

From: [Mayor](#)
To: [Mayor](#)
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Valerie Stoddard

The City of Spokane COVID-19 News Update for Oct. 20

Information about Coronavirus Disease 19 (COVID-19) is evolving rapidly. We want to make sure our City employees have up-to-date information. We will provide this update, as needed, to communicate what you need to know, while we work to reduce the spread of this disease in our community and continue to provide critical public services.

A Message from Mayor Woodward

The lingering fight against the global health pandemic and associated economic impact has us closely watching our spending here at the City. We are prioritizing expenditures that maintain existing services and programs, meeting contractual obligations, and looking at how we do things cheaper.

That's because we are currently bringing in less money than we previously expected. Current projections show a \$3.2 million decline in General Fund revenue next year. For comparison, revenue grew \$7.5 million in 2019.

We are paying our existing obligations, not taking on new ones, and carefully using our savings accounts to cover necessities. Our focus is on the high-priority services our citizens want – responsive public safety, improved streets, and healthy parks and library services; keeping it affordable; and helping people.

Unlike previous economic downturns, the pandemic and resulting recession hit quickly. There was little warning and even less time to prepare.

Still, we responded quickly and realized more than \$6 million in savings this year through scrutinized spending of expenses that could be avoided or postponed. That practice will continue next year, but the savings will not be enough to allow us to add meaningfully to our services.

Instead, we will invest in existing services to make sure citizens receive the things you expect in your neighborhoods and fully prepare Spokane for economic recovery. We will postpone other things for another, more financially secure post-COVID day. These are decisions we are discussing with the City Council.

Fortunately, healthy reserves meticulously set aside for days like today have our City in better financial condition than most. That definitely does not give us license to spend freely, but it does give us a little more wiggle room. Ultimately, we have to be very thoughtful with our spending because we don't know how long the economic impacts will last.

What's Happening at the City

- The Providence Playscape Virtual Grand Opening in Riverfront Park will be held on Friday, Oct. 23, at 11:30 a.m. [Check out the details.](#)
- Starting today, citizens can sign up to [reserve a computer at the Spokane Public Library branches.](#) This is part of the slow reopening of libraries, which have focused on curbside pickup of materials in recent months.
- Street work designed to invest our local economic recovery has begun. Check out the [new video from CityCable 5.](#)
- The City has started a focus to get [non-passenger vehicles out of on-street parking](#) prior to the start of snow season. Non-passenger vehicles are limited to 24-hour parking on City streets.

Drug Take Back Day

The next **Drug Take Back Day** is Saturday, Oct. 24. [Find locations in Spokane where you can get rid of drugs you no longer need.](#)

COVID-19 & Vaping

A study shows that youth and young adults who reported using vapor products are more likely to test positive for COVID-19 than individuals who have never used them. Vapor product use among youth in Spokane County significantly increased between 2016 and 2018. [Check out the blog by the Spokane Regional Health District to learn more.](#)

Virtual Compost Fair

There will not be a Fall Compost Fair at the Finch Arboretum this October but you can still learn about composting fall leaves. The Spokane County Master Composters/Recyclers are bringing their Fall Compost Fair to the public in a virtual event. For one week, county residents can get great home composting tips in the online event and earn a **free compost bin!**

Planning for a Safe Halloween

Halloween is a great tradition, but it will require some additional thought and creativity to celebrate safely during the pandemic. The Spokane Regional Health District, the CDC, and other health professionals have put out ideas and tips. Our City team has compiled the information and put out some [great information in a blog post on the City's web site.](#)

More Information to Assist Our Employees

Here are some more resources from our Employee Assistance Program:

- [Building Social Bonds](#)
Strong, healthy relationships are essential throughout your life. Your social ties with family members, friends, neighbors, coworkers, and others impact your mental, emotional, and even physical well-being.
"We can't underestimate the power of a relationship in helping to promote well-being," says National Institutes of Health (NIH) psychologist and relationship expert Dr. Valerie Maholmes. Studies have found that having a variety of social relationships may help reduce stress and heart-related risks. Strong social ties are even linked to a longer life. On the other hand, loneliness and social isolation are linked to poorer health, depression, and increased risk of early death.
- [Dealing With Anger in a Marriage](#)
One of the most challenging skills that partners must develop in a marriage is how to deal effectively with anger. Any time two people live together, there are bound to be episodes of anger. Anger is a perfectly normal, healthy emotion, but one that we should pay close attention to. Suppose we were to define anger in marriage. In that case, one might say that it's feeling mad in response to frustration or other circumstances and impulsively expressing yourself without thought. Anger can be used to justify feelings, displace emotions, or elevate self-worth. Though anger is one of the most common emotions known to the human race, few people are skilled at reacting to this feeling with complete effectiveness. Many of us rely on a few specific responses that we learned as children and continue to use as adults. These responses can turn into constructive or destructive behavior. Recognizing what makes us angry can help us find better ways to cope with this emotion. It's not whether we get mad, but what we do with it that matters. Expressing anger in a marriage can help draw couples closer together, but it can also backfire if couples don't use anger in a constructive manner.

To access more topics related to COVID-19 visit: [EAPHelpLink.com](#), using company code: **CITSP0**

Employee Information Portal (covid19.spokane.gov/)

Remember, this Employee Information Portal is a great resource for employees to stay current on what's happening with the COVID-19 response. The [Employee Information Portal](https://covid19.spokane.gov/) can be accessed from work or home, using a computer or mobile device. All of the emailed information we have sent to employees is archived here.