



Agenda Sheet for City Council Meeting of:
04/23/2018

Date Rec'd	4/10/2018
Clerk's File #	CPR 2018-0030
Renews #	
Cross Ref #	
Project #	
Bid #	
Requisition #	

Submitting Dept	CITY COUNCIL
Contact Name/Phone	BEN STUCKART 625-6258
Contact E-Mail	BSTUCKART@SPOKANECITY.ORG
Agenda Item Type	Special Considerations
Agenda Item Name	0320 - LETTER TO SPOKANE COUNTY CONCERNING PREPAID BALLOT POSTAGE

Agenda Wording
This is a letter for approval of the Council, asking that Spokane County pre-pay the postage for all ballots sent out for elections.

Summary (Background)
Pre-paying postage increases voter participation, and probably to a higher degree than simply installing more ballot drop boxes, and at a lower cost than installing more ballot drop boxes. While King County estimates a cost of \$381,000 for prepaid ballot postage. Of course, King County is many times the size of Spokane County. As well, the postage charge is only applied for those ballots that are returned to the elections office. The City is willing to consider cost-sharing as well.

Fiscal Impact	Grant related? NO	Budget Account
	Public Works? NO	
Expense \$ TBD		# TBD
Select \$		#
Select \$		#
Select \$		#

Approvals		Council Notifications	
Dept Head	MCCLATCHEY, BRIAN	Study Session	
Division Director		Other	
Finance	BUSTOS, KIM	Distribution List	
Legal	PICCOLO, MIKE		
For the Mayor	DUNIVANT, TIMOTHY		
Additional Approvals			
Purchasing			

APPROVED BY
SPOKANE CITY COUNCIL:
4/23/2018
[Signature]
CITY CLERK



SPOKANE CITY COUNCIL
808 W. Spokane Falls Blvd.
Spokane, WA 99201-3335
(509) 625-6255

Spokane County Commission
1116 W. Broadway
Spokane, WA 99260

April 23, 2018

Commissioners French, Kerns, and Kunej:

We are writing to request that Spokane County allocate funding to ensure that postage on ballots in both the upcoming primary and general elections is prepaid and therefore free to the voter.

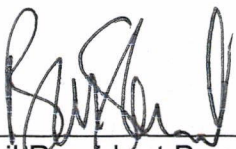
Experience shows that voter participation increases when postage on ballots is prepaid. For example, in April, 2017, when King County tested pre-paid ballot postage as a pilot program, voter participation increased by six percentage points, from the projected turnout of 46% to an actual turnout of 52%. That increase in voter turnout, alone, would justify the effort and expense to pre-pay ballot postage.

There has been discussion of installing additional ballot drop-boxes. However, providing pre-paid postage on ballots will cost less. Using King County as example again, the County budgeted for \$381,000 for ballot postage – in a much smaller county like ours, the actual postage would likely be much less, and would probably produce a greater increase in voter turnout than would be generated by spending a comparable amount on installing additional ballot drop-boxes throughout the county. The county would only incur this cost on the ballots which are actually returned.

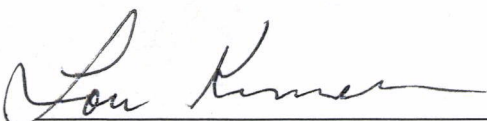
We realize that budgets are always strained at every level of government. Therefore, the City Council is willing to discuss some cost-share ideas for the implementation of this proposal.

We urge Spokane County to examine the possibility of pre-paying postage on all ballots mailed out in the county.

Respectfully,



Council President Ben Stuckart



Council Member Lori Kinnear



SPOKANE CITY COUNCIL
808 W. Spokane Falls Blvd.
Spokane, WA 99201-3335
(509) 625-6255

Council Member Breean Beggs

Council Member Kate Burke

Council Member Karen Stratton

Council Member Mike Fagan

Council Member Candace Mumm

cc: Vicky Dalton, Spokane County Auditor