

Mike Tupper

For
Minneapolis City Council, Ward 6

Complete Star Tribune Questionnaire from Steve Brandt

Q) What's one burning issue that's prompted you to run for this position (25 words)?

A) The need for active and accountable representation; to support the pride and stabilization of our residences, families, neighborhoods and small businesses.

Q) Since 2003, the city has increased the amount of taxes it levies on property by 8 percent annually. Do you favor continuing this policy, or do you favor a lower or higher amount of property tax increase? What specific increase would you support, and what budget adjustments would you make in light of your choice? (100 words)

A) I am in favor of property tax management that is consistent with individual and business growth rates versus the crippling increases of recent history. I support growing the tax BASE versus the tax RATE; small business growth and development, quality neighborhoods that attract home ownership and investment in property versus outrageous tax increases and irresponsible spending.

Q) With state aid declining and property taxes rising, should the city diversify the taxes and fees through which it derives income? If so how? (100 words)

A) The city needs more fiscal responsibility and effort towards efficiencies and cost savings. Instead of inventing new taxes or redefining a tax as a fee, we need to optimize the resources currently at our disposal and cut out the waste. Simply, we need to live within our budget and encourage our departments and leadership to seek cost savings. Changing the mindset and approach to budgeting from "wants" to a "needs", activity based approach is the first step.

Q) The council is considering how to use the property taxes from its older development districts. This tax increment by law may only be used to pay for Target Center debt and for neighborhood revitalization, or alternately, the tax base in these districts can be returned to the general tax base. What percentage would you allocate to each of these three purposes? (100 words)

A) Giving up TIF districts is not a wise idea for the city. Unlike the school district, the city relies on local taxes for a much larger share of its revenue. Giving up TIF districts altogether would result in tens of millions of dollars transferred from the City to the schools over a ten year period. A better solution would be to use the redevelopment money to rebuild sidewalks, streetlights and streets, plant new trees and improve infrastructure. Let's let neighborhood organizations prioritize infrastructure improvements and take the pressure off of the general fund.

Q) Council members may collect up to \$400 monthly as a car allowance. Would you do so or collect a lesser monthly allowance (how much?) or collect only per-mile payments for actual miles driven? Explain your choice. (50 words)

A) No. Council members are fairly compensated – similar private sector jobs do not provide such allowances.

Q) What are three specific things that you'd like to accomplish in your ward by the end of your four-year term? (50 words)

A) My key areas of focus include: Property tax stabilization through budget management and cost controls, quality neighborhoods through investment in private property without the disincentive of increased taxes and keeping the independent boards – Park Board and Board of Estimation and Taxation – independent to ensure balance in decision making and leadership.

Q) What's one specific city-wide accomplishment you'd like to make happen by the end of your term? (25 words)

A) To support and grow small businesses across Minneapolis by reducing the tax burden they currently bare.