Overview

The County’s legislative agenda is developed in coordination with the Board of County Commissioners, regional city partners, and county departments.

General Legislation/Operating Budget

Disaster Relief/Fire Response

Spokane County requests the following assistance to help those who lost their homes and property to recent wildfires:

- Updating land use legislation to allow landowners to rebuild their homes under the building codes in place when they were destroyed by a declared natural disaster.
- Making the Department of Commerce’s Emergency Rapid Response Fund pilot program permanent to assist with future disasters.
- Funding the State’s Individual Assistance Program. While the program was authorized by the Legislature, it was not funded. Funding received by Spokane residents after the fires was provided by the Governor through the Governor’s Emergency Assistance Fund.
- Developing and funding a State Natural Disaster Public Assistance Program, similar to the current Individual Assistance Program, to help towns, cities, special purpose districts, and counties with post-disaster recovery.

County Fiscal Health

There are numerous instances in which counties rely on state support to deliver state mandated services. Counties are united in the request for the state to provide financial assistance for those services in criminal justice and public health.

Specific to criminal justice services is the topic of indigent defense funding. Spokane County supports the request by the Washington State Association of Counties to provide adequate funds to provide these services. Many of the people in Spokane County who need these services come from underserved populations.
Growth Management Act (GMA)

The Legislature has entertained several concepts pertaining to the GMA. Counties have always maintained a willingness to accept changes to the GMA and the County planning processes, as long as those changes are made on sensible timelines and include financial support. Planning requirements or new elements to the GMA, including Climate Change, will necessitate additional County resources to meet the required conditions. Spokane County supports removing current condo development barriers. The County also supports legislation clarifying existing law to allow Urban Growth Area land swaps in very specific cases.

Public Building Energy Standards

Spokane County seeks legislative relief from House Bill 1257, known as The Clean Buildings Act. Spokane County supports expanding affordable, reliable, clean energy sources and requests that the Legislature provide financial assistance to facilitate compliance with The Clean Buildings Act. Spokane County also supports expanding flexibility of compliance pathways to include innovative, cost-effective technologies and strategies, consistent with the State’s climate pollution reduction goals.

Natural Gas Legislation

The Legislature is anticipated to consider legislation in 2024 that would allow for the continued use of Natural Gas in homes. Spokane County is concerned about limiting access to Natural Gas in a climate that experiences consistently cold temperatures throughout the winter.

Comprehensive Homeless Response

Support state investments in housing to alleviate the impact of homelessness on County residents and implement long-term solutions to address the factors leading to homelessness and the transitionally housed. Spokane County requests that the State partner with local governments versus bypassing city/county collaboration and directly funding non-profits.

Mobile Home Park Resident Relocation out of Potential Crash Zone: $3M

Continued state support for Fairchild Air Force Base mobile home mitigation. Spokane County is currently working with Habitat for Humanity and Community Frameworks to relocate residents of mobile trailer home parks in the potential crash zone area to improved housing while also removing the associated base encroachment. Request is for $3 million to purchase the trailer parks after removing residents from the potential crash zone area.
## Affordable and Attainable Housing Response

Request the state invest in a multi-faceted approach to address the affordable and attainable housing needs of the County. This includes increased funding for housing stability and displacement prevention, expansion of Housing & Essential Needs Rental Assistance programs, and specialized programming for residents with physical, mental, or substance use related challenges impacting their ability to maintain stable housing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Home Ownership</th>
<th>Affordable Housing</th>
<th>Condo Development</th>
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<tr>
<td>Match local funding (document recording fees, sales and use tax) up to $2M dollars towards programs that help subsidize downpayment assistance for households earning less than 80% AMI.</td>
<td>Match Spokane County’s loan forgiveness at a 1:1 ratio to maintain existing affordable housing inventory. Match funds will allow affordable housing projects to overcome the difficult loan underwriting process during a time of high interest rates.</td>
<td>Spokane County supports additional condo development, inline with densities allowed for rental apartments, to supply entry-level, affordable, home ownership opportunities. Request to remove current condo development barriers, which prevent many low-income persons and communities of color from building generational wealth through home ownership.</td>
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## Broadband

- Support the State Legislature continuing yearly funding for the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) required 25% match funding.
- Streamline permitting through State Agencies during the BEAD program to ensure the $1.2B is spent on broadband infrastructure expansion during required ARP timelines.
- Support passing the Governor’s proviso of $4M to help in the BEAD policy construct with Tribes and Counties.
- Support WSAC’s request of the Legislature for more transparency in Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) areas of WA State – including awardee verification of project area progress currently not eligible for BEAD funding.
Capital Budget Request

Spokane County is bringing forward the following Capital Budget Requests for consideration in the 2024 Legislative Session.

### House Bill 1257’s “Clean Building Act”

The Clean Building Act requires significant up-front costs to implement.

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<thead>
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<th><strong>Spokane County Campus: $9.5M</strong></th>
<th><strong>Spokane Regional Health District: $3.75M</strong></th>
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<td>Estimated need of nearly $20M for the required County Campus updates.</td>
<td>Spokane County allocated $1.39 million for window replacement and roof repair to work towards meeting the State's new Clean Buildings requirements.</td>
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<td>The County requests that the State cover at least 50% ($9.5M) of these mandated expenses.</td>
<td>Initial estimates indicate $7.5 million will be needed to bring the building into full compliance with these new state regulations.</td>
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<td>The County requests $3.75 million for the required Phase 2 energy usage upgrades.</td>
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### Sheriff Helicopter: $2M

The County’s helicopter is a regional asset that assists with search and rescue as well as public safety throughout a multi-county area. Spokane County is requesting $2 million to assist with the purchase of a new Sheriff helicopter.

### Spokane Regional Emergency Communications new building: $3M

The current Combined Communications Building (CCB) was constructed in 2003 and is not configured in a way to allow for industry best practices. The current building, owned by the City of Spokane, is not conducive to the long term needs for the region’s emergency communication center. A new building also could serve as the State 911 Backup Center.
Transportation Request

Spokane County joins regional partners in support of several transportation funding requests.

- **Four Lakes Interchange (I90 to White Road) – Access Revision, Road Realignment, and Grade Separation for Rail:** $20M

  This new interchange would add direct northbound access from I90 to SR904 and Craig Road. Currently, the I90 interchange only has a southbound ramp towards Cheney. A new interchange that includes a northbound exit ramp will provide direct access to Fairchild Air Force Base, Airway Heights, Medical Lake, and US-2 in addition to SR904. This new northbound ramp will access a globally recognized innovation zone, diverse manufacturing companies, the nation’s 5th largest aerospace industry cluster, the state’s 2nd largest airport, and Class 1 railroad carriers, all of which play a vital role in the region’s economic sustainability. This direct northbound access will save time and reduce pollution by eliminating many miles of unnecessary driving.

- **Wall Street (Greta to Whitworth) 1.4 miles – Full Depth Grind and Inlay:** $8.4M

  This project will rehabilitate the existing roadway and keep this high traffic volume arterial in good shape going forward, as well as complement a currently funded bike/pedestrian project under construction. Continuing to protect the significant investment made by our state and federal funding partners is of paramount importance.

- **Glenrose Corridor, 3.5 miles – 57th Ave to Spokane Valley City Limits:** $24M

  This project proposes a road reconstruction, realignment, and addition of sidewalks where feasible on Glenrose Road from 57th Ave and up Carnahan Road to the City of Spokane Valley limits. A realigned road will provide a more direct route and improve sight distance and roadside safety through widened shoulders, clearing or shielding of roadside hazards, and new pavement.

- **Arterial Preservation Program, Various Treatment to Maintain Arterials:** $4.5M

  This funding would maintain the roadways that our partner funding agencies have helped build. These funds will be dedicated to using chip seals, overlays, and inlays to keep the arterial road network in good shape. Protecting the significant investment made in the county road system is a top priority.
Argonne Rd / Upriver Drive Intersection: $6.5M

Reconstruction of the Argonne Road and Upriver Drive intersection to increase the performance of one of the busiest intersections in Spokane County. Argonne Road links key industrial areas, inter-modal facilities, and commercial centers on the east side of the City of Spokane to industrial and business hubs in the City of Spokane Valley. This corridor plays a vital role connecting freight east to State Route 290 (Trent Avenue), State Route 53, accessing Idaho, Burlington Northern Santa-Fe (BNSF) and Union Pacific (UP) railroads, and significant trans-loading facilities within Spokane County.

32nd Ave, 5.0 miles – Sullivan Rd Intersection to Spokane Valley City Limits at Barker Road Corridor: $18M

This project is approximately 5.0 miles in length composed of road reconstruction, realignment, and anchored at both ends of the project with roundabouts. The west end of the project starts at Sullivan and 32nd and creates a new alignment of 32nd up to a connection with existing 32nd Avenue and continues along 32nd Avenue onto the new Barker alignment and then continues south on Barker to the City of Spokane Valley City Limits.

North Hatch Road – North of Ballard Road to Bidwell Park: $2.5M

This Urban Major Collector provides north-south access to US-395 from Midway Elementary School, the 20-acre Bidwell Park and Aquatic Center, and a large residential community with a daily traffic count of 7,472. The section needs reconstruction with 11’ travel lanes, 6’ sidewalks, a 7’ swale to mitigate stormwater, ADA curb ramps, and a 5.5’ bike lane. The south half of the project is funded, the County is requesting funds for the remaining north half of the project.

Elk Chattaroy, 5.5 miles – US2 to Tallman Road: $22M

Elk Chattaroy Road is proposed to be reconstructed from a 20’ wide road to two 12’ wide travel lanes with 5’ wide paved shoulders on both sides of the roadway. An additional 1’ gravel shoulder and guardrails will be installed where appropriate, and improvements at the intersections of Big Meadows Road will be made. Elk Chattaroy Road is an important route that links northeast Spokane County to the more urban areas vital for connecting rural residents to jobs, education, health care, and other essential services.