



The State of the City 2024
Mayor Lisa Brown's
First 100 Days







A Better Way Starts Here

In her first 100 days in office, Mayor Lisa Brown has diligently reviewed recommendations from her five transition committees, swiftly taking action to implement or initiate many of their suggestions. By prioritizing these recommendations, she has demonstrated a commitment to community input, fulfilled campaign promises, and addressed pressing community needs.

Enhancing public safety and building trust in Spokane is a priority for Mayor Brown. Her approach involves collaborative efforts, community engagement, and strategic investments. Following discussions with various stakeholders and in collaboration with City of Spokane public safety leaders, Mayor Brown is putting forward a new community safety levy. If approved, this levy will generate funds for existing obligations and enhancements across various public safety services, and invest in new community resiliency enhancements and efforts.

In her commitment to economic growth and workforce development, Mayor Brown has launched initiatives to capitalize on Spokane's Tech Hub designation, foster innovation, and streamline economic development processes.

Furthermore, Mayor Brown has spent much of her first 100 days in office engaging various partners, meeting regularly with small business entities, and leveraging community events to begin activating downtown Spokane and support local neighborhood business districts.

Mayor Brown's dedication to building a resilient future includes efforts to eliminate the city's structural deficit and improve sustainability measures. She has focused on waste reduction and water conservation efforts, as well as initiatives to protect the environment and promote climate resilience.

Additionally, Mayor Brown has prioritized initiatives to enrich families and communities by supporting cultural activities, rebuilding trust, and creating inclusive spaces. She is working to improve health and housing options through affordable housing initiatives, homeless management strategies, and integration of behavioral health services.

While several recommendations have been fully completed, many remain in progress and will help guide Mayor Brown's administration throughout her tenure at City Hall.

Mayor Brown is thankful to all transition committee participants and community members for their participation and input to build a Spokane that everyone can be proud of.

Better Starts Here.



Enhancing Public Safety and Building Trust

Safer Spokane neighborhoods and improved emergency response services.

Enhancing public safety involves a collaborative effort that integrates community input and strategic investments. By engaging with residents and allocating resources to areas such as emergency response and an effective, equitable legal system, communities can foster a sense of security and trust while addressing pressing needs. Mayor Brown believes this approach not only improves immediate safety outcomes but also promotes long-term resilience and equity across Spokane.

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Immediately engage Spokane County with conditions already developed for a new public safety measure.

- Within the first few weeks of taking office, Mayor Lisa Brown began engaging Spokane County Commissioners, the Spokane County Sheriff and other county public safety leaders on the need for a new public safety measure. This included in-person meetings, as well as a letter detailing the mayor's desire for collaboration on a public safety measure with detailed plans for jail capacity, as well as programmatic investments to enhance alternative response units, behavioral health treatment, and access to affordable housing.
- Mayor Brown requested the Spokane County Commissioners take advantage of two opportunities to improve mental illness and substance use treatment for people incarcerated in the Spokane County jail. These requests include:
 - Utilizing the jail's eligibility for no-cost, long-lasting anti-psychotic medication.
 - Removing the restrictions that currently limit access to medication-assisted-therapy only to incarcerated individuals who were receiving treatment prior to incarceration.
- Mayor Brown is moving forward with introducing a City-wide community safety levy.
 - The City of Spokane is requesting a levy lid lift of \$1.00/thousand in assessed property value, which equates to \$31.42 per month for the average home in Spokane.
 - Over the next five years, the levy will generate \$37.5 million per year to fund existing obligations that were approved by Council and prior administrations, as well as enhancements to community safety services and strengthening community resiliency.
 - The five investment pillars of the levy include enhancing Fire services, Police services, the Office of the Police Ombudsman, Criminal Justice, Parks and Recreation, and community resiliency.

RECOMMENDATION 2:***Develop a process for community input to identify public safety priorities.***

- Public input, feedback from involved departments, and community priorities have been foundational in the crafting of Mayor Brown's community safety levy, as well as in the hiring processes for both the Police and Fire Chief.
- The City hosted a series of community safety meetings in each Council district to provide the public opportunities to weigh in on what they would like to see in the City's new public safety leadership. These meetings also served as a forum for the public to provide feedback on their public safety priorities and recommended solutions.
- The City also published a survey to collect feedback on community priorities that was translated into Spanish, Vietnamese, Russian and Marshallese. The survey remains open and can be found at www.myspokane.org/saferspokane.
- The Brown Administration also established a Selection Committee, comprised of city leaders, services providers, and community leaders to guide Police Chief recruitment.
- All of this work is being done in tandem with the new Community Safety Workgroup, which has been tasked with identifying Spokane's public safety challenges, developing solutions, and implementing priorities. This group is made up of subject matter experts and city leaders, and convenes monthly to collaborate on ideas and strategies to improve overall public safety throughout the city.

RECOMMENDATION 3:***Publish guiding principles for criminal justice investments.***

- While transitioning into office, Mayor Brown saw the need for a public safety director role and quickly hired Deputy City Administrator Maggie Yates. Maggie has been tasked with overseeing the hiring of the new Police and Fire chiefs, leading the Community Safety Workgroup, and establishing the City's mission and values for public safety improvements.
- Mayor Brown is reviewing guiding principles previously adopted by the City Council and will finalize her commitments upon reviewing feedback from the community engagement process.



Investing in Economy and Workforce

Support for local businesses and career pathways for our workforce.

Mayor Brown's economic strategy for Spokane focuses on creating an attractive environment for businesses and workers alike. By implementing policies that foster entrepreneurship, investing in infrastructure, and promoting workforce development, Mayor Brown is laying the foundation for sustainable economic growth and positioning Spokane as a premier destination for businesses and talented people seeking opportunities.

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Support the Tech Hub Initiative to grow Spokane's advanced manufacturing base.

- Mayor Brown believes tech innovation is central to the growth and diversification of Spokane's economy, which makes the Tech Hub designation even more significant.
- On April 10, Mayor Brown signed an executive order regarding the adoption of a new Economic Development Priority Review Policy. This helps support actions necessary to ensure the success of Spokane's new American Aerospace Materials Manufacturing Center by streamlining permitting and application processes.
 - The city will assign a case manager/project coordinator to serve as a single point of contact for both applicants and city staff related to the relevant review and permitting process(es).
 - Upon receipt of a complete application for a tenant improvement building permit, the Development Services Center (DSC) will review all aspects of the application and provide the applicant with initial comments within five (5) business days.
- The Mayor also established the new Economic Development Rapid Response Team, which will be instrumental in assisting the Tech Hub and other critical job and wealth-creating projects. This multi-disciplinary team is made up of employees from across city departments, including Building, Planning, Fire, Public Works, and other departments as needed. They work together in coordination with the Community and Economic Development Division to help devise creative solutions to permitting roadblocks on key projects, formulating development policy and procedure improvements, evaluating and proposing changes to needed infrastructure, and facilitating efficient plan review, permitting, and inspection to meet the needs of the Spokane community.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

Launch a regional child care work group to address the child care crisis.

- Mayor Brown is in the process of convening key organizational leaders from across the spectrum of the childcare workforce to share a vision and map out how to evolve infrastructure.
- Meantime, she is also working with the Planning and Economic Development departments to identify any restrictive City codes and advance new policies to improve local zoning for daycares.
- The Spokane Parks and Recreation Division boasts several existing family programs that Mayor Brown is looking to expand, including No School Day camps at Corbin Arts Center, on-site and after-school art programs, and summer recreation camps and programs. On March 20, Parks and Recreation launched a new payment plan program to ease the financial burden for summer camps.
- Mayor Brown believes that all young children deserve a great start in life, which is why she joined the Hunt Institute's Early Learning Nation Policy Fellows program. As a fellow, she will work with 100 mayors and elected leaders from across the country to help share early childhood policy and collaborate on new initiatives.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

Launch an Inclusive Economy Initiative that connects residents with training and job opportunities and supports equitable growth in their neighborhoods/communities.

- Developing an Inclusive Economy Initiative is a priority for the Brown Administration, but will take more than 100 days to launch. The Economic Development Division is currently reviewing ways to engage various partners in these discussions and is examining options for how City departments and resources can be a part.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

Meet regularly with small business entities to develop relationships and help advise the Mayor.

- Throughout her first few months in office, Mayor Brown has been meeting regularly with small business leaders and local developers to identify their needs and hear about the opportunities they would like to pursue.
- The Economic Development Division has launched regular meetings with small businesses, including Public Development Authority leaders and the Business Improvement Districts.

RECOMMENDATION 5:

Develop a public safety action plan and leverage community events to draw people to downtown and neighborhood business districts.

- Activating downtown Spokane will require the work of many partners, but must start with the City of Spokane. Mayor Brown is working to approve a formal hybrid work policy that will bring City Hall employees back to the office more frequently while also providing them appropriate flexibility to work remotely.
- In an effort to leverage community events, Mayor Brown signed Councilmember Zappone and Councilmember Dillon's Family Friendly Festivals ordinance, which allows families to stay together at street festivals that serve alcohol by aligning Spokane's regulation with state requirements.
- The Expo 50th celebration will serve as a catalyst to bring large volumes of diverse populations downtown over 9 weeks this summer. The Spokane Police Department will have enhanced patrols downtown during the celebration.
- Mayor Brown has revived the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee - now known as the Tourism and Cultural Investment Committee - which had not met or distributed grants for nearly two years. Simultaneously, she worked with the Spokane City Council to pass an ordinance updating the responsibilities of the committee and ensure grants are distributed biannually to support tourism and cultural events in the city. A grant application process is expected to open this summer.



Building a Resilient Future

A future where the city's budget and infrastructure are strong and climate goals are met.

Mayor Brown's commitment to a resilient future is evident in her proactive approach to long-term fiscal planning and tackling Spokane's budget deficit head-on while investing in essential services and infrastructure. She also sees the need to foster a more environmentally sustainable community for generations to come and is doing so by spearheading initiatives that reduce carbon emissions, promote waste reduction, and protect the Spokane River.

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Eliminate the structural deficit and create a long-term balanced budget.

- The Brown Administration has taken several immediate steps to help reverse the City of Spokane's structural deficit. In tandem with Chief Financial Officer Matt Boston, Mayor Brown has reviewed the budget and declared a budget freeze.
- CFO Matt Boston and the finance team have been working to identify city-wide expense reduction programs, and Cabinet members convened in February to identify department-specific reductions.
- Roughly two-thirds of funding sought from Mayor Brown's levy lid lift proposal would be used to fulfill promises made by the former administration and maintain current services within the Spokane Police, Fire, and Emergency Management Departments. Failure to pass the levy will lead to strict budget reduction tactics, including layoffs within General Fund departments and potential cuts to some city services.
- The City is exploring the potential to codify detailed processes to reconcile revenue and costs in labor negotiations via ordinance.

RECOMMENDATION 2:***Establish an Office of Community Resilience.***

- Due to financial constraints, the City is not in a position to hire a new role, but is identifying work that could be done by an Office of Community Resilience. Much of this work is already underway within Spokane Fire, Public Works, and Planning, including:
 - Working on emission reduction efforts.
 - Participation in Spokane County's All-Hazards Mitigation Plan.
 - Completing climate vulnerability and risk analysis with community input by 2025.
 - Developing science-based climate resilience goals and policies for adoption into the Comprehensive Plan by 2026.
 - Planning and completion of Fuels Reduction Projects within the Wildland Urban Interface.
- On April 15, the Mayor convened the internal kickoff for the newly formed Resilience and Sustainability Action Team. This team is made up of employees from across the City and meets regularly to collaborate and centralize communication for all City teams involved in grants, projects, and efforts related to resiliency, climate change, and sustainability.
- Roughly 1/3 of Mayor Brown's levy proposal includes funding for new enhancements, including community resiliency. If passed, this would include investments to expand the Office of Emergency Management and funding for new community resiliency hubs that would be activated during extreme heat, smoke, and cold weather. These hubs would be created in conjunction with community partners at various sites throughout the City.

RECOMMENDATION 3:***Support citizen review and accountability.***

- The Brown Administration has identified ways to make government more responsible and accessible, though much of this work was already started by the Spokane City Council.
 - The City Council Manager of Equity and Inclusion Initiatives has been working with the Mayor's Civil Rights Director to increase language access through translated City documents.
 - The Council has been holding new Community Days, which focus on connecting communities of color with the City of Spokane's legislative branch to discuss, debate, and consider policies and proposals.
- Members of the City's communications team have identified new software to improve public engagement and make it more consistent across City departments.



RECOMMENDATION 4:***Accelerate waste reduction.***

- Environmental Stewardship was the theme of Expo '74 and will once again be a pillar of this year's 50th anniversary celebration. The events planned for this summer, including the Lands Council's Legislative Summit and its focus on climate justice, showcase Spokane's continued commitment to the environment and improving climate response for future generations.
- Much of the City of Spokane's waste reduction efforts are spearheaded by the Public Works Department and are underway, including:
 - Collaborating with state and regional partners on the Use Food Well campaign, including the development of video tips to reduce food waste with Second Harvest.
 - Increasing Clean Green curbside collection use with rate incentives and additional collection during the winter months.
 - Exploring carbon sequestration at the Waste-to-Energy plant with the help of funding from the State Legislature.
 - Exploring the creation of Renewable Natural Gas (RNG) at the City's Riverside Park Water Reclamation Facility and growing beneficial reuse of the plant's biosolids.

RECOMMENDATION 5:***Continue water waste reduction efforts to ensure the health and resilience of the Spokane River.***

- Over the last decade, the City of Spokane has been following through on the community's commitment to an Integrated Clean Water Plan, which will continue under the Brown Administration.
 - On April 12, the City of Spokane took action to protect its drinking water by joining a lawsuit against manufacturers responsible for PFAS/ PFOA contaminants.
 - The City of Spokane has a goal of getting to a cleaner river, faster, and has prioritized investments in the combined sewer collection system to reduce overflows, which have had a substantial impact on reducing pollution in the Spokane River, representing a huge increase during the last year.
 - More than 99 percent of all storm and wastewater that enters Spokane's combined sewer system is cleaned and treated before it goes back into the Spokane River.
- An overhaul of Coeur d'Alene Park's irrigation system to a smart watering auto system is underway, which will reduce water waste and labor costs.
- This spring, Spokane will complete a multi-year project that will further protect the Spokane River. The Cochran Basin in northwest Spokane is now an intersection where engineering, green infrastructure, and recreation meet. Stormwater from over 5,000 acres collects here and is now treated with specialized soil, filtration ponds, and natural plants while outdoor enthusiasts can get in 18 holes of disc golf or access the river with a raft.
- Drought conditions have been identified for much of Washington state already. Throughout the summer, Spokane residents and businesses can take advantage of rebates on purchases that reduce water use, apply for water bill credits for removing turf and replacing it with low water SpokaneScape, and getting a water efficiency check up at their homes. More information is on the City's web site.
- City golf courses (funded solely by golf rounds and not by tax dollars) invested about \$8 million over the past 5 years in irrigation upgrades, saving approximately 40 million gallons of water annually while improving quality of play.

Enriching Families and Communities

Enrichment opportunities for children and families—from our preschool classrooms to our parks and playgrounds, to creative and cultural events across Spokane.

Mayor Brown is dedicated to making Spokane a vibrant destination for families and children, and is doing so by prioritizing initiatives that support cultural activities and the arts. By investing in community spaces, promoting local artists, and expanding access to educational and recreational programs, she aims to create a diverse range of experiences that enrich the lives of residents and visitors alike.



RECOMMENDATION 1:

Make it possible for neighborhood and cultural activities and events to thrive.

- Inspired by a visit to the Treefort Music Festival in Boise, Mayor Brown is actively working to identify opportunities for neighborhood and cultural activities to thrive in Spokane. She is looking into the possibility of eliminating fees for large neighborhood events and was proud to sign the Family Friendly Festivals ordinance.
- The Neighborhood, Housing and Human Services Division is working with the Special Events team to verify processes.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

Build stronger partnerships between the City and families, rebuild trust and create inclusive spaces.

- Much of the work to rebuild trust between the City and families will be tasked to the new Community, Housing and Human Services Director who was appointed on April 8. This role is being tasked with policy and advocacy efforts for families, as well as K-12 education supports and partnerships.
- The Spokane Parks and Recreation Division is looking to expand its already strong relationship with local senior, youth, and community centers. The division has a long history of financially supporting the centers' recreation programming and has recently started offering capital improvement grants to the centers while also partnering on recreation programs to serve more people. The Parks Division will soon launch a children's pollinator garden in Manito Park in partnership with The Friends of Manito, and is identifying new opportunities for family engagement across its properties including STEM programming at Finch Arboretum and renovations of neighborhood playgrounds.

- Mayor Brown has put forward a proposal suggesting that \$2.15 million in American Rescue Plan Act funding be used to expand broadband infrastructure in underserved communities.
- Partnership discussions are already underway between the Mayor, Spokane Public Schools and the Spokane Library for a kindergarten readiness program.
- Mayor Brown is working alongside a contractor in NHHS to launch a Mayor's impact initiative for families with young children.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

Reclaim the arts.

- Mayor Brown met with Spokane Arts and is auditing current funding structures. This includes an inventory of the City's public art collection within its facilities.
- Several City assets, like the Chase Gallery and the Hive, are areas that are already used to create interactive art and cultural centers. The Brown Administration is identifying new spaces to continue this effort, and is exploring potential partnerships with community organizations like Thrive International.
- The Community and Economic Development Division is working closely with Terrain and the new owners of the historic Jensen-Byrd building on Riverside to assist them with local and federal tax credits and incentives to support their ambitious plan to rehab the building and establish a multifaceted arts and culture hub in the heart of downtown Spokane.



Improving Health and Housing Options

A community response to homelessness, housing, and health issues.

Mayor Brown is deeply committed to improving health and housing in Spokane, recognizing them as fundamental human rights. By implementing policies that prioritize affordable housing, healthcare accessibility, and social services, she is working to create a community where all residents can live comfortably and thrive. Through collaborative efforts with local organizations and government agencies, Mayor Brown is working to address systemic issues and ensure that everyone in Spokane has access to safe and stable housing.

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Take the lead in developing a coordinated plan for affordable housing by convening a cross-sector workgroup to create a “moonshot” housing plan.

- Within her first few weeks in office, Mayor Brown convened the directors for the Office of Neighborhood, Housing and Human Services, Community and Economic Development, and Finance to begin discussions on how to invest revenue in our Spokane Affordable Housing Fund. These funds are to be used for eligible capital and service investments.
- Mayor Brown is developing a task force that will be responsible for identifying recommendations to the City Council on how best to allocate this funding. This taskforce will outline the process and RFP components to get funds into the community through a late-spring or early summer RFP.
- On March 20, the Spokane Public Library announced its partnership with Thrive International to build 45 housing projects for immigrants and refugees on a 1.62-acre property on N. Nevada St. In addition to housing, this development will feature a public event and learning space operated by the Library, as well as a playground, greenhouse, and 24/7 Library kiosk.
- The City of Spokane’s Planning Team is developing the next Comprehensive plan, which will include an evaluation of housing availability within varying strata.
- The Community and Economic Development Division is working to identify and implement additional housing incentives that will help to fund affordable and workforce housing, including SB 6175, which provides sales tax benefits for office building conversions to housing with affordable units.

RECOMMENDATION 2:***Perform a comprehensive audit to understand existing shelters, capacity, resources, and funding.***

- A full audit of Spokane's existing shelter capacity, resources, and funding is completed. At the direction of Mayor Brown and over the course of several weeks, the Community, Housing and Human Services team conducted the audit to identify the number of beds and capacity of the system. It also determined provider and community feedback supporting a mix of smaller congregate and additional scattered-site shelter locations. The Brown Administration is using these findings to guide the transition from a large congregate to a dispersed shelter model.
 - The Brown Administration is moving forward with plans for residents to transition out of the Trent Avenue Resource Center and is doing so with the help of a \$4 million investment from the State Legislature.

RECOMMENDATION 3:***Create a homeless management dashboard.***

- With the completion of the shelter audit and the Point-In-Time Count data being finalized soon, the City is working toward the creation of a homeless management dashboard. The City is also engaging the County and Spokane Valley to ensure a regional approach to data collection, integrity, and to provide regional trends.

RECOMMENDATION 4:***Develop a task force to integrate existing behavioral health and mental health services.***

- Behavioral health and mental health response is closely entwined with Spokane's public safety response, so much of this work is being completed by the new Community Safety Workgroup.
- Within her first month in office, Mayor Brown traveled to Olympia to vouch for state funding to expand and continue current street medicine efforts. With the help of state lawmakers, Mayor Brown secured \$1 million for a street medicine outreach pilot program.
- The Spokane City Council passed Mayor Brown's proposal for newly-acquired opioid settlement dollars, which includes an initial allocation of:
 - \$500,000 for the expansion of the Spokane Fire Department's CARES program, including the addition of a social worker, substance use disorder professional, and case manager to increase caseload capacity from 600 to 1,500 cumulative cases.
 - \$500,000 to the creation of a High Utilizer and Complex Care Initiative, including contracting with a community-based provider to coordinate care, provide intensive wrap-around services, and launch case management services for up to 50 opioid use disorder patients.

