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For more information contact:
Christine Varela
509-998-3631
christinev@wearedh.com

Spokane's Public Safety Metrics Trending in the Wrong Direction

Lisa Brown releases mayoral commitments to improve public safety in Spokane

Spokane, Wash.— Spokane residents want the same things—to feel safe where they live, work, and play and to know police officers and firefighters will respond to calls for help, regardless of what zip code those calls come from.

Over the last several years, Spokane has seen a rise in crime and a decrease in police responses to calls for service. It's a trend that has frustrated residents and business owners alike.

“As I've been meeting with people from across the city, it's clear, a desire to improve public safety is on the mind of families across the city,” said Lisa Brown. “People are tired of the divisiveness and finger pointing for the problems happening in our city. They want a leader who can bring more than words. They want a leader who will remove barriers and deliver results.”

“At our core, we all want the same things. We want first responders—who put their lives on the line—to have the tools and training they need to effectively answer calls for help. We want people who commit violent crimes or property crimes to be held accountable. We want effective strategies that put an end to the cycle of the same people repeatedly committing crimes. And we want an effective and compassionate response to people who are in crisis, suffering from domestic violence, severe health, or mental health challenges.”

Despite our shared desires, Spokane is not experiencing the level of safety its citizens deserve nor are people and neighborhoods experiencing public safety responses equally.

- Calls to police for service are only responded to 42% of the time¹;
- Violent crimes in downtown are up by 35% year-to-date with robberies and assaults making up the majority of that growth²;

¹ Spokane Police Department Patrol and Precinct Reorganization Press Conference, January 5, 2023:
<https://vimeo.com/786726814>

² Preliminary Citywide IBR Crime Report, Spokane Police Department. June 3, 2023

³ Annual Point-in-Time Count, Spokane County 2023

- Residential burglary is up 34% in the policing sector that includes Indian Trail, Audubon/Downriver, and the Northwest neighborhood just this year to date²;
- Residential property crime has increased 40% this year in the policing sector that includes Nevada Heights, Shiloh Hills, and the Whitman neighborhoods²;
- Domestic violence is up more than 14% this year-to-date ²;
- The number of people experiencing homelessness has increased 30% in the last year³.

"It was refreshing to join Lisa and other neighborhood advocates and business owners to discuss the challenges we face in our community. I am impressed with not only her genuine concern for our neighborhoods, but also her grasp of the issues we face. She gets it, she really gets it. Lisa will be an amazing mayor for Spokane," said Gene Brake, Emerson Garfield neighborhood leader.

On Thursday, Lisa Brown released a list of public safety commitments she will prioritize when she takes office. Additionally, once she is mayor, Lisa Brown has pledged to work collaboratively with the Spokane Police Guild, Spokane Firefighters Local 29, crime victim response organizations, criminal justice reform advocates, communities of color, neighborhood councils, housing and homeless service providers and federal and state partners on the development of specific public safety plans to improve outcomes and response rates.

Lisa Brown's public safety commitments center on four key areas:

- Funding and supporting the Spokane Police Department and Fire Department
- Expanding capacity to break the crisis cycle
- Partnering with community for effective prevention programs
- Building a coordinated navigation center homelessness response

Lisa Brown's public safety commitment document (attached) contains a detailed list of the specific actions and priorities.

"As a small business owner in downtown, I know firsthand how badly we need a mayor who can make meaningful progress on public safety," said Deborah Di Bernardo, owner of First Avenue Coffee. "I trust Lisa's leadership to get results because I've seen her do it. She brings people to the table. She listens. And then she follows through with action. That's exactly what Spokane needs."

"Lisa has a long track record of working to prevent family violence and address the needs of victims," said Regina Malveaux, former CEO of the YWCA Spokane. "For years, she has leveraged her leadership positions to secure resources and policies to put an end to the cycle of violence experienced within many families. I know she will bring this same tenacity and passion for keeping families safe to her role as Spokane mayor."

“Through these priorities, we will strengthen the public safety response in our community, hold people who commit crimes accountable, increase connection between law enforcement and our neighborhoods, provide support and resources to our first responders and mental health professionals, and invest in proven strategies for reducing crime, substance use, and homelessness,” said Lisa Brown.

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