

2023 City of Spokane Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate for: Mayor of Spokane

Name: Nadine Woodward

Professional licenses or other relevant professional experience:

I am completing my first term as Spokane Mayor, leading the city through a global health pandemic, a summer of protests, the city's first riot, the Defund the Police movement, unprecedented workforce shortages, inflation, and a looming recession. Despite these challenges, Spokane has continued to grow as people flee rising crime and costs of living in Seattle, Portland, and California. As mayor, I'm the CEO of an organization of 2,300 employees and write/oversee a \$1.3 billion dollar budget.

Find more information about the campaign:

<http://www.mayorspokane.com> or @MayorSpokane on X (Twitter)

Tell us about your plan for downtown's recovery...

How will you boost commercial activity downtown?

I have always said that downtown is the economic engine of our region. That's why I've worked so hard in partnership with the DSP and its members to build a safe, healthy, and vibrant place where people go to enjoy everything Spokane has to offer. That includes joining efforts to recruit businesses, conventions, and events, partnering to grow legacy activities and develop new attractions, and creating new ways, like alley activations and sidewalk cafes, to use public spaces for dining and retail.

When more people live downtown, not only do the businesses do better but the activity keeps downtown safer. With more people on the sidewalks, drives down the crimes of opportunity. We've doubled our officers downtown and strategically and aggressively hit some hotspot areas and those approaches have returned some encouraging successes. Overall crime and property crime is down double digits year-to-date in those immediate areas and across downtown. We have also begun exploring new ways to drive investment that activates underutilized commercial spaces and I have a plan to jumpstart that work in my second term through adaptive reuse that encourages more downtown residency, fills empty space in downtown buildings, and helps address the housing shortage.

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

Staying on top of litter and debris and avoiding the broken window effect is about repetition. We have tripled the graffiti, litter, and encampment clean up teams downtown to have crews in the field 7 days a week and for additional hours each day. That has resulted in hundreds of thousands of pounds of garbage being picked up and still we have more to do. That's why we've been aggressive in our approach to re-establishing some of the law enforcement tools to be more proactive approach to prevention of the quality of life crimes.

We have also worked with the business community to improve our snow removal plan. The downtown business core is a priority area that gets resources first and continuously to keep commerce and the economy moving.

Having access to downtown means access to a majority of Spokane's businesses. From snow removal, to landscaping and cleaning up litter and graffiti, our teams that work to improve our downtown area need to be given the resources necessary to keep business moving downtown. We have worked hard to make this the case, especially involving the protection of Riverfront Spokane and the Spokane River. In my second term, we will continue to find ways to improve our resources that keep Spokane clean and make Spokane an even more welcoming place.

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

As a city, we need to be encouraging new development. Housing at every brings the overall demand and price of housing down and allows people to move up the housing ladder. However, we do specifically need to focus on building missing middle housing. Rapid increases in impact fees are the exact opposite of that, which is why my administration has worked with the developer community on a reasonable approach that encourages development and meets the City's increasing costs. Developers have reminded us through that process that they expect to pay their fair share as long as the program is structured with the end results of quality housing inventory in Spokane.

We are also addressing our zoning ordinances. The work we did to bring the City Council together to lead the state on allowing multi-family housing on residential lots is one recent example. We're also exploring other ways to better use centers and corridors resources and leverage the tremendous new investment in public transportation into and through our downtown core.

How will you address public safety in downtown Spokane?

In my first term, strengthening our sit-and-lie, illegal camping and public drug use ordinances has returned many of the tools our officers need to keep downtown clean and safe, but the work isn't done. I have also doubled patrols downtown, relocated the police precinct to a more central location, and created the Violent Crimes Task Force which has arrested more than 150 violent and prolific criminals in Spokane. We have also added space and navigation resources to better connect individuals to resources. That push-pull combination gives people choices to access the assistance they need when they need it and also the incentive of a nudge when the situation requires it.

In my next term, I will continue to recruit officers, particularly lateral transfers that come to Spokane more ready to be out patrolling our neighborhoods. Our officers know how supportive I am of law enforcement and the multi-year contract we recently negotiated has made us much more competitive as an employer and marks the first time in decades officers have worked without an expired or expiring contract. Those two factors have been the primary drivers behind creating a supportive environment of our law enforcement, allowing us to put more officers in neighborhoods. I also plan to create a health and safety campus to address the mental health crisis happening every day downtown, evolve the municipal court to better serve our communities needs and work with the State Legislature to encourage them to provide tools that keep our communities safe.

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

City governments were not originally set up to handle this issue, but we have been able to make adjustments to meet the needs of our community. My administration has added hundreds of beds to the shelter system with wrap-around services and navigation to longer term solutions. This strategy is expensive, but navigation centers like TRAC have been proven to be the only successful way to house chronically homeless.

We have also joined more than a dozen other cities and counties, including Seattle and Tacoma, and the International Municipal Lawyers Association, National League of Cities, National Association of Counties in petitioning the U.S. Supreme Court to overrule the Ninth Circuit court decisions in *Martin v. Boise* and *Johnson v. Grants Pass* that compel local governments to choose between providing shelter or surrendering public lands to encampments that harm local communities.

In my next term, we need to create a health and safety campus to finally address the mental health issues that are seen downtown every day with no current recourse except the criminal justice system. Getting people the help they need before they commit crimes or overdose on the street can save lives, prevent crime, and get homeless people off the streets.

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?

My biggest priority is the safety of the people who work downtown and visit downtown. Downtown has all the shopping and service industries one could want, the most popular park in Spokane, a vibrant and welcoming community, but people need to feel safe to come downtown. With the addition of the ONE Spokane Stadium to our first-class collection of venues, we have a unique opportunity to use our revitalized Riverfront Spokane in new and exciting ways to drive additional economic investment in downtown.

From providing more officers in neighborhoods and continuing to find creative solutions to the crime and homelessness that downtown has seen, I'm excited to keep making progress towards a cleaner, safer, and more vibrant downtown.

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

Thank you to DSP for allowing me to share my vision for Spokane, and for all the work you do to keep Spokane vibrant and economically prosperous.

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