



Green Bay Neighborhood Leadership Council

Mayoral Candidate Questionnaire



Eric Genrich

For fun, if you were to have a theme song what would that song be?

Tough choice, but I'll have to go with "Braunschweiger," by the Happy Schnapps Combo. :)

With state-imposed restraints on increases in property taxes, how are you going fulfill campaign promises to increase funding for priority city needs largely funded through property taxes? If you had to cut the city budget, where would you cut?

Municipal budgets are tight all around the state, and Green Bay is no different. With that in mind, I will establish a task force to explore budgetary and operational reforms. This citizen task force, made up of business and community leaders, will explore establishing a line-item veto and implementing zero-based budgeting processes, among other reforms, with an eye toward making our city government as efficient and effective as possible.

Additionally, I will forge real partnerships with our county administration and with surrounding communities. There's plenty of work to be done to strengthen these working relationships. New bonds must be forged based on mutual respect and benefit, recognizing that the region's citizens expect elected leaders to govern in a way that benefits all residents. To this end, I will explore cooperative planning and HR agreements with the county, joint health insurance pools with other local government entities, and shared service agreements with our county and municipal partners.

Finally, I will lengthen and enliven the budget process. The municipal budget is the single most important policy adopted by our common council and signed by the mayor every year. We will seek to increase citizen participation in the crafting of the city's budget. City staff and I will reach out to neighborhood associations and other community organizations to educate the public about budgeting practices with the hope of engaging a greater number of citizens in the process.

Mayor Schmitt started Kids Day as an annual tradition. Would you continue Kids Day? What kind of new traditions, if any, would you like to see to bring the community together and promote healthy neighborhoods?

Absolutely. It's a great annual event, and it highlights the kind of community we are and should aspire to be, which is a great city for kids and families. I would also love to try to strengthen the ties that bind city residents together with events like large-scale community meals or potlucks

and an event like “Big Read GB,” which would identify a book to be read and discussed among city residents and community leaders. This kind of program exists in at least 75 communities around the country and is supported by the National Endowment for the Arts.

In addition, I will work to create a PTO allotment for volunteerism among city staff. Our reputation for and commitment to volunteerism is what makes us a strong community. The city should actively support and promote these opportunities with our employees, making it possible for more people to find time in their schedules to give back to the community we all love.

Only one person in City Hall is devoted exclusively to neighborhood issues and that person is currently funded through a Federal grant and a donation from the GBNLC. The City does support neighborhoods with a \$10,000 yearly donation for neighborhood improvement projects. Would you support having a full-time city employee to help neighborhood associations? What other ways would you support budget initiatives to help neighborhoods?

Having a full-time city employee that is tasked with supporting our neighborhoods is a critical need. For several years, I was a member of the board of directors for the Fisk Addition Neighborhood Association and Neighborworks Green Bay. I know how important this work is to the health, safety, and strength of our community.

I will also explore the creation of neighborhood improvement districts (NIDs). Wisconsin law enables the creation of Neighborhood Improvement Districts for the purpose of investing in urban areas in need of stabilization. The associated revenue can be used to fund staff and enhancements for properties and streetscapes in the designated area.

Green Bay is becoming a more diverse community, culturally, ethnically and economically. As Mayor, what two things would you do to bring our community together to make Green Bay a community that respects diversity and promotes cooperation?

I will create an Office of Equal Opportunity and Inclusion, make appointments to our city’s boards, commissions, and authorities that reflect the makeup of our community, and sign the CEO Diversity and Inclusion Pledge, which has the support of the Greater Green Bay Chamber of Commerce. And I will never pass up the opportunity to use the platform afforded to me to make it clear that Green Bay is a place where all people of good will should feel welcomed and supported.

Speeding is a problem in most neighborhoods. What would your strategy be to address numerous driving concerns in Green Bay neighborhoods?

If you talk to a traffic expert they will tell you that safe streets require smart engineering, thorough education, and consistent enforcement. Whenever we construct or reconstruct our streets, we must make sure that pedestrian and bicycling accommodations are included. City streets are not just thoroughfares, they are valuable community spaces that need to be designed with that spirit in mind. We must also work together to promote a culture that is attentive to pedestrian safety and continue to focus police attention on streets and neighborhoods where speeding is a problem.

What strategies would you use to encourage business expansion and job creation? How would you make sure that economic vitality impacts all neighborhoods of the City?

I will work to attract and retain businesses and professionals to all corners of the city. The city’s community and economic development department has done tremendous work in recent years. Their work deserves recognition and support from our next mayor, and I will give it. Our established business parks are near-capacity, but there is still work to be done in University

Heights and in the city's business improvement districts. Our revolving loan fund, seeded with federal dollars, is a well-used development tool. I will continue to put these funds to use to support new and growing businesses, and I will create a segment of funding available only to the smallest of enterprises in order to spur additional startup activities.

How would you make sure neighborhood residential building codes are enforced, condemned properties are removed or refurbished, and neighborhood housing options are encouraged?

I will support city inspections staff in their mission to keep our city residents safe and healthy. Also, having served on the board of directors of Neighborworks Green Bay and attended countless Habitat for Humanity ribbon-cuttings, I know we are blessed with some great organizations that are focused on providing low-cost, high-quality housing to many of our community members. These organizations will continue to receive support from the city under my leadership. Finally, we must bring these efforts together to develop a comprehensive housing strategy that is focused on increasing the availability of high-quality housing units for all who seek them. We have opportunities for growth and development in our city's core and on our far northeast side, neither should be neglected as we provide additional housing to people of all income levels and interests, grow our community, and add to the city's tax base.

We all know that our streets and water mains need upgrades. Aside from coming up with the money for these improvements, what do you think needs to be done to make sure that there is an orderly process to address these issues in our neighborhoods and prevent a backlog of infrastructure needs in the future?

I will establish and implement a capital improvement plan and program. Most similarly-sized communities in the state and country produce a capital improvement plan that guides infrastructural investments. Green Bay doesn't, and our crumbling streets and recent flooding events are the result. We will establish a five-year plan to improve our roads and stormwater infrastructure and make it publicly available. Specifically, the plan will address how we fix (and fund) our infrastructure so that we have long-term stability, not just short-term fixes.

I will also serve as an advocate with fellow mayors and local leaders to make sure our voices are heard in the Madison and Washington when our area legislators are debating how best to support the infrastructural needs of local communities.

What does the future hold regarding neighborhood associations and your involvement in the GBNLC if you are elected Mayor?

The future of our city has to include a strong network of neighborhood associations and the GBNLC, which knits these neighborhoods together. As I've said before, it takes a village to lead a city. Our neighborhood leaders are these villagers, and I will call on them--on you!--to continue to play an active part in making Green Bay the best version of itself.

Thanks for all you do, and I ask for your vote on February 19.