavioral Health Continued

- 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.
- Supporting funding, policies and workforce development to increase the availability of public defense and prosecution to meet the public defense caseload standards recently approved by the Washington State Supreme Court.
- Encouraging the state to fully fund and support a comprehensive behavioral and mental health system, including quick access to treatment beds and investments in youth behavioral health infrastructure including youth detox facilities such as the "No Wrong Door" model of care.
- Monitoring and supporting changes in Medicaid reimbursement that allow individuals to more effectively receive substance use disorder treatment.
- Revising the Involuntary Treatment Act and funding an adequate number of designated crisis responders to ensure those with substance abuse addictions receive treatment.
- Amending the Keeping Families Together Act to protect children from living arrangements where they may be exposed to controlled substances.
- Supporting 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.

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.
- Support efforts to strengthen joint planning requirements within UGAs.
- To preserve existing affordable housing and prevent homelessness, 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 and increase homeownership opportunities, the City promotes policies to reduce the costs of constructing new housing through establishing a local housing trust fund, funding down payment assistance programs, reducing state energy and building codes and offering incentives to housing developers that produce affordable and market rate housing.
- Partner with the insurance industry, homebuilders and federal partners to find sustainable solutions to keep insurance premiums reasonable for homeowners and property developers.
- Leverage apprenticeship and workforce training programs to increase the skilled labor pool for the creation of additional housing and stable, living-wage jobs.

Local Decision-Making Authority

A foundational belief for the Spokane Valley City Council is that local decision-making provides more responsive and tailored solutions while state government can provide a more unified and consistent approach to broad issues that transcend localities. 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.

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.
- Reduce liability that would drive additional claims and increase litigation costs and insurance premiums.
- Reduce the impact of abusive public records requests.

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 that foster a welcoming business environment 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 that the Legislature increase the amount of revenue allocated to cities generated through cannabis sales, either through an increased distribution of existing tax revenue collections or local option taxing authority. In 2024, about \$455 million in cannabis revenue was collected; only 5% of this revenue is allocated to local governments.
- The Council requests that all of the net revenue generated by local traffic safety cameras remain with the city or county.
- The Council requests increased flexibility with existing revenues to allow the City to efficiently meet the community's needs as they arise.
- The Council supports legislation that provides for fair local taxing authority and/or distribution of other taxes between adjoining and neighboring cities, and ensures that local residents are not unfairly burdened with taxes imposed by other local municipalities.
- The Council requests legislative support in the form of funding and tools to meet local street preservation and maintenance needs.
- The Council supports ongoing funding to infrastructure programs such as the Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board, the Transportation Improvement Board, the Public Works Assistance Account, and more. Additionally, as the Legislature considers project-based proposals from these agencies, the City supports any action that elevates Spokane Valley projects.

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