



## DISTRICT 1 (NORTHEAST SPOKANE)

### Jonathan Bingle

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**Please list any professional licenses or other relevant professional experience.**

City Council District 1 for 4 years.

**Before we dive in, tell us a little about what you think about downtown Spokane.**

**What's your favorite restaurant or small business in downtown Spokane—or somewhere you spend a lot of time?**

I enjoy supporting local businesses like 1st Avenue Coffee, Indaba, and Riverfront shops. Cochinito is always a go to for lunch! Downtown's small businesses are the heartbeat of Spokane, and I try to spend my dollars where they matter most which is supporting entrepreneurs and keeping our core vibrant.

**What is downtown's greatest asset?**

Downtown's greatest asset other than its people like our small-business owners, employees, and families who choose to live, work, and shop here, is Riverfront Park. Combined with our river and historic core, they make downtown Spokane unique and worth investing in.

**What is downtown's greatest challenge?**

Our biggest challenge is safety, and I continue to hear this from many of our residents and business owners. The open drug use, encampments, pedestrian interference, and other criminal activity that discourages residents and visitors from going downtown. Until these issues are addressed, businesses will struggle, and Spokane won't see its downtown reach full potential.

**Each of the following questions were developed through the lens of DSP's five core policy priority areas:**

**1. Cultivate commercial activity downtown: Supporting employees on their return to work downtown is a priority for DSP because a steady and consistent flow of people eating, drinking, and shopping is essential to supporting our small businesses and a vibrant downtown. What specific partnerships, incentives, or infrastructure investments would you pursue to support and attract new commercial activity downtown?**

I've continued to build partnerships with small businesses and property owners, reduce permitting barriers, and explore tax incentives for storefront activation. We must make downtown a place where businesses feel supported, and customers feel safe.

**2. Enhance a vibrant downtown experience: Essential services downtown like graffiti abatement, litter collection, landscaping, street sweeping, snow removal, etc. are especially important to ensure a clean and welcoming downtown. How will you ensure a vibrant downtown experience for people that live, work and visit?**

Essential services like litter pickup and graffiti removal can't be ignored. I was able to successfully secure funding from our last remaining ARPA dollars to create a one-year pilot program to which the sole purpose was to clean up downtown. I'd continue push for reliable contracts, quicker response times, more money to Code Enforcement, and expanded partnerships with DSP and successful nonprofits to keep streets clean and welcoming year-round.

**3. Build and expand housing options of all types, for all incomes: A growing downtown population supports economic vitality and community resilience. Achieving our goal of new housing units requires bold action, especially to support middle-income and workforce housing. How would you support these efforts?**

I oppose rent control, but I strongly support increasing supply. Streamlining permitting, encouraging workforce housing projects, and building middle-income options will make downtown more affordable and economically resilient. In the same ordinance I obtained funding with the ARPA, I was able to fund a downtown housing study.

**4. Improve public safety, deter crime and negative behavior: A safe, secure, and welcoming downtown is critical for everyone, but concerns about public safety are a top theme we hear from residents across the city. How will you address public safety concerns and perceptions in downtown Spokane?**

Perception follows reality. For downtown feel safe it must BE safe. To make Spokane safer, any way possible we NEED more police officers downtown. I'd continue advocate to strengthen enforcement against open drug use and crime while supporting police and community patrols. Safe streets attract businesses, families, and visitors which is why public safety is the foundation of a healthy downtown.

**5. Support funding, facilities and services for people to get the help they need: Homelessness and open drug use is a crisis in Spokane. What role should the city play in addressing homelessness and behavioral health challenges downtown?**

The city should partner with successful and reliable service providers to expand treatment and shelter options but must also set boundaries on illegal activity. Helping people in crisis goes together with keeping public spaces usable and safe. The city also has critical infrastructure deficiencies in long-term substance use disorder facilities and mental health care facilities. Until then, I am currently working on a project on asking the state and federal government for funding to address the real needs on the street.

**Given the fragile state of downtown's recovery, what is the role of the city in getting people the help they need while fostering economic revitalization?**

The city's role is balance and ensuring treatment and shelter access while enforcing laws so downtown remains open for families and businesses. I can't stress enough how I often I am told by my constituents that they refuse to go downtown because they feel unsafe. A safe, clean, and compassionate downtown is key to recovery and long-term growth.

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

I'm running to restore Spokane's promises which are safe neighborhoods, a thriving downtown, and responsible government. I'll continue working with businesses, service providers, and residents to make our city a place where families and commerce thrive together. As the representative for downtown, I will continue to champion downtown's importance for a stronger and more economically viable Spokane.



## DISTRICT 1 (NORTHEAST SPOKANE)

**Sarah Dixit**

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**Please list any professional licenses or other relevant professional experience.**

Organizing Director of Pro-Choice Washington, Chair of City of Spokane's Equity Subcommittee, Board President of ACL Spokane

**Before we dive in, tell us a little about what you think about downtown Spokane.**

**What's your favorite restaurant or small business in downtown Spokane—or somewhere you spend a lot of time?**

I love the buildings that function much like third places such as the Washington Cracker Building and Saranac Commons–Hatch Coffee in particular. I also spend a great deal of time hanging out in Riverfront Park and wandering through Atticus or Aunties.

**What is downtown's greatest asset?**

The mix of experiences you can get downtown. There's great food, art and cultural experiences, a variety of shopping options, hosting of major sporting events, and the natural beauty of Riverfront Park.

**What is downtown's greatest challenge?**

Fearmongering. Downtown is a vibrant neighborhood to be proud of while we address community safety and economic insecurity. I often hear from folks that parking is an issue for both residents of the Riverside neighborhood and those coming into downtown for work or play. The public's issue with Lime scooters also highlights an issue with a lack of infrastructure. I will support investments in downtown like Dignified Workday, crisis interventions, and increasing housing, while promoting a narrative that Downtown is a welcoming place for all people.

**Each of the following questions were developed through the lens of DSP's five core policy priority areas:**

**1. Cultivate commercial activity downtown: Supporting employees on their return to work downtown is a priority for DSP because a steady and consistent flow of people eating, drinking, and shopping is essential to supporting our small businesses and a vibrant downtown. What specific partnerships, incentives, or infrastructure investments would you pursue to support and attract new commercial activity downtown?**

Investing in our downtown via housing, multimodal transit, and beautifying spaces is good for everyone – visitors, employees, and residents alike. Parking continues to be a point of frustration, whether someone is a tenant of a downtown apartment or if they work at a downtown business - being able to access parking at an affordable rate is something that needs to be addressed. Commuters who use bicycles have expressed a need for bike lockers, so that they feel confident in biking versus driving. For many folks, traversing through the downtown core during the winter can be difficult – a maintenance of roads, sidewalks, and bike lanes during the winter months would ensure

both safety and accessibility. Prioritizing a bustling walkable downtown reduces air pollution, car traffic, and studies show that pedestrians actually increase economic activity via spending and increased property values.

**2. Enhance a vibrant downtown experience: Essential services downtown like graffiti abatement, litter collection, landscaping, street sweeping, snow removal, etc. are especially important to ensure a clean and welcoming downtown. How will you ensure a vibrant downtown experience for people that live, work and visit?**

When people are proud of their city, they want to invest in it and contribute to its beautification. I love our downtown, and I know there are so many others who do too. Spokane has a robust arts community which gives us an incredible opportunity to invest in public art, which we've seen demonstrated in the murals in underpasses, murals in alleyways, and more. We already have creative and fun ways to take care of our city, such as the Garbage Goat, and I will continue to push the city in that direction.

**3. Build and expand housing options of all types, for all incomes: A growing downtown population supports economic vitality and community resilience. Achieving our goal of new housing units requires bold action, especially to support middle-income and workforce housing. How would you support these efforts?**

I am a proponent of workforce housing and transit-oriented development. I will support these efforts by streamlining the process so that projects can get started faster, while maintaining safety and sustainability. This requires deep listening and collaboration, skills that I have developed over the last 10 years as a community organizer.

**4. Improve public safety, deter crime and negative behavior: A safe, secure, and welcoming downtown is critical for everyone, but concerns about public safety are a top theme we hear from residents across the city. How will you address public safety concerns and perceptions in downtown Spokane?**

A downtown where people visit, work, live, and play, creates a safer downtown. We know that the more community members using a space, the more others feel comfortable to do the same. Safety is created through community-based prevention strategies that include addressing economic insecurity for those who are most vulnerable. I will work to increase restorative justice practices and bolster a more diversified response system to manage different emergencies.

**5. Support funding, facilities and services for people to get the help they need: Homelessness and open drug use is a crisis in Spokane. What role should the city play in addressing homelessness and behavioral health challenges downtown?**

It is the city's responsibility to care for its people. Criminalizing poverty is not a long term solution to the housing crisis and the proliferation of open drug use in our community, and if anything, is a more expensive route for cities. Housing first models have proven to be more effective in getting people housed, in treatment, and on track to a sustainable future. The city is making strides in addressing these crises through scatter site models, street clinics, and other creative methods that meet people where they are at and that center people's humanity. I would also support Safe Injection/Smoking Programs because they are safe, effective, cost-saving, do not increase illegal drug use or crime, reduce infections, and decrease deaths. New users of SSPs are 5 times more likely to enter treatment and 3 times more likely to stop using drugs than those who don't use the programs.

Given the fragile state of downtown's recovery, what is the role of the city in getting people the help they need while fostering economic revitalization?

I see investment in people and economic revitalization not in opposition to each other but as mutually beneficial. By investing in the people the city is fostering revitalization. With the rising cost of goods and rent, our downtown businesses are needing to make difficult decisions around their pricing, staff, and pay. Those are the same issues people in the city are dealing with, resulting in them having to decide what to do about rent, work, food, etc. As a council member, I will lead on getting folks housed through partnerships like the Tiny House project in West Hills and I will promote programs that actually work like the Safe Smoking Programs I mentioned above. We need leaders who will seek intervention models that work in other cities and collaborate to make them work here in Spokane. I'm encouraged to see that new businesses continue to come into downtown and I am confident that we will continue to see growth in the years to come.

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

I am running because I love this city and believe it can be a leading example to other municipalities across the state and country. When leaders fearmonger and create a narrative that our downtown is dangerous, it not only harms the people who call downtown their home, but to the businesses that rely on patrons. I want to uplift a positive narrative, and remind both residents and visitors that our downtown is filled with incredible businesses, beautiful spaces, and kind people.