

2022

STATE LEGISLATIVE
AGENDA



GREATER
SPOKANE
inc.

WHAT WE DO

As the Spokane area's business development organization, GSI brings regional partners together to advocate for our community's priorities with a strong, unified voice. Together, we have a greater voice for the future of our region.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

Our 2022 state legislative agenda is developed in collaboration with our community and business leaders, local government and school district partners, higher education and community college institutions, and non-profit and labor leaders from across our Spokane region.

GSI PRIORITIES

- Protect our state's business climate and promote recovery for small businesses,
- Work for sustainable transportation revenue and our regions fair share of funding,
- Support our higher education partners to expand academic programs and opportunities,
- Secure passage of necessary modifications on long-term care premiums and nurse licensure compact,
- Pursue dedicated, permanent regional funding for economic development,
- Promote a quality, affordable childcare system, and
- Bring state funding back to our region for critical local community projects.

MISSION

We lead transformative business and community initiatives to build a robust regional economy.

VISION

A vibrant Spokane region where businesses and communities thrive.

VALUES

Collaboration

We are inclusive and welcome a diversity of perspectives that reflect the aspirations of our community.

Innovation

We are resourceful and creative and strive for intentional progress in all that we do.

Respect

We foster mutually respectful relationships between members, our partners, and the community.

BUSINESS CLIMATE

Unemployment Insurance Relief

GSI supports mitigating increases on unemployment insurance (UI) premiums by paying down rate classes with state surplus funds or federal relief funds when feasible. UI costs are a direct result of the COVID pandemic and would serve to be a major burden upon small businesses trying to recover from the economic downturn.

Qui Tam

GSI is adamantly opposed to House Bill 1076 that would provide an employee the ability to pursue legal relief on behalf of an agency for the enforcement of various occupational and employment laws, a qui tam action. This bill is unnecessary as there are existing penalties in law for violations and the bill does not allow businesses any ability for the employer to cure.

Clean, Affordable Energy

GSI supports affordable, reliable energy resources and the preservation of consumer choice when it comes to meeting their energy needs. GSI believes that natural gas and hydroelectricity play an integral role in maintaining the economic vitality of our local business climate and are critical pieces of cost-effective “all-of-the-above” strategies for expanding our region’s clean energy capacity and fighting climate change. GSI is opposed to breaching the Columbia and Snake River dams that provide low-carbon transportation, efficient irrigation, flood control, and clean, affordable electricity.

Expanded Broadband Capacity

The Spokane business community recognizes the critical need for expanded access to high-speed broadband for businesses and consumers in the greater region. Broadband infrastructure and access make Spokane a regionally competitive site for new businesses and helps current businesses access a global market. Rural broadband access should be expanded and urban capacity increased to ensure that our region and state continue to grow and flourish.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

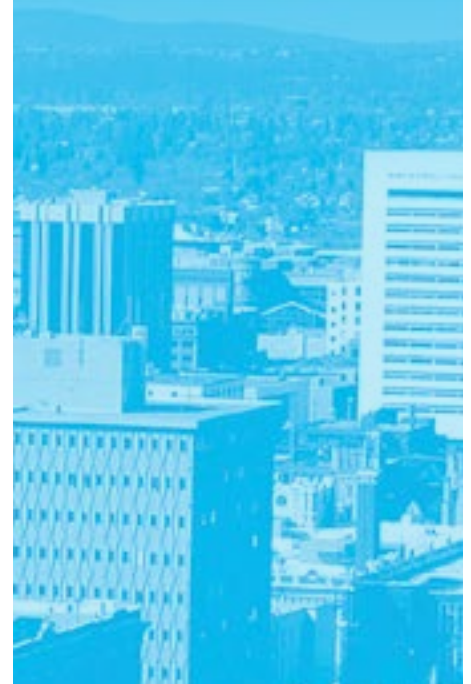
Local Economic Development Funding

GSI supports House Bill 1333 which would extend the existing local sales tax credit for economic development in rural counties.

Growth Management Act

GSI supports 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, GSI encourages the state to allocate adequate funding to local jurisdictions to effectively implement planning directives from the state.

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GREATER COMMUNITY

Together, we put the pieces in place to attract organizations, talent, and people with big dreams to create a vibrant community

GREATER GROWTH

Together, we support business expansion to create job growth for a thriving economy

GREATER VOICE

Together, we have a greater voice for the future of our region

GREATER TALENT

Together, we build, champion, and retain a talented workforce

ENGAGEMENT

Investment, Communications, Partnerships, Events, Programming

TRANSPORTATION

GSI will work during the 2022 Legislative Session for passage of an additive state transportation package subject to the following principles:

- Ensures any new revenue for transportation is used for its intended purpose,
- Makes certain any state transportation spending package is reflective of the Spokane region's proportional share and appropriated for Spokane projects and programs,
- Maintains current committed funding for the region and maintains funding for its designated purpose (North Spokane Corridor),
- Allows more regional and local control with flexible state transportation funds to determine and sustain needed maintenance and preservation 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 Investment Board (FMSIB), Transportation Improvement Board (TIB), County Road Administration Board (CRAB), and Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB).

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Human capital is an essential ingredient that drives business innovation, growth, and competitiveness. Spokane employers face a critical shortage of skilled and experienced labor. Central to re-engaging our regional workforce and upskilling the existing workforce is access to affordable childcare and post-secondary education.

QUALITY CHILDCARE AND EARLY LEARNING

GSI supports a systemic approach to early learning and quality childcare that addresses regulation, worker's wages, and capital investment shortages in the industry. To make best use of available resources in the public and private sector, GSI supports regulatory streamlining and reduction of barriers-to-entry in the childcare industry as well as the exploration of a public-private partnership in childcare as a pilot in the Spokane region.



POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mental Health Pharmacy Residency Program

The University of Washington and Washington State University are partnering to establish a one-year pharmacy residency program to provide additional training in mental health. The new program would have graduates devise pharmaceutical strategies for complex or unique mental health challenges. Each school would have two residencies per year for both eastern and western Washington.

Cybersecurity Programs at EWU, SFCC, and WSU

The employer community in Eastern Washington recognizes the critical need for cyber security professionals to join the workforce. GSI supports efforts at Washington universities to expand their programs and help protect vital business infrastructure.

EAGLE CARE Network

GSI supports EWU's request to expand and continue their coordinated care network, Eagle Care. Eagle Care is a network designed to maximize collaboration of various student support services and academic advising focused on degree completion.

Expand the Washington College Grant

GSI supports the efforts outlined in Senate Bill 5215 which would address the equity gap through an expansion of the Washington College Grant at independent institutions of higher education.

Expanded Work Study

Aligning with an expansion of career-connected learning opportunities and GSI's efforts to recruit talent from outside the state, Spokane businesses support the expansion of Work Study to include out-of-state students. Connecting students from other states to Washington companies will both advance access to quality education and open opportunity for Washington companies to recruit from a broader workforce.

High-Demand Degree Programs

GSI supports expanding student aid to fill seats in high-demand degree programs. Through targeted public and private support, Washington's institutions of higher learning can ensure that residents meet critical state workforce needs.

College Success Foundation Maintenance Funding

GSI supports maintenance funding for the College Success Foundation at \$8.3M annually.

Capital Matching Grant Program

GSI encourages the state to leverage capital investment at Washington's institutions of higher learning through a matching grant program.

Career and College Pathways Innovation Fund

GSI supports WSAC's recommendation of investing federal and state funds in a competitive grant program across the state for existing and new community-based career and college promise collaborations. The goal of increasing direct K-12 postsecondary enrollment rates, which currently lag national rates, will bolster Washington's workforce competitiveness.

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TOGETHER WE'RE GREATER

HEALTHCARE

Long-Term Care Premium

GSI members are concerned by the rapid implementation of the state's new long-term care program. The Spokane business community supports additional time for employees to choose a long-term care program that works best for their individual needs. Modifications to address portability of benefits, the ability to opt out of the state program, out-of-state residents working in Washington, and the automatic inflator on premiums should be considered by the legislature as soon as possible.

If the needs of Spokane workers cannot be met by a state program, GSI supports a full repeal of the state's long-term care program.

Nurse Licensure Compact

Under the state's emergency COVID-19 order, out-of-state licensed nurses have been allowed to practice in Washington State, and it's time to make it permanent. GSI continues to support passage of Senate Bill 5247 to include Washington State in the National Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC). SB 5247 would allow nurses who are credentialed and licensed in other NLC states to practice in Washington. Passage of this legislation is a long-time GSI priority for our partners at Fairchild AFB, the long-term care community, and the hospital industry.

Healthcare Providers

Licensure

GSI supports efforts underway to expedite healthcare providers licenses and joining federal compacts for audiologists and psychologists.

IHME in Spokane

GSI supports the University of Washington's supplemental operating budget request to study community health metrics, disparities, and drivers in rural and Eastern Washington medical care to maximize positive population health impacts. The study will harness the capacity of the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation while piloting the expansion of impactful research in the Spokane region.



COMMUNITY PROJECTS AND BUDGET REQUESTS

Trunk Rail and Transload Spur Connection

GSI supports the state matching request from Spokane International Airport to make a critical \$17M investment in rail connectivity between the airport Trunk Rail and Transload facility, optimizing multimodal freight movement in the Spokane region. State matching funds: \$1.7M

Spotted Road Realignment Project

GSI supports state matching funds for an important \$29M safety and mobility improvement project in Spokane International Airport's runway protection zone. Realignment of Spotted Road will address significant traffic and aviation safety concerns at the inbound and outbound intersection. State matching funds: \$5M

Felts Field Parking Lot Update

GSI supports the Spokane International Airport's request for state funds to support the \$10M Felts Field Gateway Plan through a \$500,000 request to update the parking lot at Felts Field.

Sewer Extension to Transload Facility

GSI supports state matching funds for infrastructure investment at the transload facility, connecting the facility to the regional sewer system. This investment will optimize use and extend its \$773M economic impact well into the future. State matching funds: \$1.5M

Division Bus Rapid Transit

GSI supports the Spokane Transit Authority's request for state transportation funding towards a \$150M investment in Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) in Spokane. The Division BRT will support economic vitality, equitable access, and improved quality of life through improved public transit infrastructure and is a piece of transit-centric development in North Spokane and Mead. Transportation funds request: \$50M over 3 years

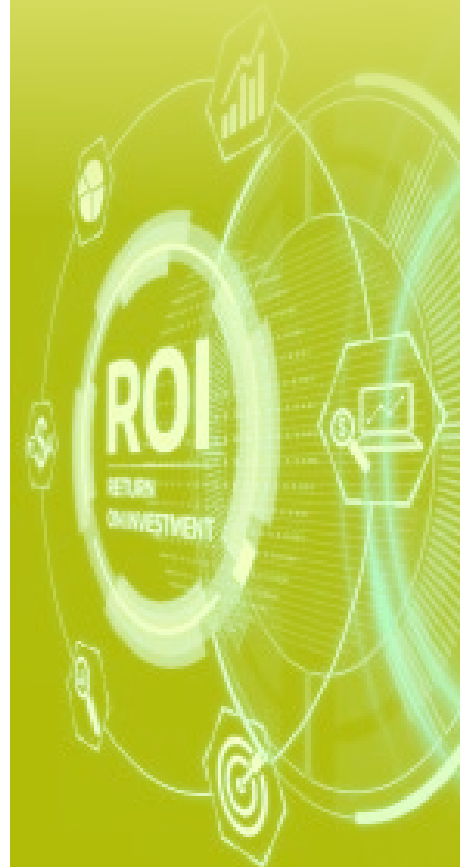
Mt. Spokane Ski and Snowboard Park Lodges

GSI supports Mt. Spokane's request for state funding to improve guest service areas at Mt. Spokane's lodges through kitchen renovation and outdoor seating improvements to address continuing COVID spacing needs. State request: \$385,000

Pines/BNSF Grade Separation Project

To replace the existing at-grade BNSF crossing on Pines Road with an underpass and redesign the adjacent signalized Pines/Trent intersection with a roundabout. State request: \$19.3M

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GREATER VOICE

Greater Spokane Inc., the Spokane region's business development organization, works year-round with business, civic, and community partners on public policy initiatives to provide a greater voice on behalf of employers and the community at the local, state, and federal level.

STATE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS REPRESENTING SPOKANE



Jay Inslee
Washington State
Governor (D)



Andy Billig
3rd District
Senator (D)



Mike Padden
4th District
Senator (R)



Jeff Holy
6th District
Senator (R)



Shelly Short
7th District
Senator (R)



Mark Schoesler
9th District
Senator (R)



Timm Ormsby
3rd District
Representative (D)



Bob McCaslin
4th District
Representative (R)



Jenny Graham
6th District
Representative (R)



Joel Kretz
7th District
Representative (R)



Mary Dye
9th District
Representative (R)



Marcus Riccelli
3rd District
Representative (D)



Rob Chase
4th District
Representative (R)



Mike Volz
6th District
Representative (R)



Jacquelin Maycumber
7th District
Representative (R)



Joe Schmick
9th District
Representative (R)

