

2023 City of Spokane Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate for: Spokane City Council District 1

Name: Michael Cathcart

Professional licenses or other relevant professional experience.

Current: City Council District 1 & City Council President Pro Tem;

Past: Executive Director, Better Spokane; Gov Affairs Director, Spokane Home Builders Association; Legislative Aide, Washington State Senate, Production Assistant, KHQ

Other:

- Member, Broadlinc PDA
- Chair, Public Safety Committee;
- Chair, Northeast Public Development Authority;
- Vice-Chair, Finance Committee;
- Member, Budget Committee;
- Member, Downtown Spokane Partnership

Find more information about the campaign:

- www.votecathcart.com
 - www.facebook.com/votecathcart
 - <https://www.spokesman.com/elections/2023/washington-general-election-nov-7/races/citytown/city-of-spokane/spokane-city-council-district-1-northeast/>
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Tell us about your plan for downtown's recovery...

How will you boost commercial activity downtown?

Supporting the resurgence of downtown activity is critical, and I am committed to implementing strategies to revitalize the commercial and residential heartbeat of our city. The effort will require an emphasis on public safety and residential development to return downtown to its greater vibrancy. A secure downtown is a bustling downtown. We need to continue amplifying our community policing efforts and technology adoption to ensure that downtown is a place where people feel secure at all times. A sense of safety is instrumental in drawing residents and visitors alike to the area, fostering a lively and active environment. Moreover, by increasing housing options, including office conversions, we not only provide homes for more residents but also ensure a constant flow of customers capable of supporting our local businesses, and we continue the loop of putting more eyes on our streets to generate a safer atmosphere.

How will you ensure a vibrant downtown experience for people that live, work and visit?

The cleanliness and overall appeal of downtown is pivotal to creating an inviting atmosphere for residents, workers, and visitors. It's a reflection of our city's commitment to excellence. I am committed continuing our efforts to enhance the downtown area's cleanliness and vibrancy. By ensuring that our

city's standards are upheld, we are able to cultivate a clean, orderly, and attractive downtown. I am grateful for the instrumental efforts by our Downtown Ambassadors and the Clean Team, and will continue to support their efforts in anyway we can. Their efforts set a benchmark that we aim to replicate across the City's business districts. Further, the City needs to make BID expansion feasible by supporting the effort, which will enhance our ability to address issues south of the viaducts.

How will you support new housing development downtown, especially for “missing middle”?

One area of focus is streamlining the process for housing development to ensure we can get more families in to more residential opportunities. By revisiting downtown regulations and permitting processes, we can remove barriers and incentivize developers to build a variety of housing options. This includes mixed-use developments that combine residential, commercial, and public spaces, accommodating to a broad spectrum of income levels. Financial incentives will also play a crucial role in making it financially viable for housing that is affordable. Collaboration with the private sector will be key to fostering partnerships that are mutually beneficial and aligned with the broader goal of attainable housing and expanded ownership opportunities. Lastly, condominiums represent one of the most accessible pathways to homeownership, yet regulatory impediments have stifled their potential in Spokane. We must continue advocating to the legislature that fixing this long enduring mistake is a pivotal piece to our housing solutions.

How will you address public safety in downtown Spokane?

In my role as Public Safety Chair, I've been vocal and proactive in addressing the complex issues surrounding public safety. The safety of our downtown and surrounding neighborhoods is a priority that I've approached with urgency. I've spearheaded initiatives aimed at enhancing safety and security. One example is the stringent regulation of dangerous substances like fentanyl in our public spaces, a measure that is instrumental in fostering a safer environment for all residents and visitors. Investment in law enforcement, including the advancement of tools and equipment, has been another pivotal aspect of our comprehensive approach to public safety. The passage of a resolution to enhance the safety of the Monroe Street Bridge for pedestrians hopefully underscores my commitment to creating a downtown where every individual feels secure and welcome to come and go. We must take extraordinary steps at times to address the high levels of criminal activity, such as what we are seeing at 2nd and Division. Our Downtown Ambassadors have been important partners for the city and I am proud to continue advocating for their well being as they work incredibly hard to enhance the safety and vibrancy of downtown.

What do you believe should be the City's role in addressing homelessness, mental illness and substance use on the streets of downtown Spokane?

I firmly believe that the issue of homelessness, coupled with mental illness and substance use, requires a comprehensive and collaborative regional approach. It's not just a city issue; it's a regional one, and addressing it effectively means bringing together resources, expertise, and solutions from across the region. I've always been a strong voice for a regional strategy. In fact, I had the privilege of visiting Houston one year ago and seeing first hand how they have successfully been addressing the issue and understanding how a system wide approach centered on partnerships and collaboration can work to make a real impact. It's about accountability and measurable results. We need to continue advocating to the state for support with capital and operations for facilities and services that are specifically tailored to address the diverse needs of individuals facing mental health and substance abuse issues. Our focus should be on creating a network of cost-effective support services that are accessible and effective and the outcomes are measurable.

Investing in a clean and safe downtown is essential to attracting new businesses as well as workers, visitors, and residents. Given the fragile state of downtown's revitalization, how should the City of Spokane prioritize funding downtown recovery in its budget?

You are correct that the city is facing a significant budget challenge to the tune of a 20 million dollar deficit, however, even with this challenge, we can't afford to compromise on public safety, whether emergency response, law enforcement, traffic control, or code enforcement, these are top priorities of our residents and also a key driver in attracting more people to live, work, and shop downtown and all across our neighborhoods and business districts. A safe community is a flourishing community. We can't balance our budgets by making our community less safe. We all have a right to live in a safe community.

Is there any additional information you would like to share about your candidacy that you were unable to provide in the above responses?

The candidate did not respond to this question.

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