

Please submit your responses to the Chamber's Advocacy Director, Christopher Emge, at cemge@chamberbloomington.org by Friday, February 24th, 2023.

1. If elected, what are your top 3 priorities as a City Council member? (200 words)

My first priority is facilitating the construction of housing at all price points. My second priority is improving the quality of life and economic vitality of the city. I am particularly interested in creating greater opportunities for economic mobility and earnings potential for residents by attracting, developing, and retaining businesses and industry that could offer high-wage jobs, skills training, and professional development. My third priority is working to improve relations between city and county governments, as well as the university, to provide more robust and expansive public services with a more efficient, transparent, and productive government for all residents.

2. What concerns do you have about the business community and economic development in Bloomington? (125 words)

I am concerned about the workforce, especially the small size of the talent pool, our inability to retain IU graduates, the way that cost of living concerns and lack of housing, along with the availability and cost of childcare and other healthcare services are putting significant strains on job creation and retention. Furthermore, these issues continue to push workers into neighboring towns and counties which has resulted in the loss of tax revenue for the city putting more strains on public services. For startups, I am concerned about the access to early stage funding and am eager to expand the entrepreneurial funnel.

3. What solutions would you propose to address these concerns? Specifically, what would you do to promote a positive business climate? (125 words)

We need to focus on strengthening quality and access to local resources throughout the business ecosystem. One significant way to do this is to better leverage the relationship between IU and the city. I can imagine our city and university collaboratively seizing the opportunity to explore the cutting edge of technologies and practices to push this city into the future. This living lab approach would allow students to have high impact and meaningful experiences applying their knowledge to solving big societal challenges and making other residents – their neighbors - lives better. Fostering this type of an approach would spur innovation, create new ventures and opportunities while providing a steady pipeline of talent and knowledge into Bloomington's economy.

4. What do you think is our community's biggest opportunity? What is its biggest threat? (125 words)

I think investments in high growth sub-sectors like cybersecurity, AI, industry 4.0 and climate tech paired with the enhanced collaborations with IU along the living lab model proposed above could really make Bloomington an amazing small city with a high per capita income, strong public services, and abundant opportunities for professional and skills development. Our biggest threat is not working together, believing in each other, or in the future of our city and consequently failing to make the needed investments now in areas like climate action,

housing or needed infrastructure improvements. If we do not move fast, and if we do not move together, we might miss our opportunity to build a solid foundation for the city to bring us strongly forward for the next several decades. I really believe that now is our time.