

The City of Spokane

## Weekly News Update for Oct. 5

*Information about COVID-19 is evolving rapidly, and our important work as a City is continuing. We want to make sure our City employees have up-to-date information on both COVID and employee news. 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**

Current economic times give us reason to pause as we enter the heart of budget season and also have us cautiously optimistic about where we are as a City organization. Collaboration, communication, and compromise have been critical components to finding ways for a few modest additions in [my preliminary draft priority-based budget](#) even as revenues are lower than anticipated before the pandemic.

My draft proposes increased spending on investments in police officer training, an in-field partnership between officers and behavioral health specialists, reducing wait times for police public records requests, supporting victims of violent crime and human trafficking, additional downtown and neighborhood cleanup services, and staffing to support decreasing residential permit times and increases in housing supply. Investments are also proposed in diversity, equity, and inclusion, public access to government, and ongoing cyber security measure needs.

The preliminary budget is a balance of maintaining core services and strategic, modest, and a first step, in many cases, toward enhancing programs based on specific outcomes we can achieve.

A cautious and thoughtful approach to spending to meet service expectations while being realistic about continuing revenue impacts resulting from the pandemic has put us in a manageable position. Revenue projections are a bit of a mixed bag. While the nearly \$215.6 million in forecasted revenue presents a 5.9% increase over currently projected 2021 revenue, it is still \$5.3 million short of the pre-COVID revenue trend.

That we are even talking about some positive revenue news when other communities are much less fortunate is a credit to the work my Administration and this Council has done to carry on the good fiscal stewardship of the previous Administration and Councils, which prioritized healthy reserves and careful spending controls.

We will hold four budget workshops with the City Council this month on the 14th, 15th, 19th, and 22nd before submitting my final proposed budget on November 1. Look forward to the continued conversation.

## Long-Term Care Payroll Tax – Opting-Out

To opt-out of this Payroll Tax, as a result of purchasing a qualified, private, Long-Term Care (LTC) Insurance policy, you will need to apply for an exemption from the Employment Security Department (ESD). As a reminder, **if you do not have a qualified, private, LTC insurance policy by Monday, Nov. 1, 2021, our understanding is that you can never “opt-out” of the tax.**

To learn more visit [SharePoint](#).

## Get Your Flu Shot!



**You Don't Want to Be Sick, So Get the Flu Shot Quick!**  
**Multicare Indigo Occupation Medicine will be administering the Flu Shots at NO COST to all benefitted employees.**

### Flu Shots will be provided at these locations.

Mon. 10/11/2021	Fire Training Center	8:30 - 11:30
Mon. 10/11/2021	SCSC (915 N. Nelson)	2:00 - 3:30
Tue. 10/12/2021	Fire Training Center	8:30 - 11:30
Tue. 10/12/2021	Streets (901 N. Nelson)	3:00–4:15
Wed. 10/13/2021	Fire Training Center	8:30 - 11:30
Wed. 10/13/2021	Water Department	2:30– 3:30
Thurs. 10/14/2021	Fire Training Center	8:30 – 11:30
Mon. 10/18/2021	City Hall (Council Briefing Center)	8:30 – 12:00
Mon. 10/18/2021	Waste Water (Aubrey Complex)	2:00 – 3:00
Tue. 10/19/2021	Municipal Court Conference Rm.	9:00 – 11:00
Tue. 10/19/2021	Public Safety Bldg. Police Chief Con. Rm.	12:00-2:00
Wed. 10/20/2021	Sewer Maintenance (Sprague)	6:30 - 8:00

\*CDC  
Guidelines  
will Apply

### After October 20th, these options are also available.

**Premera Blue Cross: Premera Plans** – For employees and their covered dependents enrolled under Premera Plans III/IV, V, VI, VII vaccinations will be provided at your applicable in-network co-insurance level. Make sure that your clinic or provider is an In-Network provider for Premera you can go to [Premera.com](http://Premera.com), or call 1-800-722-1471.

**Kaiser Permanente:** For Kaiser Permanente covered employees and their covered dependents; Kaiser Permanente is now providing the Influenza vaccination with no co-pay to its members. Members must go to one of the Kaiser Permanente you can access this information on [wa.kaiserpermanente.org](http://wa.kaiserpermanente.org), or call them at 1-888-901-4636.

**TALK WITH YOUR PHYSICIAN** if you have a fever, or are severely ill at the time the shot is scheduled.

Contact the Benefits Department at 625-6565 or City Benefits ([gracb@spokanecity.org](mailto:gracb@spokanecity.org)) if you have questions.

## More Information to Assist You

*Here are some more resources from our Employee Assistance Program:*

- [Depression: Getting Help](#)

Everyone occasionally feels blue or sad, but these feelings are usually short lived and pass within a couple of days. When you have depression, it interferes with daily life and causes pain for both you and those who care about you. Depression is a common but serious illness.

If you have depression, you may feel exhausted, helpless, and hopeless. It may be extremely difficult to take any action to help yourself, but as you begin to recognize your depression and begin treatment, you will start to feel better.

## Employee Information Portal ([covid19.spokanecity.org/](https://covid19.spokanecity.org/))

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](#) 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.