

2023 City of Spokane Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate for: Spokane City Council District 2

Name: Paul Dillon

Professional licenses or other relevant professional experience.

Former Vice President of Public Affairs for Planned Parenthood of Greater Washington and North Idaho, recently transitioned to Educator. Current board member for Greater Spokane Progress and the Washington Bus. Former Eastern Washington Director for YMCA Youth and Government, Legislative Aide to Senator Andy Billig, Legislative Aide to Councilmember Jon Snyder.

Find more information about the campaign:

votepauldillon.com

facebook.com/votepauldillon

instagram.com/votepauldillon

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

How will you boost commercial activity downtown?

We need to make sure we are funding and supporting a safe and walkable downtown that can help attract and retain talented people and the companies that want to hire them. Improving pedestrian access will improve economic opportunity within our community and create a culture of engagement. We need a more robust transportation plan to support downtown commuters that incorporates all modes of transportation and increase public spaces. We need more event support for our arts and culture such as Terrain and First Friday but also smaller networking events, happy hours and downtown business meet ups or food and drink tours that offer incentives to increase commercial activity. I also would like to review survey data on returning to in person work - or not - since much of it depends on the employer.

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

We need to continue to fund and support these services - realizing we are in a massive budget deficit, the city needs to hire a full time grant writer to help coordinate with DSP and other entities to help a vibrant downtown.

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

I am a strong supporter of the "missing middle" and want to advocate for the 1590 funding would increase Spokane's sales tax by 0.1% and generate \$6M a year for 20 years to fund very necessary affordable housing in our city to also include downtown.

We need more mixed residential/office building development near the heart of downtown that would provide needed housing and add vitality to an area that lacks life at night and on weekends. Various incentives should be provided in appropriate cases to encourage housing in the downtown area like the Pavement to People ordinance. With our open surface parking that is underused and historic vacant

buildings, we have opportunities for new housing can be provided there without displacement. In some areas, entire new residential neighborhoods can be created. In addition, we have underused sites adjacent to downtown on the east end between 1st Ave to 5th east of Division St to Arthur St that could become more residential and commercial. This area could be perfect for more projects like The Warren - which is so exciting! - and increase density utilizing vacant space.

How will you address public safety in downtown Spokane?

Investing in services so Spokane is safe for everyone is critical. We must fund and fill our vacant positions within the Spokane Police Department and Spokane Fire Department. In addition, we need to establish a model similar to Eugene’s Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets (CAHOOTS) which has proven to assist with law enforcement capacity, save the department money, and have better long term public health outcomes. The program dispatches two-person teams of crisis workers and medics to respond to 911 and non-emergency calls involving people in behavioral health crisis CAHOOTS units are equipped to deliver “crisis intervention, counseling, mediation, information and referral, transportation to social services, first aid, and basic-level emergency medical care.” In addition, we need to address gun violence downtown and I want to see the Spokane Regional Health District form a gun violence prevention task force and look at what legislation is possible at the municipal level including private right of action for victims.

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

It is the City’s responsibility to address these issues and recognize first and foremost they are public health issues. I am supportive of the Regional Homeless Authority that is forming but we are far off from the Houston model. I want to be the Council representative on the governing board. We need to make sure we are incorporating immediate help and resources coupled with rapid navigation that includes the Navigation Center Model so there’s wraparound services for legal aid, daily services, employment support. While funding and supporting transitional shelters and warming/cooling centers in extreme weather conditions we need to move away from the idea that transitional shelters are meant to be a permanent solution. We need housing. Homeless is fundamentally a housing issue.

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?

Downtown is such an economic engine of Spokane. In addition to the grant position, we need to pursue funding for marketing and promotions as well as different sponsorships that boost downtown.

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

As a former downtown resident and downtown worker, I am committed to a thriving downtown! I had my kickoff at Nyne Bar & Bistro. I love downtown and look forward to the future!

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