



City of Joliet Questionnaire for 2023 District Candidates

1. Please list your top three priorities / initiatives of action once elected.
 1. Hire additional life safety personnel.
 2. Recruit and hire a professional city manager.
 3. Plan for and maximize the opportunity Joliet (and the region) has in 2026 due to the confluence of the Route 66 Centennial, the Rialto Centennial and America's Semiquincentennial. Joliet is positioned to be one of the greatest beneficiaries of tourism (millions of visitors will come through Illinois) that will result from these anniversaries.

2. What type of working relationship do you plan to have with neighborhood groups?

As a Past President of the Cathedral Area Preservation Association, I had the opportunity to forge very strong relationships with neighborhood groups from Districts 2, 4 and 5. I have a record of working with them on important initiatives, such as the advocacy campaign for single family rental inspections. As a Councilman, I will continue to foster those relationships and work to advocate for shared concerns and needs.

3. Please share your thoughts on possible economic development opportunities within your district.

The St. Joes TIF District is an opportunity and we need an intentional focus on it and take the necessary steps to identify measures to optimize the purpose of it. Beyond the TIF, there are a few systemic and structural initiatives that will help increase development and redevelopment. First, the corridors on Jefferson, Larkin, Plainfield, and Essington are ripe opportunities. We need to identify and enact measures to enhance these corridors, including, but not limited to, an update of the City's sign regulations and increased code enforcement to ensure consistency in implementation of existing or future regulations. Second, the much needed Comprehensive Plan process will provide the City an holistic mechanism to evaluate its commercial zoning districts, land use, and form-based regulations for each specific district. Once identified, the Council will have an opportunity to prioritize the findings to ensure that the City's regulations reflect the

importance of the third largest city in the State. Third, the continued roll-out of the Single Family Rental Inspection Program and adjacent measures of code enforcement will help enhance and stabilize our neighborhoods, which will support development and redevelopment.

4. What would you do to improve the overall safety of citizens in your district and in the City of Joliet?

We need to hire additional police personnel: we can do that if we look at the City budget closely to find creative ways to free up general revenues. A priority needs to be the addition of NOPT officers, especially in neighborhoods that have asked for them over the years. We also need to be creative and prioritize routine practices that disinvite criminal activity, such as focusing resources on code enforcement throughout the city.

5. Do you feel there is adequate affordable housing options in your district and the city?

No.

6. Share with us your background and what unique qualities you believe you possess that stand out from the other candidates.

I am a lifelong resident of Joliet who cares deeply about our historic fabric, our built environment and how we leverage our status as the third largest city in the state to move our City forward in a holistic way. I worked with at-risk students as an education administrator for the first part of my career and I now work for Landmarks Illinois as a statewide historic preservation advocate. I have been involved in our community in varied ways and have experience with non-profits, multiple levels of government, schools and businesses. My volunteer activities touch on economic development, arts and culture, social service and policy. I have well rounded experiences that I will be able to draw from in service to the City as a councilperson. I have a proven track record of taking on leadership roles and building coalitions of stakeholders to solve large and longstanding issues. I am tenacious and I believe that there are always solutions: “can’t” is not part of my lexicon.

7. Have you previously or are you currently serving on a governing board such as a business, nonprofit, other government, or a religious or education organization?

Current Board Experiences

- Board President, Joliet Area Historical Museum – Old Joliet Prison
- Chairman, Joliet Board of Fire and Police Commissioners
- Immediate Past Chairman, Joliet Arts Commission
- Immediate Past Chairman, Joliet Historic Preservation Commission
- Chairman, Illinois Route 66 Scenic Byway
- Member, Greater Joliet Area YMCA
- Member, District 86 Foundation

Previous Volunteer Experiences

- Board President, Cathedral Area Preservation Association
- Vice President, Joliet Public Schools District 86 School Board
- Member, Will County Take Back the Night
- Member, Joliet Alliance for Youth

8. If so, how would this experience prepare you for this role and if not, do you believe this lack of experience would be a concern for voters?

My board and commission service has fully prepared me to serve as a councilperson. In my leadership positions, I have led efforts to bring efficiencies and trajectory change to organizations at the board and micro levels. I have learned how to be a fixer and how to leverage available resources to maximize opportunities. The large initiatives I have led—preservation of the Old Joliet Prison, creation of the Joliet Arts Commission and the advocacy effort for the inclusion of single family rentals in the inspection program—show a track record of success.

9. What level of interaction do you plan to hold with constituents and do you feel that you have the ability to be continually accessible?

It is absolutely imperative to have regular interaction with constituents and to be accessible to them. I regularly attend community events and make it a point to visit different social/community clubs. Not only will that continue, I plan to increase my visibility as a councilperson. Town halls have been suggested during this election cycle. I like the idea and will explore the best way to host those to ensure that constituents have the opportunity to be engaged. I will absolutely be accessible to the public and I have pledged to respond to all constituent outreach whether by phone or email. Being accessible and responsive is the job.

10. Do you believe that the city is providing quality services such as water, garbage removal, sewer, snow removal, and infrastructure?

The City has some challenges in these areas, but there have been improvements over the past few years regarding services and infrastructure. The ongoing rebuild of our infrastructure will take time and be arduous. An option to speed up the process is available, but there would need to be a desire to issue bonds and not rely on general revenues to pay for projects. Three areas that are in need of rapid improvement are the conditions of roads, sidewalks and alleys in the older neighborhoods.

11. How would you work to improve communication with the citizens of Joliet?

Citizens and the City need more available outlets for communication. The City should have a Public Information Officer and I will advocate for that position. The PIO and/or other staff, along with council members, should regularly attend neighborhood meetings. I support the idea of hosting town halls to provide residents another outlet. I have and will continue to pledge to be accessible and responsive to constituent outreach.

12. What strategic alliances can be explored and/or better utilized? Do you feel the city has a solid relationship with county, state, and federal elected officials? Please explain why or why not and how that can be improved.

There is an opportunity for Joliet to lead regional conversations with surrounding municipalities on a host of issues: there needs to be a concerted effort to plan and conduct them. Our relationships with county, state and federal officials are not where they need to be. There are various reasons for this, but perhaps the biggest is due to the city manager carousel we have endured over the past few years. We need a permanent

professional city manager who has experience working with government officials at all levels. Based on feedback I have received from various officials, there is also a need to improve dialogue between them and the Council. I have strong relationships with many officials and I look forward to helping build that dialogue.

13. Do you have any conflicts of interest that would prevent you from participating in council business?

No.

14. How do we maintain and enhance Joliet's position as a complete community with a thriving commercial and retail sector, highly ranked schools, diverse workforce, affordable housing, vibrant and walkable neighborhoods, and plenty of opportunities for recreation?

- Develop a comprehensive plan
- Work more closely with other governmental bodies (schools, park district, forest preserve, county, state, etc) to foster strategic partnerships and break down silos
- Invest in the neighborhoods, corridors and our arts and cultural institutions
- Mitigate blight and prioritize code enforcement across the City
- Identify historic building reuse options for housing (vacated schools, for example)
- Survey the existing housing stock in older neighborhoods and incentivize reinvestment in the homes (purchase or rent)
- Fully promote and leverage our recreational assets (Prison, Stadium, trail system, parks, Route 66, etc.)
- Never accept "can't" as an answer to a creative idea or suggestion