



## **CITY OF SPOKANE VALLEY 2018 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA**

Adopted by Council November 14, 2017

### **Transportation Funding Request: Bridging the Valley**

The City of Spokane Valley continues to make headway on the multi-phase Bridging the Valley project that replaces dangerous at-grade crossings throughout the City. As the City nears design on the Barker Road Grade Separation Project, it hopes to pursue state and federal funding to advance the project, as outlined below. However, it is important to recognize that the Barker Road project is only the first phase, and in future years, the City will also pursue funds for the Pines Road Underpass / BNSF Grade Separation Project, and other elements of Bridging the Valley.

#### **Phase 1: Barker Road / BNSF Grade Separation Project**

The City of Spokane Valley respectfully requests that the state invest in Phase 1 of Bridging the Valley by allocating funds to the Barker Road/BNSF Grade Separation project. The Barker Road/BNSF Grade Separation Project replaces an at-grade crossing with an overpass of BNSF's railroad tracks and Trent Avenue (SR 290). The project will eliminate two at-grade crossings, eliminating train/vehicle crash risks. The project will improve train travel through the Spokane region, which is a bottleneck of the Great Northern Corridor. The total project cost is currently anticipated to be \$20 million. The City has already secured partial financing for the project including a \$720,000 federal earmark, a Washington State Freight Mobility Investment Board grant equivalent to 20% of the total project cost, \$3.6 million of City-generated funds specifically earmarked for this purpose, and \$1.5 million that the City received in the 2017-2019 Transportation Budget from the Washington State Legislature, which the City plans to spend on bridge design. Once designed, the City hopes to continue its partnership with the state to fund right-of-way acquisition and construction.

### **Pass legislation responding to *Hirst* and a 2017-19 Capital Budget: Funding for Appleway Trail Park Amenities**

The City supports efforts to reach agreement on legislation addressing the recent *Hirst* Supreme Court decision regarding water availability in rural areas. The City of Spokane Valley also encourages the Legislature to pass a 2017-2019 Capital Budget with an allocation of \$540,000 for park amenities for the first mile of the Appleway Trail. The most recent versions of the proposed 2017-19 Capital Budget include this funding. These additional amenities include a restroom, topsoil, limited turf and dryland seeding, trees, drinking fountain, and benches. The City previously funded, designed and constructed the paved portion of the first mile with over \$1 million without these amenities. The state has allocated funding for the remaining 3.25 miles (including amenities), scheduled over the next two years. This funding of \$540,000 in the Capital Budget will bring amenities to the entire 4.25 mile trail, realizing the full conceptual plan and orienting future economic development.

### **Protect the Local State-Shared Revenues**

The City of Spokane Valley requests that the Legislature preserve and restore local state-shared revenues. These funds include the Liquor Excise Tax Account (\$442,294 in 2016), Liquor Board Profits (\$804,057 in 2016), Municipal Criminal Justice Assistance Account (\$280,337 in 2016), and City-County Assistance Account and Marijuana Revenues (\$54,213 in 2016). Specifically, the City supports legislation that removes the 2011 cap on Liquor Profit revenues, to restore the 50/50 revenue sharing relationship between the state and local governments.

Spokane Valley is home to many warehouses and manufacturing facilities. As a result, the City receives over \$500,000 each year in streamlined sales tax mitigation payments to compensate the City for financial losses when the state switched to a destination-based sales tax system. The 2017 Legislature indicated with



the passage of the Marketplace Fairness Act, that the state intends to suspend streamlined sales tax (SST) mitigation payments in the 2019-21 biennium. Meanwhile, the Department of Revenue was directed to analyze if and when expected revenue gains from implementation of the Marketplace Fairness Act equal or exceed revenue losses to cities. The City will be closely monitoring the outcome of this and requests that cities receiving SST mitigation are made whole through this transition throughout the state.

### **Protect Businesses by Reforming State Regulatory Burden**

The City of Spokane Valley strongly supports businesses small and large, in our City and across the state, because they are the lifeblood of our economy. Unfortunately, these businesses are forced to compete in a state regulatory environment that is increasingly burdensome, making it difficult to compete with businesses in neighboring states. Of most urgent concern is the regressive state business & occupation tax, with the current Labor & Industries program close behind, with both needing significant reform before they do irreparable damage to commerce in Washington. Spokane Valley supports rebalancing the state-wide regulatory framework to encourage and support business development and retention.

### **Abandoned/Foreclosed Homes**

The City of Spokane Valley supports legislation to provide cities with the tools to address abandoned and foreclosed homes. In 2016, the Washington State Supreme Court ruled in *Jordan v. Nationstar*, that financial institutions cannot enter and secure homes until the foreclosure process is complete. This leads to many homes that are mid-foreclosure being abandoned. Abandoned homes throughout a community become sites for criminal activity, squatters, and declining property values. The City encourages the Legislature to adopt legislation in response to the *Jordan v Nationstar* case that provides cities with tools to address abandoned and foreclosed homes.

### **Indigent Defense Funding**

The City of Spokane Valley supports full funding for municipal indigent defense services. In 2013, the Washington Supreme Court set new caseload standards for the number of cases a public defender can represent in a calendar year. This has increased the annual cost of providing indigent defense services by \$71,521 or 11.4%. The City supports policy and fiscal changes to mitigate this new obligation.

### **Support Continued Prohibition of Recreational Marijuana Home Growing**

The City of Spokane Valley supports the continued prohibition on home growing of recreational marijuana. Allowing home growing of recreational marijuana will unnecessarily increase youth access, illegal diversion, and criminal activity related to marijuana. Neither the State nor local cities have sufficient resources to adequately enforce home growing. Allowing home growing will place an additional and unnecessary cost burden on local cities that primarily have to deal with the impacts from legalized marijuana. By allowing home growing, the State will also weaken the still-growing commercial marijuana market.

### **Protecting Parental Rights Regarding Decisions Involving Their Children**

The City of Spokane Valley recognizes as critically important the role parents play in all facets of the lives of their children. Over the years, the State of Washington has adopted various laws and agency rules which encroach upon the decision-making rights of parents. Some of these laws and rules have significant impacts on families, and infringe upon the traditional parental role. The City supports changes in state law that strengthen parental rights, and requests that future legislation not have the unintended consequence of eroding parental rights.

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