

# Councillor and Mayoral Candidate Questionnaire: Individual Responses



**Councillor: Kris Desjarlais**  
**Ward: 2 - Rosser**

#	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?	✓	No Comment.
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?	✓	No Comment.
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?	✓	No Comment.
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 have concerns over the health of a handful of our reserves and would prefer not to offset tax increases through inadequate reserve appropriations.
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?	✓	I think we have shown a strong commitment to this over the past 4 years. I will add a caveat that this cannot be guaranteed given the current practice of offloading funding for transit, protective services etc. through freezes and cutbacks by the provincial gov't.
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?	✓	No Comment.
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?	✓	Let me begin by saying that I think it's unfair to frame this only as a bridge to connect "flat" residents to the downtown. It's part of 3 master plans (downtown secondary, greenspace, and riverbank). Active transportation and connectivity for walking paths are a vital component to a healthy city. In speaking to staff at the riverbank, many tourists stop in at the centre and lament the inability to ride their bikes or walk through the riverbank area up to our downtown. I'm not suggesting I'm in favour of the bridge regardless of cost, only that my threshold is a little higher (@ \$4million). If we are unable to find adequate funding through other avenues then I think we should start looking at alternatives, including a bridge across the Assiniboine from Stickney to Dinsdale park. It could connect to a path leading up to the first street bridge.

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?		No Comment.
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?		I think we need to be careful on this one, but we need to be ready to grow with developers when they're ready to move.
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?		I've been saying it for years. Technically we have a charter that's been in effect since 1997 but this merely gives us the basic rights to collect taxes etc. Brandon services a much larger population than the city proper and could benefit from more authority in those areas and others.
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)?		Continuous improvement in all service areas should be what we're striving for. It shouldn't come at the expense of employee job satisfaction through impossible expectations. I think the more areas we collect data on in relation to performance benchmarks, the better.
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?		A resounding yes. I would argue that in spite of these challenges the downtown continues to attract new businesses and investment. In my 4 years on council we have seen a net gain in business. We've supported the redevelopment of the Fire Station, the Bass building, 7 upper story market rent apartments and have cleared the way for a potentially game changing development right in the heart of it. Without question, we've let things go as far as maintenance, repair, and general upkeep. The beautiful brickwork is heaving in areas and we've damaged the patterned concrete from watering flower pots. Weeds and overgrowth are bothersome. We've recently strengthened our nuisance by-law and this had a noticeable improvement on vacant lot eye sores. I'm hopeful the Downtown Ambassador program will receive continued support from council and that group could quarterback issues of general tidiness, graffiti and the like. We will also need a meaningful investment in infrastructure dollars to improve streetscapes and sidewalks. There are immediate safety issues for seniors and residents with mobility challenges. I'm a half glass full guy though. The downtown is on the right trajectory.
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.		100% agreement.

**General Comments**

Thanks for being active in civic issues and asking questions that warrant thoughtful consideration.