



Green Bay Neighborhood Leadership Council

Mayoral Candidate Questionnaire



Mark Steuer

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

It would be the musical "West Side Steuer", tongue in cheek. But if I would have to choose one song, it would be "Everyday" by Buddy Holly and the Crickets.

With state-imposed restraints on increases in property taxes, how are you going to 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?

As a Green Bay Alderperson since 2012, I have participated in seven City budget cycles. This past year may have been the most difficult, since we had \$17,000 worth of wiggle room in a \$107M budget. We also had a 4% cut in each of the City Departments on top of that. How does this happen? The next Mayor will have to deal with this difficult scenario.

The next cuts would be employees, since a majority of the City budget entails employee salaries and benefits. If employees are cut, services suffer, and then the entire process deteriorates. I would counteract this by streamlining some City divisions and looking for new revenue streams to fill those gaps, which in turn could increase the City coffers and keeps employment where it is.

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?

Kid's Day would be continued under my administration. There have been some issues in the past as to whether non-Green Bay residents can freely partake in this event. Since this is a one-day event that kicks off summer in the City, I feel that all who attend would have free access. I would look to have extra funds available to cover any over expense.

I would also promote a busking (street performance) festival environment that would allow the children to show their talents musically, artistically and culturally.

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?

With the budget in such tight straits, as I alluded to in Question 2 above, any talk of a full-time employee being added to any department would have to be fully studied to see the benefits that it would engender.

A few years ago, I helped to hire a half-time Historic Preservation Planner who helped enact a Historic Preservation Ordinance that will garner tax incentives and monies for adaptive reuse projects that will aid in the economic development of the City. Is there cause for a full-time position in historic preservation? I believe so. Sadly, I had one neighborhood association disintegrate in my Aldermanic District because of differing political stances on a controversial issue. Detecting problems early on here could have saved this association. Neighborhood associations do not cover one-third of the City of Green Bay. This needs to change. In addition, there are active associations and those that are not overly active or now defunct.

The full-time employee would work in concert with the Mayor and Administration to ensure that these goals of coverage and involvement would be achievable. A full-time neighborhood person here would need to continue getting the entire City covered by neighborhood associations, while monitoring the mood of the various associations to keep them positively solvent. The benefit to the City, economically and customer service-wise, would have to be realized by the Administration and the Council to ensure this full-time position.

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?

Diversity often settles on culture and ethnicity. Economic diversity needs to be addressed initially, before culture and ethnicity take root in a community.

As Mayor, I would encourage public discussions; panels with professionals and advocates on pertinent issues; and support organizations such as JOSHUA and CIRCLES-GREEN BAY in their proactive efforts on prison reform and poverty, respectively.

Also as Mayor, I would work in concert with workplace and communities, not so much to make the community look good, but because I would support the empowerment, voices, and successes of these communities. I would support and work in concert with the Hmong Center, Casa Alba Melanie, NEWAAMA, First Nations and the Oneida Nation and other groups to support, encourage, and advocate their efforts to be an integral part of the City of Green Bay.

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

Education is key at an early age that needs to look at accountability and responsibility for various privileges, such as driving an automobile. Again, it is a privilege and not a right to drive a car. So, there are those folks who do not espouse to this line of reasoning.

As an alder, I have sat with neighbors at curbside, estimating the speed of vehicles going by. We have taken license plate numbers and the make of the car and have shared that with police. There are the electronic speed limit signs and the occasional police car presence, often at the bequest of an alder or a concerned citizen. These are temporary fixes. If a speeder incurs a

number of speeding citations over time, a potential change in behavioral pattern may occur. There are no guarantees on this either. Rolling stops are often becoming a normal way of seeing a stop sign.

I believe that neighborhood association members, dog walkers, bicyclists, walkers and other drivers can take note of speeders, get the pertinent information needed and then share with the police department. Hopefully over time, there may be a paradigm shift on this issue.

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?

As Mayor, I will study all of Green Bay's Tax Incremental Finance (TIF) agreements, service agreements, union contracts and project term sheets in order to find ways to attain financial stability. Green Bay is at 5% of equalized value when using TIF as a development tool. Green Bay can go up to 12% here. Ashwaubenon presently is at 16%. Ways to change this disparity are needed. Enacting Lean Government initiatives to streamline departments and divisions could prove to be financially beneficial as one step.

Out of a \$107M 2019 budget, City Council had a mere \$17K to work with. Armed with a solid City-wide Capital Improvement Program, the City stands a better chance to stay within a well-crafted budget. Efforts to reduce our City debt and improve our bond rating need to be accomplished in order for business expansion to occur and for new jobs created.

As Mayor, I do believe that having a strong central city emanates positive threads into other city neighborhoods. Supporting the efforts of the various BID districts in Green Bay (Military Avenue, On Broadway, Olde Main Street, Downtown Green Bay) will help to encourage economic growth in these, and other, areas.

I would look to create proactive economic efforts, with examples of waterfront development in Davenport, Dubuque, Duluth, and LaCrosse (among others) as examples of what can make our City unique and viable.

Filling vacant "bricks and mortar" structures (such as Sears and Shopko) on Military Avenue, with uses that would draw shoppers and tourists are essential as well. As a historic preservationist, I would also look to adaptively repurpose existing structures, such as the Alwin Corporation on Velp Avenue, into mixed-use developments of senior housing, farmers' markets, entertainment venues and cultural amenity locales.

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

A thorough review of City Ordinances and Building Codes would be a priority of mine. I have spoken to a number of business folk who feel that there is too much red tape in getting projects initiated and finished in Green Bay. I am grateful for those neighbors, dog walkers, and pedestrians who make me aware of problem properties in their neighborhoods. It takes but a phone call to Inspection or Police to have someone look at the problem or issue at hand. One bad property can pull down the entire neighborhood.

Home ownership in Green Bay stands at about 55% of total living units. Most take pride in their home and it reflects on the neighborhood. I have an issue with rental properties that have landlords who live out of town or out of state. Oftentimes, issues with the property or neighbors go unsettled due to a lack of apathy, greed or ignorance on the part of the landlord or uncaring

renters. Ordinances and permits that deal with roofing, siding, gutters and windows to the betterment of a property will be sought out when I become Mayor.

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?

My number one priority as Mayor of Green Bay is to repair our roads and infrastructure. This concern used to be a line item in our City budget years ago. Why it was taken out of our budget is a matter of concern to me. A wheel tax has been recently enacted to help address this issue. Though I originally opposed this tax, the fact that special assessments on a number of far-west side properties were in excess of \$40,000 each prompted me to change my vote.

When elected Mayor, I would like to see a declining rate wheel tax plan that would charge (in dollars) 20-16-12-8-4 over the next five years. In the sixth year, road repair/resurfacing/reconstruction would be placed back in the budget as a line item, where it should have been these past ten years.

Without revenue sharing from the State and the "what-if" scenario of a potential gas tax increase from the State being realized in Green Bay, there seems to be a dearth of solutions on this issue.

As far as sewer infrastructure goes, as Mayor, I would look for a solution akin to what South Bend, Indiana is doing at the present time. It is based on a sensor-based system for monitoring sewer flooding. These sensors would monitor and collect data that would help to avoid problems of flooding and water main breaks. Some upfront costs would more than pay for themselves in the future.

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

As Mayor, I would aim to have the entire City covered by effective neighborhood associations. With the forty plus associations on the books, there are those that are quite active, those that are limping along and those that have become defunct. One-third of the City is not covered at all; so one voice for those neighborhoods is non-existent. Getting the neighbors to invest time and effort into their neighborhood is often challenging, but quite rewarding, when a team-first attitude for common goals exists.

I would look at what works for the associations that are active and successful and apply that to those associations that need a boost. As Mayor, I would look at increasing funding sources for the GBNLC as well.