

**Legislative & Public Affairs  
Strategic Plan  
January 2007**

Division Name: **Legislative & Public Affairs**

**Mission Statement:** To promote the City's interests with local, regional, state, federal, tribal and international governments, and advocating the City's state and federal legislative agendas to garner support for and/or mitigate issues that may be harmful to the City.

**Definition of Customer:**

- Mayor, City Council
- City Division and Department Heads & Employees
- Citizens
- State and Federal Elected Officials
- Unelected State and Federal Staffs, Administrations
- Other Local Jurisdictions
- Business, Education, Civic, Neighbor and Labor Leaders

**Definition of Product/Service Provided:**

Legislative & Public Affairs pursues legislative priorities of the Mayor and City Council through new or amended legislation or funding that supports the City's priorities and goals. It also provides advice and counsel to the City's elected leadership.

**Strengths:**

- City with improving reputation for customer service, strong leadership
- Knowledgeable, experienced staff
- Excellent, credible state and federal contract personnel
- High credibility, trustworthiness and excellent relationships with electeds (and non-elected staff)
- Excellent partnerships with key community organizations to develop support for both the City's legislative agendas and the community's agendas
- Excellent relationships with community decision makers
- Highly responsive to customers
- Excellent return on investment; effectiveness of function
- Ability to act independently and provide leadership
- Very flexible and able to operate in crisis
- Good relationships with AWC and other cities
- Thoughtful development of positions, briefing papers and strategies

### Weaknesses:

- Outdated or lack of web content relative to strategic initiatives, successes that helps build and broaden support for City
- Lack of web content about legislative and public affairs that provide information about how to access government information, the City's legislative priorities, state and federal elected representatives, elections, etc.
- Public conflict or controversy between Council/Administration can harm ability to succeed
- Negative media attention can harm ability to succeed
- Resources, including time, to be more even more inclusive, including and especially with City Council

### Opportunities:

- Fulfillment of City's strategic mission tremendously assists this function
- More strategic approach to identify, analyze and manage public policy issues
- Utilize intern or other support staff to assist workload
- Utilize Mayor, Council, Key Staff and Labor Leadership more in development and/or advancement of agendas, and begin process earlier
- More participation in regional Council of Governments, Northeast Mayors' Association and other regional intergovernmental relations opportunities
- Utilize community partnerships more to achieve agendas
- Foster even more positive relationships with all customers
- More routine communication about City's legislative agendas with more customers
- Better use of technology, e.g. City website to communicate City's legislative agendas
- Determine ways to enlist broader community in support of City's legislative agendas or on specific issues

### Threats:

- Negative perceptions about the City that are real or perceived that discredit the City's "value" to its citizens influence the success of the City's legislative agenda
- Legislation or citizen initiatives that harm City's ability to achieve its goals and objectives, e.g. Congressional rewrite of Communications Act could substantially threaten City revenues and local city cable
- Continued controversy, negative publicity about the City impacts ability to succeed

### Key Success Factors:

- Public policy decisions that improve the community
- Legislation or amending language supporting City's priorities, or defeat/amendment of legislation that may harm the City
- Funding for City priorities

- Adequate information or how to access information about local, state and federal government for citizens
- Continued strong partnerships and collaboration with community that supports City's priorities
- Effective collaboration with other local jurisdictions
- Excellent personal and professional relationships

List top 5-10 goals for the group:

- Promote City's state and federal legislative agendas with state legislature, key members of congress and other stakeholders
- Ensure public policy issues are analyzed and positions developed for Mayor, Council and Cabinet decisions, and assist in implementation where necessary
- Maintain and improve effective working relations with multi-jurisdictional elected and unelected staff, and with key community leaders
- Significantly improve communications with citizens

List top 5-10 strategies for the group:

- Improve the process for developing and advocating the City's state and federal legislative agendas
  - Continue to solicit legislative priorities from Mayor, Council members, Cabinet and departments in developing state and federal legislative agendas
  - Continue meeting with local business and other interests to develop collaborative, consensus agendas where possible
  - Continue to develop information from governor's policy office, legislative leadership, key local legislators and federal staff to develop effective, meaningful legislative agendas for the City
  - Continue to monitor Association of Washington Cities (AWC) and National League of Cities (NLC) policy issues and legislative agendas
  - Discuss state and federal legislative agendas with Spokane County, City of Spokane Valley and other local jurisdictions
- Involve more City leaders (Mayor, Council, Key Staff) in advocating City's legislative priorities
  - Seek opportunities for the Mayor, Council and key staff to participate in the state and federal legislative process, such as delivering the federal agenda to key members of Congress, testifying before a state legislative committee, etc.
- Establish an effective process for City leaders to make good public policy decisions on behalf of the community that identifies issues, provides appropriate pro/con analysis and helps implement where necessary
  - Work with new Economic Development Director and other experts to outline this process for consideration

- Improve citizen communications about the City’s legislative and public affairs department, process, issues, agendas, etc.
  - Establish a department home page on the City’s website that provides interested citizens and visitors information about the City’s Legislative & Public Affairs department, its mission and priorities, its state and federal agendas, and information and other policy matters
  - Participate in “Ask Spokane” web portal to citizen questions about legislative and public affairs matters
  - Continue to publish legislative agendas, updates and wrap-ups
- Continue to provide advice and counsel Mayor, Council and Cabinet on public policy matters, and participate in special projects as assigned such as the 2008 Presidential Debates, the Mayor’s Task Force on Affordable Housing, the Mayor’s Quality of Life initiative, the Living Wage Ordinance, funding for a streetcar system in downtown Spokane, etc.