



LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

2023

GREATER SPOKANE VALLEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

We are the catalyst for building relationships, driving collaboration, and championing opportunity in the Greater Spokane Valley.

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BUSINESS CLIMATE We work to create a vibrant business climate that promotes innovation and allows business to thrive. A healthy business climate is vital to ensure that our region stays competitive, sustainable and attractive to future business. We support legislation that promotes economic growth, develops a strong workforce and reduces the tax and regulatory burden.

DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE We work to maintain and develop infrastructure systems that power economic growth. We promote growth by supporting projects that preserve existing infrastructure and development, while strategically increasing capacity to drive economic development. We support legislation and infrastructure investments that optimize development opportunities through increased accessibility, reliability and safety while providing sustainable funding and local control uniquely address the needs of our communities.

QUALITY OF LIFE We work to enhance our vibrant community with diverse opportunities to live, work and play. We are committed to maintaining a high quality of life for individuals and families in our area through community initiatives, as well as advocating for citizen access to housing, entertainment and a healthy environment.

EDUCATION & WORKFORCE We work to support an education system that meets the workforce demands of our region. Investment in education increases the opportunities of our students and meets the needs of our business community. Developing a skilled workforce of the future depends upon a robust education system that serves students of all ages. We support a fully-funded education system with clear and challenging academic standards, expanded options that are innovative and affordable, and a system that operates with accountability, efficiency and transparency.

HEALTHCARE We work to develop access to robust services that improve the health of our community. Expanding access to health care and the resources needed to identify and address public health issues is vital to a strong economy. We support legislation that will improve access to physical and behavioral health services and strengthen the healthcare workforce.

Top Legislative Priorities



Our Top Priorities represent those that we believe will have a great and lasting impact on our region. These priorities will increase economic opportunity, improve the quality of life, and enhance the vibrancy of the Greater Spokane Valley.

Business Climate

Long Term Care - we strongly continue to support efforts to abolish or amend the Long-Term Services and Support (LTSS) Act to allow employees the freedom to make the best decision for themselves and their family. At a minimum, the legislature should honor the intent of the original bill amend the LTSS to allow for the opportunity to opt out at any point they obtain private sector insurance.

Business Climate

Energy - we support preserving and expanding the diversification of energy through natural gas, hydro, nuclear, hydrogen and renewable biofuels. Support reliable, cost-effective energy solutions that meet our regional demands as we work to meet our state decarbonization benchmarks.

Business Climate

Emergency Powers - we strongly support amending the current emergency powers structure to give our elected legislative representatives and public more of a voice in policy making during an emergency declaration, but also give the Governor the time and flexibility needed for a quick response at the beginning of an emergency. Specifically, we support legislation which would require a vote of the legislature after 90 days of the emergency declaration to extend the order.

Development & Infrastructure

Sustainable M&P Funding - we strongly support a focused effort to create sustainable funding for maintenance and preservation of our transportation infrastructure that gives local control over how the money is spent. A sustainable funding source, with local control, will allow WSDOT regions to properly maintain the current and future transportation system.

Quality of Life

Public Safety - we strongly support amendments and clarifications to several law enforcement related bills enacted during the past legislative session to ensure there aren't unintended consequences negatively impacting the delivery of law enforcement services, including the critical community caretaking function law enforcement performs to maintain public safety,

Education & Workforce

Education Workforce - we support investments in our high school and colleges so they may sustain workforce programs such as healthcare, advance manufacturing, transportation, and aerospace - while updating equipment to ensure students learns in classroom's that mirror today's evolving work environments.

Additional Priorities

BUSINESS CLIMATE

Create a dynamic business climate that promotes innovation and allows business to thrive.

- **Local Economic Development Funding** - we support HB 1333 which would extend the existing local sales tax credit for economic development in rural counties. The GSVCC and our regional partners will pursue an expansion of this vital program to include border counties, such as Spokane County, to provide a permanent and sustainable source of regional economic development funding.
- **Growth Management Act** - we strongly support amending the GMA to address significant population fluctuations and enhance local government's role in the GMA planning process. Amendments should account for and accommodate growth in the Spokane region. Further, we encourage the state to allocate adequate funding to local jurisdictions to effectively implement planning directives from the state.
- **Regulation & Taxation** - we believe it is the free market that allows the entrepreneurial spirit to thrive, innovation to increase, and business to grow. Heavy handed government interference, increased taxes and regulations continue to hinder business growth in Washington. Reducing burdensome regulations and taxes will create a stronger and more competitive business climate.
- **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)** - we oppose broad and restrictive extended producer responsibility legislation that increases costs of recycling packaging and products. The process needs to be more flexible to allow more opportunities for businesses to develop different technologies. EPR is one more tax on manufacturers and businesses - putting WA trade exposed businesses at a competitive disadvantage to other states and countries.



DEVELOPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE

Maintain and develop efficient transportation and infrastructure systems that power economic growth.

- **South Barker Road Corridor** - we support the City of Spokane Valley's funding request for the South Barker Road Corridor project. The road intersects with Interstate 90 providing access to more than 800 acres of industrial property and 220 acres of homes. The project includes the widening & reconstruction of Barker Road to a 5-lane urban arterial (Mission to Appleway), a 3-lane urban arterial (Appleway to city limits) and roundabouts at Sprague, 4th, and 8th avenues.
- **Argonne Station Park and Ride** - we support Spokane Transit's \$10.4 million transportation funding request for the Argonne Station Park and Ride. The project includes pedestrian connections, necessary channelization, and signal changes to support bus movements in and out of the facility. Additionally, the facility increases parking capacity for commuters, provides new connectivity, and improves multimodal access for our community.
- **Felts Field Terminal Building Parking Lot** - we support the \$500,000 funding request in state funds to support the \$10 million Felts Field Gateway Plan which will update the Terminal building parking lot at Felts Field. The parking lot update would improve aesthetics of this area with the Felts Field Historic District and restore pavement that is in serious disrepair. The project will also allow for new energy efficient lights, landscaping, and drainage.
- **Spotted Road Realignment** - we support the funding request for \$5 million in state matching funds for a Federal USDOT RAISE grant to fund an important \$29 million safety and mobility improvement project in the Spokane International Airport's Runway Projection Zone. Realignment of Spotted Road will address significant traffic and aviation safety concerns at the inbound and outbound intersections with Airport Drive.
- **Sewer Extension to Transload Facility** - we support the \$1.5 million request in state matching funds for infrastructure investment at the Rail Truck Transload facility, connecting the facility to the regional sewer system. This project resolves a gap in sewer connectivity and capacity to an area of over 500 acres of developable land in and around Spokane International Airport's Rail Truck Transload Facility. The investment will optimize use and extends its \$773 million economic impact well into the future.
- **Trunk Rail and Transload Spur Connection** - we support the \$2 million funding request in state matching funds at extend a mile of rail east of the Trunk Rail Transload facility to allow further industrial and logistics development. This project extends rail access into Airport-owned property to provide for light industrial and commercial development opportunities.
- **Advocating With Our Regional Partners** - we are committed to working corroboratively with the Washington Legislature and regional partners to identify and support sustainable transportation funding sources. GSVCC would support state and regional transportation investments as part of the federal infrastructure package currently being contemplated by Congress. GSVCC will work during the 2022 Legislative Session for passage of an additive state transportation package subject to the following principles:
 - Protects current committed funding for the region and maintains funding for its designated purpose (corridor),
 - Makes certain any state transportation spending package is reflective of the Spokane region's proportional share and appropriate for Spokane projects and programs,
 - Reflects the work of our community partners and the Spokane Regional Transportation Council (SRTC) process, and
 - Preserves programs for targeted transportation programs and investments including Freight Mobility Strategic Investments Board (FSMIB), Transportation Improvement Board (TIB), County Road Administration Board (CRAB), and Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB).

Additional Priorities

QUALITY OF LIFE & COMMUNITY

Enhance our vibrant community with diverse opportunities to live, work, and play.

- **Decriminalization of Narcotics** - we support finding a permanent solution to the Supreme Court's Blake Decision that holds those in possession of narcotics accountable, and which would keep our community safe.
- **Police Tactics** - repeal or reform HB 1054 so law enforcement can conduct vehicle pursuits using a reasonable suspicion standard in specific circumstances. This is essential to allow for effective and safe pursuit of suspects when there is an immediate threat to public safety.
- **Capital Gains Tax** - we do not support a statewide tax on personal income. Any change to the tax code that seeks to make the code fairer should not include a state income tax.
- **ICSVAPAC** - we support the Idaho Central Spokane Valley Performing Arts Center (ICSVAPAC) request for funding from the Washington State Legislature for the construction of a multi-use facility location in the City of Spokane Valley, which will significantly impact and benefit the entire Inland Northwest Region economically and culturally.
- **HUB Outdoor Field Project** - we support HUB's Sports Center Outdoor Fields Project as it will impact economic development especially in tourism and hospitality industries. It will also be a benefit for our community with more options to play which leads to better outcomes for mental, emotional, and the physical health of our youth and families.
- **Army National Guard Facility** - we support the current land-swap or purchase efforts between the WA Dept of Natural Resources and the Washington State Military Department to establish an Army National Guard Readiness Center in the City of Liberty Lake which will offer amenities for the community and region.
- **Spokane Indians** - we support the \$5.8 million state funding request that would allow the Spokane Indians to keep its Minor League baseball team. Over \$6.8 million in economic activity is generated by the Spokane Indians each year. Due to new requirements by Major League Baseball, teams across the state, including the Spokane Indians, must update their stadium to keep their local teams.
- **Mt. Spokane** - we support the \$680,000 state funding request for Mt. Spokane's Vehicle Maintenance Building and Terrain Park Surface Lift. This would allow the fleet to be serviced and operational as they serve over 120,000 visitors per year. The surface lift would also bring additional relief to the chair lift lines and create a better guest experience with shorter lift lines.
- **Employee Stock Ownership Plan** - we support ESOP legislation as it promotes productivity, employee retention, keeps jobs local and contributed to business health and longevity.
- **Greenacres Park Phase 2** - we support the City of Spokane Valley's request that the State Legislature fund the following two grants to for Phase 2 of Greenacres Park: 1) Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) grant award for \$500,000, and 2) Land Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant award of \$1 million. This project will expand the park to add a tennis court, pickleball courts, basketball courts, a community garden, add new parking spaces, and more.

HEALTH CARE

Develop access to robust services that improve the health of our community.

- **Reimbursement Rate for Medicaid Patients** - reimbursement rates have not increased for nearly 20 years, while the cost of care and staffing have risen exponentially. While Medicaid rates do not cover the entire cost of care, any rate increase will lessen financial losses.
- **Healthcare Workforce** - we strongly support legislature that will address the need for workforce in the healthcare sector. Examples of legislation include an increase in loan repayment funding for nurses, funding for one-time grants to community colleges to expand training programs, or funding for grants to support students in continuing health care careers.
- **Behavioral Health Workforce** - we advocate to increase the behavioral health workforce by increasing funding in the Behavioral Health Loan Repayment Fund, and by signing on to a multi-state compact allowing mental health professionals to cross state lines and work in Washington.
- **Nurse Ratios** - we oppose government-mandated nurse staffing ratios that remove decision-making power out of the hands of the health care professionals closest to patients, will harm our state's highly rated quality of care, and increase costs across the board.
- **Nurse Licensure Compact** - under the state's emergency COVID-19 order, out-of-state licensed nurses were allowed to practice in Washington State, and it's time to make it permanent. We support both entering a nurse licensure compact and expanding programs and funding to grow nursing students in our region.
- **Bed Readiness Programs** - we support funding for Bed Readiness Programs, which would enable hospitals to discharge patients that no longer need hospital-level care into safe, appropriate care settings as the patient awaits transition to long term care placement or other outpatient services and programs.
- **Mergers & Acquisitions** - we support the ability for hospitals to enter appropriate mergers and affiliations freely. Health care mergers in our state have led to continued access to health care services for patients in local communities across the state.

EDUCATION & WORKFORCE

Support an education system that meets the workforce demands of our region.

- **Educator Shortages** - we support updated to the prototypical funding model, to include substitutes, nurses, para-educators, and counselors in K-12 schools to support our region's students.
- **Workforce Programs** - we support investments in our high schools and colleges, so they may sustain workforce programs such as healthcare, advanced manufacturing, transportation, and aerospace - while updating equipment to ensure students learn in classrooms that mirror today's evolving work environments.
- **School Bus Driver Shortage** - we support a grant program or formula funding to districts to support strategies that will address local and regional transportation shortages and simplify that pupil transportation funding formula.
- **Childcare** - we strongly support measures that would reduce the regulatory burden on childcare providers making childcare more accessible and affordable for all families. Specifically, GSVCC supports regulatory streamlining and reduction of barriers-to-entry in the childcare industry to increase the supply of childcare facilities and choice for parents.
- **Regional Initiatives in Dental Education** - we support the UW & EWU joint proposal request of \$4.7 million to expand the capacity and footprint of the Regional Initiatives in Dental Education (RIDE). The program will aim to increase dental students trained per year from 8 to 16 and double the time students spend in Spokane by adding a second year of dental curriculum at EWU Spokane.