



October 28, 2020

NSBA questionnaire for 2020 Civic Election Candidates

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2020 Civic Election Mayoral and Council Candidates Questions

Many questions are Yes or No answers. Please elaborate where appropriate.

PLEASE NOTE: MY RESPONSES ARE IN BLUE.

1. Candidate Name **Don Atchison**
2. Email Address (for follow up only)
3. Ward/Constituency **Mayoralty Candidate**
4. What do you envision the city's role to be in economic development?
It is important from the outset to realize that the City can play a major role in economic development, but only in the context of collaboration with and support from both the public and private sectors. Very importantly, we have to support the role that SREDA plays in economic development, particularly in attracting foreign direct investment. It is vital that the mayor be non-partisan in his or her ability to work with various ministries and departments at both the federal and provincial levels, and with neighbouring municipalities. As a trustee of taxpayer dollars, it is also critical that the City work in this manner to develop major infrastructure and other projects which benefit our local economy. I have repeatedly proven my ability in this regard, as my record shows, to encourage new entrepreneurs, local businesses, and major corporations to flourish in Saskatoon, and to realize major projects such as new bridges, community centres and River Landing.
5. How can the City help businesses survive through the COVID pandemic?
Here again, there is no room for a mayor to play politics. Overcoming the issues of the pandemic demands a collaborative effort from all levels of government. Our role as a City is to first of all use the powers within our jurisdiction to ensure public safety that – as shown in other parts of the world – can lead to a gradual return to “business as usual.” This is also a time when we have to carefully consider – and reconsider – how we allocate taxpayer money, to ensure it does the most good to benefit not only all of our citizens, but also our business community. It is no secret that one of the best times for governments to spend money is during the hard times, when the private sector is hesitant to invest.
6. Crime and Safety are key election issues. What is your plan to address these concerns, including your position on defunding the police?
I strongly oppose defunding of the police, and in fact want us to return to a time when we were actually decreasing the crime rate – a time during my tenure as mayor. That means increasing our investment in public safety by recruiting the necessary policing personnel and ensuring they





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receive the best possible training and resources to do their job – as well as addressing many of the underlying causes of crime. Another strategy is to encourage development in areas of concern such as the downtown. Further development in downtown Saskatoon, for example, would result in “more eyes on the street”, which we know reduces crime, and just as importantly, people’s perception of safety. We all feel much safer on a crowded downtown street than a deserted one.

7. What are your priorities for major capital projects in Saskatoon?

One of my priorities is to hold a plebiscite regarding investment in a downtown entertainment/multi-purpose facility, which would complement River Landing and encourage private investment in both residential and commercial development. Another of my capital projects would be removal of the problematic rail lines running through the city, replacing them with a network of walking and cycling paths. Through careful examination of existing proposed projects, notably the potentially very expensive Bus Rapid Transit system, we can find the funds to assist in this process.

8. Do you share the concerns many residents and businesses have regarding increased taxes and user fees?

Yes OR No

9. What steps would you recommend the City take to curb or mitigate rising operational costs?

I would oppose any tax increases in 2021, thereby forcing City managers to look for every possible opportunity to increase efficiencies. I would also look to a careful examination of current proposed projects, as discussed earlier, to see where our tax dollars could be better allocated to mitigate rising operational costs. I would also have the City look at measures such as tax abatements and other measures to ease the strain on already overwhelmed businesses and commercial property owners.

10. If necessary, would you support any initiatives City Management may take to freeze or even reduce staffing levels?

Yes OR No This cannot be a simple “yes” or “no” matter, especially when you say “any initiatives.” For example, I would support increased funding for police and fire services.

11. How do you believe that the City should spend COVID-19 relief money provided by the provincial or federal government? Do you believe that relief money should be spent in the area for which it is specified (e.g. infrastructure, etc.)?

Yes OR No

As stated earlier, spending on infrastructure has repeatedly proven to be a very wise strategy by governments at all levels to benefit our communities while at the same time providing profitable projects – and thus employment – for local businesses.





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12. Do you believe the decision regarding the Main Library funding/debt should be revisited?

Yes **OR** No

I believe we can be more imaginative in our approach to achieving the vision of an exceptional world-class library in Saskatoon. For example, we could combine the library with a residential development, which would certainly be attractive to a significant demographic, which in turn would assist in revitalization of our downtown.

13. What is your No. 1 concern/election platform?

My number one concern is the inaction and lack of direction that has settled into Saskatoon's municipal government. My election platform is to return to the days when we work toward realizing our city's potential through visionary thinking, planning, and doing the hard work it takes to put words into action, visions into reality. As I say in my campaign, "We've done it before. We can do it again."

