

Councillor and Mayoral Candidate Questionnaire: Individual Responses



Councillor: Nick Brown

Ward: 6 - South Centre

#	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?	X	I believe that there is a large amount of space available in Brandon for new businesses to set up shop. We have a number of vacant retail locations throughout the city that are begging for someone to move in. We also have a number of abandoned buildings/lots that have gone unused for years, because no one is willing to invest in the space. Brandon doesn't need more land, it needs to create incentives for businesses to use the land/space we already have.
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?	✓	I believe that every dollar spent of taxpayer money needs to be accounted for and have a purpose which will benefit the people of Brandon.
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 believe that reserves are a great way to save money now and in the future. Putting money aside will allow for new projects in the future to be funded without incurring more debts. At BU, the students have been paying into a building fund for decades, and some of that money was spent on the recent Gender Neutral Washroom renovations without debt, without loans, and without ongoing debt servicing.
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?	✓	Yes! I believe that the many Canadians are earning a wage that is below what they need to live comfortably, and that increasing taxes above the rate of inflation, and the current provincial government's increases to the minimum wage, would be detrimental to many Brandonites.
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?	✓	I believe that Public-Private-Partnerships are one way to increase efficiency, as long as the private sector is not turning around and extracting maximum profits on these deals.
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?	✓	I am in favor of creating a link across the tracks from the downtown, although I am skeptical that solely pedestrian crossing will provide enough of a corridor to be effective.

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 believe that the Keystone Centre needs to adapt to the market, and if they can find more and different sources of revenue, then I'm all for it.
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?	X	If we can find a way to build without taking on loans and debt, I would prefer not to spend today's dollars at the cost of tomorrow's.
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?	✓	I believe that without properly funded core infrastructures such as road surfaces and public transportation, there would be no one interested in growing the city. Unfortunately, Brandon needs to remedy it's deficits before we can move forward.
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 believe that Brandon is a growing city that is starting to out-pace some of it's provincial oversight. If we truly want to become the hub for Southwestern Manitoba, we will need more autonomy than we currently have.
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)?	✓	I am always in favor of collecting, analyzing, and using as much data as possible to streamline processes, and create efficiency.
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?	✓	Brandon's downtown has experienced a significant drop in businesses and customers in the downtown, and if nothing is done, it will become more vacant than it currently is.
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	I don't believe a punitive tax is a solution to any problem. When England taxed windows in the 1800's, it did not increase revenues as expected, rather it caused people to board up and seal their windows.
General Comments			
No Comment.			