



**City of Spokane**  
**2006 State Legislative Agenda**  
**2006 Supplemental Session**  
*Adopted by the Spokane City Council January 9, 2006*

**Economic Development**

**GigaPop Funding.** Funding in the amount of \$1 million state investment to bring next generation high-speed bandwidth (via PNW GigaPop) from Seattle to Spokane/Eastern Washington to promote economic development, research and technology transfer, education and health care. The state granted the project \$1 million in the 2005 legislative session.

**2009 World Figure Skating Championship.** Support statewide effort to secure state resources to help Spokane's bid for the 2009 World Figure Skating Championship.

**Neighborhood Main Street B&O Tax Credits.** Support removing the population eligibility limit for cities wanting to participate in this new program administered by the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development.

**Community Empowerment Zone (CEZ).** Improve CEZ legislation by expanding the types of eligible businesses locating within the CEZ, which allows sales and use tax deferral/exemptions, and B&O tax credits. Amend language to reduce the requirement that a company must increase its workforce by 15% within a given year in order to receive a B&O tax credit. Hollister-Stier Laboratories is a growing manufacturer of both biological and pharmaceutical products located in Spokane's CEZ. The company has steadily increased its workforce but likely would never meet the abnormally high 15% requirement.

**Tax Increment Financing (TIF)** legislation to attract and retain business and put underutilized property to productive use.

**Municipal Finance**

**Public Safety Multi-Year Operation & Maintenance Levies.** Support a constitutional amendment that would allow cities and other taxing districts the ability to apply, *with voter approval*, multi-year operation and maintenance levies up to six (6) years. The constitution already provides this option to school and fire districts.

**Weights & Measures.** The State Dept. of Agriculture's Weights & Measures program regulates the use and accuracy of all commercial weighing, measuring and counting devices in the state, except for Seattle and Spokane. Support the agency's request legislation for 2006 that will increase registration fees by a factor of 2.5 to provide revenues needed to increase device inspection frequency. This proposal will increase the annual revenues received by Seattle and Spokane.

**Satellite Television Taxation Equity.** Support state legislation to impose tax on satellite television comparable to cable television, and the state agrees to share revenue with local

governments. It addresses a fairness argument that cable providers have long professed in that they are subject to both franchise fees and utility taxes in Washington state and are required to provide access to their system for governments, education, while satellite television providers face none of these constraints.

**Streamlined Sales Tax.** Support legislation that is jointly proposed by both negatively and positively impacted cities that implements destination based sourcing and provides mitigation for negatively impacted jurisdictions.

### **Criminal Justice & Public Safety**

**Municipal Courts.** To ensure cities have the flexibility to meet public needs, we seek:

- explicit statutory authority to contract with other cities to provide court services
- authority for cities to establish administrative process for municipal parking ticket infractions

**Sexual Violent Predators.** More than 50% of sexual offenders released from prison to Spokane County are not from the Spokane, creating an unfair burden and endangering the public safety of our citizens. The City seeks solutions that may involve:

- cost-sharing from jurisdictions where offenders are arrested
- direct financial assistance for housing offenders from outside Spokane
- legislation requiring offenders be released to the county of original commitment
- reallocation of priorities/services provided by existing Department of Corrections and Department of Social & Health Services to counties of original commitment, particularly rural areas.

### **Water/Water Quality**

The City supports water stewardship, protection of the Rathdrum Prairie/Spokane sole-source aquifer, and improvements in water quality through effective storm water and non-point source management programs that set goals that are achievable and affordable.

- Support Washington's continued proactive role in the bi-state Spokane/Rathdrum Aquifer Study to determine reasonable allocations of the resource between the two states that recognizes the amounts and dates of existing water rights.
- Ensure that the implementation of Phase 2 Storm Water Program be no more stringent than that required under the EPA promulgated regulations. Any additional requirements should be in the purview of the local government, or if the state mandates, funded by state appropriation.
- Support funding for study of non-point sources input to contaminant load in Spokane River.

### **Transportation & Infrastructure**

- Increase local transportation funding through matching grants, direct gas tax distribution to local government, street utility, direct project funding, and/or other local revenue options.
- Continued state funding for Spokane North Spokane Corridor, US 195, Hatch Road to I-90 and I-90 Widening to State Line.

**Health Care, Human Services & Housing.** Historically, the state and federal governments have been the primary provider of human services. The level of support has

declined over time, placing significant burden on local governments who do not have the financial ability to respond to increasing needs in housing, homelessness, childcare, mental health, substance abuse, and human services and social support programs. The City of Spokane urges the legislature to:

- In addition to the \$6.5 million Spokane-area hospitals received in 2005 by legislative appropriation, continue to seek equitable state reimbursement for Spokane-area hospitals for the Medicaid clients they serve.
- Support community pursuit of \$11 million additional funding for hospitals to serve mental health clients.
- Support state funding for Project Access.
- Provide funding for supportive services attached to housing for disabled street homeless individuals to house them, stabilize their mental and physical health, and prevent hospital, jail and/or prison costs.
- Maintain/increase funding for mental health and substance abuse treatment and to include the uninsured street homeless.
- Provide funding to expand health insurance and health care programs for uninsured adults.
- Increase funding for childcare for TANF and the working poor.
- Increase funding for home care and chore services for the elderly and individuals with disability so that they may continue to live in their own homes instead of more expensive alternatives.
- Continue funding the General Assistance-Unemployable (GAU) and GAX (Government Assistance-Referral) programs, a safety net program for single disabled individuals.
- Maintain funding for sentencing diversion programs for juveniles and adults that require treatment for first time offenders versus incarceration.
- Increase funding for the Low Income Heating and Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).
- Increase funding to the Housing Trust Fund.

### **General Local Government**

**Public Records Act.** The City believes that the public records act is in principle a good and positive mandate for all governments to follow, including local governments. However, what follows are issues of concern that need to be addressed.

- **Cost recovery/unfunded mandates** for hours spent in responding to public records requests can cripple already strained local government budgets. Perhaps a fair sharing of the costs on the party requesting the records, similar how local governments charge for other targeted services such as water, building permits, inspections, etc. Or perhaps the state should provide the funds to local governments and agencies which have very limited resources.
- **Good faith** of the government should be a principle guiding how the public records act is interpreted and applied – no penalties or attorney’s fees should be imposed if the government shows it made a good faith effort to comply.
- **Public records act requests should be denied or limited** when they are unreasonable or over broad. The Hangartner decision was well balanced public policy.

- The **State Attorney General’s office role is advisory only**, as it is not a legislative body. The AG’s stated position of “filling in the gaps” with model rules, which are advisory only, over-steps the AG’s authority under the law. The AG’s interpretation of vague and/or complex provisions in statutory and case law is **not** binding on local agencies or the courts.
- The **attorney client and attorney work product privilege** is just as critical to all government agencies, employees and elected officials as it is to every other citizen (person or corporate) and there is no reason why it should be weakened for government agencies.

**State Capital Budget/Community Projects**

The city, along with its many community partners, supports state investment in important state capital budget projects. These projects support the community’s economic development efforts with capital investment that creates construction jobs and ongoing economic benefits. The 2006 projects are as follows:

|                                    |             |
|------------------------------------|-------------|
| Northeast Community Center         | \$1,000,000 |
| Armed Forces Aerospace Museum      | \$2,000,000 |
| Mobius Science & Technology Center | \$1,500,000 |
| The Emmanuel Center                | \$ 400,000  |
| East Central Community Center      | \$ 350,000  |
| Second Harvest                     | \$ 300,000  |

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**Bob Apple**  
**Al French**  
**Nancy McLaughlin**  
**Brad Stark**  
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