

1. Is crime a problem in Cañon City?

Yes, crime is a problem in Cañon City. Violent crimes, property crimes, drug offenses, and incidents involving repeat offenders are a continuing concern. The impact on families, neighborhoods, and our quality of life is real. Even isolated acts of violence or property intrusion can shake our sense of safety and stability. When we have residents that don't feel safe in their homes, on their streets, or in their local businesses, we have a problem that must be addressed.

2. Do you believe crime is a significant concern from Cañon City residents now? Why or why not?

Yes, I believe many residents are genuinely concerned about crime in our community. I hear regularly from residents who are frustrated – and in some cases fearful – due to theft, drug activity, vandalism, and crime sometimes linked to homelessness. However, public opinion is not uniform. There are also residents who do not perceive crime as a major issue here. Both perspectives are important. Our Cañon City Police Department (CCPD) crime analyst is transitioning past years' data to the new tracking system, which will enable all of us to better understand the year-over-year crime trends. Public perception matters. When people feel uneasy in their own neighborhoods or worry about the security of their property, that has real consequences for community trust and quality of life. When that sense of safety is lost, it's our responsibility as city council members to listen, respond, and act.

3. What specific role do you believe the City Council should play in addressing public safety in Cañon City?

Public safety is one of the most fundamental responsibilities of local government, and leadership starts at the top. City Council has a responsibility to lead with clarity, consistency, and accountability. That means setting clear priorities, standing firmly behind our police department, and working in partnership with community members, city staff, and other agencies to create a safer Cañon City. We set the tone and priorities by how we allocate resources, shape policy, and engage with law enforcement leadership. These decisions have a long-term impact on public safety in our community.

I believe that strong leadership means asking the tough questions when proposals come forward, while having the conviction to act when decisions must be made. I've supported every initiative brought to Council by local law enforcement, because after doing my due diligence, I've seen that these efforts are grounded in sound strategy and aligned with improved public safety. Council members are not law enforcement subject matter experts, and we shouldn't pretend to be – but we are responsible for providing strategic direction, listening carefully to our police chief's recommendations, asking thoughtful questions, and standing behind the men and women who have dedicated their lives to protecting all of ours. That includes ensuring the department is properly staffed, trained, equipped, and resourced to serve and protect our community.

I have confidence in our police chief's expertise and judgement, and I'm proud of the progress our police department has made in recent years under his leadership. From the addition of a career progression program to attract and retain high-quality officers, to increased investment in training — including our second commander currently attending the FBI National Academy at Quantico — we're building a department that's both professional and forward-thinking. We've increased salaries to stay competitive, and through the COPS grant, we've added five new officer billets, which is on track to include a second parks officer and dedicated coverage downtown by September of this year. We envision that this new unit will be housed at Royal Gorge Boulevard and 9th at the new Chamber of Commerce building, which will enable a significantly faster response time to downtown. These steps reflect collaboration, foresight, and shared priorities.

Our police show up for our community; they are a fixture at community events and are beloved by the kids in our schools. Fostering that connection and trust between our police and community members is vital. No police department can everywhere at once, and they rely on citizens to report crimes and concerns. Council has a role to play in clearly communicating to residents the importance of sharing information with the CCPD and how best to do so.

I believe we can redouble our efforts to address the threats our community faces — including the devastating impact of synthetic drugs such as fentanyl. Council must ensure our police department has both the authority and the tools it needs to enforce the law fairly and effectively. Leadership in public safety is not just about responding to crises. It's about setting a steady tone and making a clear, consistent commitment to the values of safety, order, and respect for the rule of law. City Council must be a partner — not just in oversight, but in action. That means listening to residents, advocating for strategic investments in policing, working with community groups to build trust and preventative programs, promoting policies that reflect the priorities of the people we serve, and holding ourselves accountable for results.

4. Are the current city resources allocated to public safety in Cañon City appropriate for our community's needs? Please explain your reasoning.

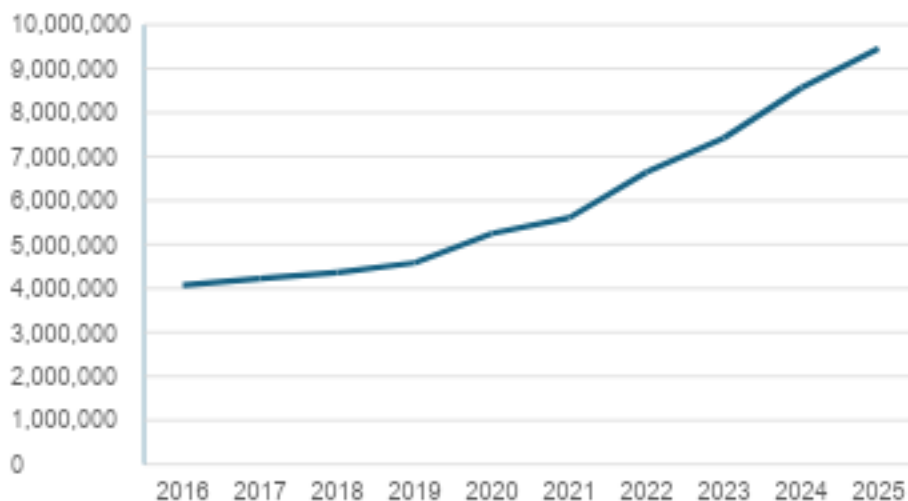
Over the past ten years (2016 to 2025), Cañon City has increased its funding for public safety by 132%, from \$4.06 million to \$9.46 million. This significant investment reflects our community's commitment to public safety and the strides we've made in ensuring the police department is well-equipped to meet the challenges.

I'm proud of the progress our police department has made. Morale is up, leadership is strong, and there's a renewed sense of professionalism and commitment that's being recognized across the city. I'm optimistic that the department will be fully staffed by the end of 2025, and we're on track to achieve that goal.

In addition to funding, CCPD has made smart and effective use of both personnel and partnerships. A prime example is the intergovernmental agreement between CCPD and

the Fremont County Sheriff's Office. This partnership enhances coordination and enforcement along our city boundaries and high-traffic areas like the Riverwalk. This kind of collaboration serves as a force multiplier, and it improves community safety. The department's "What's Important Now" (WIN) focus, alongside its demonstrable commitment to customer service shows that public safety is about building trust, maintaining a visible presence, and engaging in proactive communication with the public.

Once our police force is fully staffed, I believe it will be important to reevaluate the need for additional positions. It is essential to ensure that we have the right people in place and that current officers are fully integrated into their roles. This will give us a clearer picture of CCPD's capacity and help us make well-informed decisions about staffing and policing strategies. As we assess our community's evolving needs, it may be necessary to create new roles and adjust resources to protect our community. We need to continue investing not only in staffing and equipment, but also in the core values and cultural shift that make a police department truly effective and connected to the community it serves.



5. What specific policy approaches or changes, if any, would you support to address crime concerns in Cañon City?

We cannot address crime without confronting the opioid crisis—particularly the rise of fentanyl. Since 2013, fentanyl has contributed to a devastating increase in deaths across the United States. This is not just a public health issue; it's a public safety issue. Fentanyl has made drug use more dangerous than ever, and its direct connection to rising overdoses, property crime, and homelessness cannot be ignored. Our law enforcement officers are on the front lines of this crisis, and they need ongoing support, training, and resources to deal with it safely and effectively. Cañon City receives a relatively small amount of funding annual from the opioid settlement. I would support

reviewing the efficacy of its current allocation to determine if it could be better used by our police force.

I support a balanced approach to crime prevention – one that holds offenders accountable while focusing on what actually works. This includes continuing to invest in data-driven policing strategies, such as hotspot policing, which concentrates resources in areas where crime is most concentrated. We also need to work closely with other regional agencies to track and manage the most prolific offenders, who are responsible for a disproportionate amount of crime. These approaches are backed by research. They have been successful in other communities, and they can be effective here as well.

I also believe in crime prevention through community engagement. CCPD's relationships with local schools, nonprofits, and event organizers are a key part of that. These partnerships help build trust, make law enforcement more visible, and humanize our officers as well. Whether supporting youth programs, engaging at local events, or being present in our schools, these connections make a real difference. We must continue to ensure our community has access to vibrant activities for our youth, mental health services, and early intervention opportunities for at-risk individuals. Preventing crime before it occurs is paramount.

One important action City Council can take is encouraging our residents to be active participants in public safety. Encouraging people to call in tips, report suspicious activity, and engage with law enforcement when they see something that doesn't seem right can make a significant impact. I am also excited about the growing interest in forming neighborhood watch groups. These groups help to foster a sense of community, increase vigilance, and empower residents to take an active role in their own safety. I would also like to explore ways to build on this momentum, particularly by expanding neighborhood watch efforts to include areas like our trail network.

Finally, it's crucial that we, as a City Council, listen to the concerns of residents and be responsive to their needs. We need to continuously engage with our community to understand their public safety concerns and support our law enforcement leadership as they develop new ideas and strategies to tackle these challenges. Our police department is on the front lines, and we must ensure they have the support and resources necessary to keep our community safe.

At the end of the day, I believe effective public safety is about being smart, tough, and deeply committed to the wellbeing of our community. By combining data-driven enforcement with proactive community engagement, listening to residents, and supporting our police leadership, we can continue to address crime in a way that ensures the safety, health, and prosperity of Canon City.