

Councillor and Mayoral Candidate Questionnaire: Individual Responses



Councillor: James Montgomery

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?	✓	If taxpayer dollars are used in a responsible way and there are measureable return on investment parameters then yes I would be in favour of the city offering certain businesses incentives to invest, hire and conduct business in Brandon.
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?	✓	The City of Brandon needs to work constructively with the surrounding Municipalities to attract new businesses, particularly large retail and manufacturing businesses. However, there also needs to be a better strategy to attract business to existing vacant land and downtown.
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?	✓	Absolutely! We need to see value and return on investment for taxpayer dollars.
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?	✓	I am in favour of reserve funding and creating a rainy day fund for possible future recessions instead of creating debt during poor fiscal conditions.
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?	✓	While certain services are vital, we need to make sure taxation is fair and that spending doesn't exceed revenue. Council members need to work cooperatively to ensure every dollar is spent with a purpose.
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?	✓	If the private sector can provide a service more efficiently then I would always support that option when available.
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?	X	Cost overruns are notoriously expensive. This project needs to be very carefully considered.

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?		The Keystone Centre has been and can continue to be successful in attracting private sector sponsorship and naming rights funding. Funding from the City and Province needs to be stable and equitable, but the facility needs to continue to pursue additional funding sources.
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?		No Comment.
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?		No Comment.
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?		Brandon can and should have the same autonomy as Winnipeg does for development, planning and rate structures.
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)?		It's always good to set targets, goals and measure performance. We need to be open for business and not just give that slogan lip service.
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?		We need an anchor business or attraction downtown. Moose Jaw is an example of a downtown success.
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.		No Comment.

General Comments

I love Brandon. I am pro business and active on the Chamber Membership Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to complete this survey. If anyone has any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me.