

2023 City of Spokane Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate for: Spokane City Council President

Name: Kim Plese

Professional licenses or other relevant professional experience.

Former Owner of Plese Printing and Marketing for 32 years

Find more information about the campaign:

<https://pleseforspokane.com/>

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

How will you boost commercial activity downtown?

We can't have a thriving downtown business environment if people don't feel safe coming downtown. Public safety is my top priority and I will fight to fully fund and increase staffing within our police department.

In addition, I have extensive background working with large and small businesses in Spokane and across the country, growing their businesses through design, print, social media and direct mail marketing. I will leverage my business expertise and personal connections to grow downtown and ensure the small businesses here are able to keep their doors open. This includes cutting redtape and standing up against tax increases unless they are absolutely necessary.

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

I will prioritize the City's essential duties to keep downtown a clean, friendly, and welcoming places for employees, Spokane residents and visitors. The City Council's budget has doubled from \$1 million to \$2 million in recent years, I would like to look at ways to cut back that budget and put it back into ways that make Spokane safe and clean.

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

The current housing situation is inadequate across the City. Spokane is severely under built and there is a need to increase supply of all types of housing. There is a lack of options for buyers and renters of all types.

As a City, we should be supporting those who have built up our community, not penalize developers and cause them to look to build elsewhere. For Spokane to continue growing in a sustainable way there needs to be policy coming from the state and city that allow for more building. In downtown, that should include incentivizing building in empty lots or turning empty commercial space into mixed use housing and commercial properties.

How will you address public safety in downtown Spokane?

Spokane is short about 100 police officers compared to the national average of a city of our size. I support our law enforcement officers who put on the uniform and do the hard work every day to keep our communities, including downtown, safe. Earlier this year, I went on a ride along with a Lieutenant in SPD and I was amazed at what he had to deal with downtown. When elected, I would like to put an emphasis on hiring more police officers and focus on retention. Overtime is a big part of the budget struggles we are facing, so keep our good officers and recruiting more is key to keeping Spokane safe and in a strong fiscal position. I'm proud to be endorsed by the Spokane Police Guild and Sheriff Nowels, because Spokane law enforcement know that I am the best candidate in this race to have their back.

In addition, to keep our neighborhoods, schools, and parks safe, I have raised my voice in support of Proposition 1, a ballot initiative prohibiting encampments within a 1000-foot radius of these areas. These are practical and sensible solutions to protecting those using these amenities amidst a rise in crime in our community.

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 believe that we must support the most vulnerable while still holding those who receive City services accountable. I support the Regional Homeless Authority to bring all of the surrounding communities together to implement a plan that works collaboratively with community partners to provide individualized services for the homeless – including mental health services, a pathway to affordable housing, and other critical services.

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 Spokane is a large source of tax revenue that the city receives, so its critical that the City is prioritizing a safe, clean and thriving downtown. Businesses and residents are already strugglingly coming out of the pandemic and now with inflation, so I do not support tax increases to plug gaps in the City's budget. We must look at ways to address budget shortfalls without letting essential services and potential for economic development to go to the wayside.

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 commercial and residential property owner in the city, I understand the complex issues our City is facing. I will work in a positive, collaborative way with the mayor and DSP to ensure Spokane is the city to visit, live, shop and play!

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