

# Councillor and Mayoral Candidate Questionnaire: Individual Responses



**Councillor: Barry Cullen**

**Ward: 3 - Victoria**

#	Question	Answer	Comments
1	The offering of a wide range of incentives, in a timely manner, can be a critical component in the negotiation to attract new business. Are you in favor of the development of a comprehensive incentive package, including performance parameters to allow for increased flexibility to address "calls of interest" at an administrative level in a timely manner?	✓	We must always find ways to create an even playing field. My caution is: we need to not create new winners at the expense of our well established existing industries. I'm not willing to tax the existing businesses higher to subsidize a new business.
2	The City of Brandon is challenged in attracting business, in part due to the lack of unserviceable land, the access to land, undefined development plans, etc. Are you in favor of investment in servicing and / or land acquisition, as part of a business attraction investment strategy?	✓	Over the past 4 years we have requested and authorized and budgeted for development industrial land use plans.
3	Administration of the City of Brandon have referred to the concept of program and /or outcome-based budgeting and reporting, allowing for more transparency of the impact budget dollars are having in priority areas. As part of your mandate this term, are you in favor of making this a priority for administration to fully incorporate this approach into the budget process?	✓	Apples-to-apples year-to-year transparency. Stating % variances with explanations. The budget process must be more consistent. The hardest part of the budget process is understanding the numbers.
4	The funding of reserves is meant to ensure that as an asset is being used, funds are set aside to plan for its replacement. In recent years, increased tax revenues have not been used to proportionally build reserves. Are you in favor of reserves being proportionately funded in line with the percentage of increase in tax revenues in any given year?	✓	In a perfect world this is the way things should happen.
5	Citizens can only absorb so much when it comes to having the ability to pay tax. Do you support ensuring increases in taxes do not exceed municipal inflation, even if this requires adjusting the services currently being provided?	✓	My colleagues and I on the last city council delivered on this statement. This will be my goal once again for the next 4 years. With the right combination of taxation and growth we should be able to maintain and even grow service.
6	In some municipalities, specific community services that are also provided by the public sector are identified and requests for public proposals are opened to determine if there are more cost-effective solutions that could be offered by the private sector. Do you support this concept of private, public partnerships to help improve the city's overall operating efficiency?	✓	There will always be partnerships that work better together than apart. Our world class waste water treatment plant is a prime example of a win-win ( Maple Leaf and the city) The condo development at the rec center golf course. win win . I'm always willing to explore new ways to stretch our tax dollars by partnering with private enterprise.
7	The 8th Street Pedestrian Bridge has been identified as a solution for people to gain access from the "flats" into the downtown core at an approximate cost of \$8.2 million. A number of programs and partners have been identified, to assist in cost sharing this investment. If this project costs the Brandon taxpayers more than a third of the total cost (\$2.75 million), are you in favor of it proceeding?	✗	This structure is our responsibility. The numbers of people serviced by this bridge is questionable. The only way the numbers work is if the commitment is there for our city wide recreational and green space master plans . The next council will need to review and recommit to the recreational master plan if this project is to be viable.

8	The Keystone Centre has been identified as needing to explore and adopt alternative funding streams to become more self-sustaining in both its operational and capital requirements. Are you in favor of the Keystone Centre actively pursuing these alternatives?	✓	I have always been in favor of charged parking . I'm open to hearing any and all options for additional revenue sources that come from the Keystone Board.
9	The City of Brandon gave approval to move forward with the use of Development Cost Charges to build a reserve for growth related infrastructure. Are you in favor of funding growth related infrastructure as needed, as opposed to delaying these investments until the associated reserves are adequately funded through DCC?	✓	This is a long game strategy. We cannot put development on hold. We must develop a win-win formula for the city rate payers and the developers.
10	The City of Brandon has a significant infrastructure deficit. It is Council's role to prioritize where capital dollars are spent to ensure that critical infrastructure is taken care of ahead of the non-essential investment. Do you support prioritizing strategic infrastructure investment that would yield a return on investment or that would facilitate growth?	✓	Over the last 4 years we have focused on infrastructure and are making gains. I will continue working for growth and the availability for shovel ready industrial development land.
11	The City of Brandon has started to explore the concept of developing and seeking the approval of the Manitoba Government to govern its own Charter, which would provide for similar autonomy to what Winnipeg currently has related to development, planning, rate structures, etc. Are you in favor of Brandon having its own Charter?	✓	We as a city have our own professional teams , planners , engineers and administration. I understand that the rural municipalities need to have the province oversee all their development as they do not have the staff to do so. I feel the second level of bureaucracy out of the province slows down our development process. The vision of our city is also micro managed by people that do not live here. A charter is a big commitment but I feel we need to move forward and explore if we can leave the Winnipeg nest.
12	The City of Brandon administration has said that they are "Open for Business", however there continues to ongoing complaints from developers, business owner, and citizens about the level of bureaucracy, regulation, and time associated with doing business in Brandon. Would you be in favor of identifying key processes and putting in metrics / measurement systems to gauge actual performance (i.e. approval time on a permit)?	✓	Complaints are sometimes a nice way of saying they don't like our plans. We need an even playing field that is consistent and fits into the big picture. Yes we should work to reduce red tape but there needs be rules and a master plan. Development needs to follow the infrastructure Master plan in order for everything to stay efficient and affordable.Yes I am in favor of any system improvements that would speed up development for everyone's benefit.
13	Downtown Brandon continues to be a challenge, as more buildings have vacant storefronts, and the area has gradually been allowed to degrade in appearance (garbage, weeds in the sidewalks, graffiti, overgrown lots, etc.), resulting in some businesses choosing to leave the area. Are you in favor of investment being made by the City of Brandon to address these issues?	✓	The myth that downtown Brandon is in a tailspin is not accurate. I would be willing to take anyone on a tour of the downtown and show them the progress we as a city have made over the past 10 years. As a city we are investing in downtown and have many success stories. This is a slow steady improvement that will need our attention year after year.
14	Would you be in favor of the concept of charging a tax levy on downtown properties that remain vacant, as a means to encourage the active redevelopment of buildings in the area.	X	More taxation is not the answer. Redevelopment help and support is the answer.

**General Comments**

My record on tax increases are well known over the past 4 years. My commitment to hold taxes at the rate of inflation or lower was realized. The downtown is not a negative story. In fact, it is still the highest income per working person per square foot and the highest revenue generator for the city of Brandon per sq foot. The downtown has the highest rate of cultural activity, independent business, and historical value. The challenge is downtown also services most of the needs of the impoverished in Brandon. The record of all incumbents are proven. There are lots of improvements to be made over the next 4 years. If re-elected I will continue on the same path of continuous improvement.