

## Tier 1 Legislative Priorities

Updated 11/15/21

### ***Smart Justice***

Improve public safety, reduce recidivism, and lower criminal justice costs by establishing a program that enables the Spokane region to use Accelerated Rehabilitation and Community Safety (ARCS) diversion services in lieu of incarceration for felony property crimes adjudicated by Spokane County and misdemeanor drug crimes adjudicated by the City of Spokane.

Background: Diversion services are a proven alternative to traditional court and correctional processing that substantially lowers re-offense rates. These services also provide significant savings to taxpayers by reducing the number of incarcerated prisoners as well as avoided costs from individuals successfully completing the program and not re-offending. The Washington Supreme Court's "Blake" decision struck down the state statute that made possession of controlled substances a class C felony, removing state criminal penalties for possession and making them misdemeanors, which places new burdens on municipal courts.

### ***Traffic Safety***

Safeguard pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers by permitting the City of Spokane to expand the use of automated traffic safety cameras near schools and parks. Dedicate revenue from infractions to fund traffic calming measures that will help reduce speed and enhance the street environment for non-motorists.

Background: The Legislature authorizes the use of automated traffic safety cameras for limited pilot projects in specific jurisdictions. The cameras may only take pictures of the vehicle and license plate while the infraction is occurring; the photos must not reveal the face of the driver or passengers, and cities and counties must install cameras to minimize the impact of the camera flash on drivers. Automated traffic infractions are processed in the same manner as parking infractions.

### ***Affordable Housing***

- Expand housing opportunities by allowing the City of Spokane to use revenue it collects from existing tax increment financing (TIF) areas to help pay for land acquisition and construction of affordable housing.
- Support legislation to allow land banking, which enables local governments to develop a public entity focused solely on converting distressed properties into productive use according to local community goals.

## **ATTACHMENT A**

- Grant authority for the Washington State Department of Transportation to lease its vacant properties for the purpose of building affordable homes and to use lease proceeds for property maintenance expenses.

Background: Existing TIF law enables cities and counties to finance public improvements using certain local tax revenues within defined “revitalization areas,” Spokane already collects this revenue however a technical correction is needed so it can be used for land acquisition and construction of affordable housing. Landbanking for vacant, abandoned, and tax-delinquent properties, and leasing of government-owned properties such as WSDOT’s vacant land along E. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. adjacent to I-90, provide additional opportunities to make housing more attainable for all.

### ***Transportation Funding***

- Approve a robust new-revenue Transportation Budget to fund the backlog of repairs for roads, highways, and bridges, invest in maintenance and preservation, improve public transit and bike-pedestrian mobility, promote vehicle electrification, and accelerate construction of the North Spokane Corridor.
- Provide cities with additional transportation funding opportunities that support safe streets, equity, sustainability, and connecting communities.

Background: In the 2021 legislative session, lawmakers came close to agreement on a nearly \$18 billion funding package to address statewide transportation needs but were not able to finalize negotiations before adjourning. Reaching agreement on expanded, equitable transportation funding mechanisms and priorities in the 2022 session is essential to improve our state, regional and local transportation systems, create new jobs and economic activity, and maximize opportunities from federal infrastructure funding.

### ***Capital Budget***

- Create a stand-alone Municipal Court Diversion Bed facility that supports the City’s Smart Justice initiative to address increased misdemeanor drug-related crime cases in a more cost-effective manner.
- Refurbish and modernize the former Hillyard Library to create a dual-purpose community center, with a behavioral health program operated by the MultiCare Behavioral Health Network and an incubator for local cultural groups.
- Secure funding to complete the Carl Maxey Center’s transformation from a neglected 1920s building into an African American focused Cultural Center that will be a gathering place for the community, as well as a business and

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technical hub for the East Central neighborhood in Spokane's East-Central neighborhood.

- Improve playground equipment and other facilities at Northeast Spokane's historic Minnehaha Park, a 39-acre public park located at Euclid Avenue and Havana.
- Establish a downtown Spokane Intake and Referral Center to help people who are experiencing homelessness secure housing, mental and behavioral health treatment, food security, job assistance and other critical services needed for recovery.
- Install suicide-prevention barriers on Spokane's Monroe Street Bridge in response to the well-documented increase in mental health crises and proven effectiveness of barriers in stopping suicide attempts.