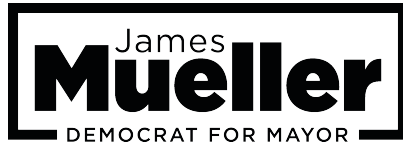


James
Mueller
DEMOCRAT FOR MAYOR

BUILDING ON OUR PROGRESS

**JAMES MUELLER'S PLAN
FOR SOUTH BEND**



Dear Neighbor,

Over the last eight years, South Bend has turned a corner. I have worked closely with Mayor Pete to make the city we all call home a better place to live for everyone.

Serving the community I love—the place I was born and raised—has been a great honor. I've seen our city's revival firsthand and am proud of the work we've done to make South Bend a place where everyone can thrive.

I'm running for Mayor because we have much more work to do. I am excited to share the following plan for how we are going to build on our progress and keep moving forward.

This plan will evolve and change as we continue to bring more voices to the table, hold on-going community conversations, and explore new ideas together. This comprehensive report lays out my plan to accelerate our economic growth, expand opportunity, strengthen our infrastructure, improve public safety, invest in neighborhoods, and support our education system. A couple of my key initiatives include:

- **Ensuring universal access to high-quality Pre-K and child care programs** - we must give our children the best possible start in life, and we must support them with a cradle-to-career approach to education.
- **Implementing a plan to rebuild, repair, and reimagine our neighborhoods** - we have addressed many vacant and abandoned houses, but we must now pursue a bright new vision for walkable and safe neighborhoods with public spaces, retail stores, resilient infrastructure, and a strong feeling of community.
- **Lowering barriers to opportunity** - a city should be judged on how it treats its most vulnerable residents, so I will champion initiatives and policies that provide pathways and opportunities so that more residents share in the benefits of our growth.

My ultimate goal is to make South Bend the most welcoming and inclusive city in the midwest, with strong, safe neighborhoods and paths to opportunity so that all our residents can thrive.

This is a critical moment in South Bend's history, and I am ready to build on our progress and serve as your next Mayor. I hope to earn your support and continue moving our great city forward.

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ECONOMY: ACCELERATING OUR GROWTH

South Bend is a city on the rise. From 2016 to 2018, the median household income in South Bend increased by 8.4%, above the national average. South Bend's poverty rate decreased from 28.3% to 25.4% during the same period, a rate 7 times greater than the national decrease of 0.4%. The City's population decline reversed, jumping from 100,984 in 2013 to 102,245 in 2018. Over \$800 million of building permit value was created across the city between 2015 and 2018.

We've come so far. South Bend is writing a new chapter, but we need to build on our progress and keep moving forward.

2025 VISION

South Bend will be a growth leader in mid-size midwest cities, competing directly with larger cities in attracting and retaining professionals and families, creating new startups, and in attracting venture and investment funding.

We need to take this growth to the next level. This means being open for business and thinking about the future. Most importantly, this means investing in our people. In our economy, jobs follow talent, and people head to locations where they want to live. To keep South Bend's economic engine humming, we need to focus on opportunities and place-making: investing in our public assets to make our community safe, vibrant, and desirable.

All of this flows into the most important thing – making South Bend a place where everyone can thrive.

SOUTH BEND IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS

Background

Under Mayor Pete, it became easier to do business with the City, sending a clear signal that South Bend is open for investment. Working with

external partners, the City constructed a Turbomachinery Lab at Ignition Park, reimagined the East Bank as a vibrant mixed-use community, and made critical infrastructure improvements to Portage Prairie. Downtown South Bend has gained momentum as a residential and entertainment destination, with two new hotels and 270 new residential units online since 2016, and another 350 announced or underway. This is no time to take our foot off the gas. We need to continue closing financing gaps and partnering with community-led, private development to revitalize our City block by block. We should leverage federal economic development tools like Opportunity Zones and Community Development Financial Institutions for the benefit of our residents, like the City has done with the investment prospectus created in partnership with New Localism Advisors and Accelerator for America.

South Bend is open for business - and is open for business to all. Our future prosperity will come from being a welcoming city, free from hate and bias, in which all residents participate in, contribute to, and benefit from economic growth. We must continue to pursue policies that support and empower LGBTQ, immigrants, and minority communities. We must continue to streamline business support services to make it easy to do business in South Bend, especially for new business owners. We are committed to transparency and having clear, simple processes for how to partner with the city.

Mueller's Plan

- Continue excellent business development services, including a single point of contact for business development, to strengthen the momentum of new investment and opportunities coming to South Bend
- Streamline land-use decisions with a one-stop shop that provides quick, clear, and consistent guidance to businesses and investors
- Develop a prospectus for Community Development Financial Institutions, increasing the availability of responsible lending to underserved populations
- Maintain guidelines on City business incentives and track performance indicators to ensure taxpayers are receiving clear benefits from every private partnership
- Personally lead conversations with members of the business commu-

nity to communicate our advantages to potential investors

- Provide top notch safety services across the City, resulting in lower private insurance costs for businesses and residents
- Empower and support LGBTQ businessowners and patrons, ensuring protection from bias and equal access to resources
- Support minority and women-owned businesses to diversify access to capital across South Bend
- Support the South Bend Human Rights Commission as a core City institution to fight discrimination and ensure equal employment opportunity, fair housing, public accommodations, and education for all individuals, regardless of ethnic group, sex, sexual orientation or gender identity, nationality, or disability.

ATTRACTING AND RETAINING TALENT

Background

In the past, success in South Bend was defined by getting out. Nearly half of our state's graduates leave Indiana within 5 years after graduation. We need to do more to retain our college graduates. The City has benefitted from programs like enFocus and the Chamber of Commerce's Young Professional Network events, but we have more work to do. We need South Bend to be a community where our youth want to build a future and have the opportunity to do so.

This extends to all of our young people, not just university graduates. We want every high school student in South Bend to feel like they have the opportunity to make a life here. We will work with regional employers and our university partners to strengthen training and upskilling programs, ensuring access to good, middle class jobs for all residents. We also recognize that immigration is a crucial part to building South Bend's talent base and will promote South Bend as an open and welcoming city.

To attract and retain talent, placemaking needs to be a central part of our approach to economic development. We need to improve public spaces to promote the health, happiness, and mobility of our residents and celebrate the vibrancy of our city. And we need to connect commut-

er rail service from Chicago and close the gap between our talent and the country's third largest market.

Mueller's Plan

- Facilitate talent pipelines and upskilling programs between our universities, technical schools, high-schools and local industries
- Expand fellowship programs like enFocus and Americorps to match talent with impactful opportunities with the city
- Use City projects, zoning review and developer partnerships to promote and incentivize good urban design for more walkable, bikeable, appealing neighborhoods
- Pursue commuter rail service to and from downtown Chicago, strengthening our connection to the 3rd largest market in the US
- Work with the South Bend-Elkhart Regional Partnership and Lilly Foundation to market the South Bend region as an attractive place to build a career
- Embrace immigration and promote South Bend as an open, welcoming city

SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESSES & ORGANIZED LABOR

Background

Small businesses are the lifeblood of our City. From the third-generation family store to the new technology firm, entrepreneurs and hard working business owners in our City keep us going. We will support our small business owners and make sure future entrepreneurs have the access they need to make their ideas a reality.

We are proud of the partnership the City created with the West Side Small Business Resource Center to help them expand their support services. We will keep encouraging progress in South Bend and make sure our business growth is inclusive. Opening a new business should not be impossible for those starting with less. We will partner with bank regulators and secure expanded financing options so that small business ownership is within reach for all members of the community.

We will support the economic success of all of our residents by enforcing labor laws, worker classifications, and contractor registrations. We will advocate for working people. We have great pride in South Bend's long history of organized labor and know that our entire community benefits from strong unions.

Mueller's Plan

- Partner with local institutions to provide technical assistance and resources to small businesses, such as the West Side Small Business Resource Center and Indiana Small Business Development Center
- Support businesses looking to build in neighborhood main streets (Western Ave, Mishawaka Ave, Lincoln Way, Miami Street, Michigan St, Portage Rd, etc.) with City incentives
- Craft plan with area employers to buy locally and support local business
- Expand facade grant program to help small businesses maintain and renew their storefronts
- Maintain a level playing field by making sure that labor laws, proper worker classifications, and contractor registrations are followed
- Protect taxpayers by continuing to ensure that City contracts go to qualified, responsible, and responsive bidders
- Attract funding sources like Community Development Financial Institutions that can provide microloans and other financial support to local businesses

FOSTERING THE ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM

Background

South Bend has a rich history of innovation and entrepreneurship. We will live up to that tradition by making sure that our City can participate meaningfully in the 21st century economy. Over the last eight years, Mayor Pete has made smart investments to grow an entrepreneurial ecosystem in South Bend and spur innovative growth. We need to build on that foundation and make sure South Bend's entrepreneurs and business leaders have the resources and support they need to keep fueling job creation.

The innovative growth we see in South Bend has come from City leadership, smart investments, and the support of organizations like Vested Interest, INVANTI, and Notre Dame's Innovation Park. Public investment in projects like Metronet Zing, the open-access dark fiber network running beneath the city, have ensured that established businesses have the internet connectivity to compete on a global scale.

We will continue to help established businesses leverage technology to be competitive in a global economy. We will support entrepreneurs who are creating and expanding home-grown technology companies. We will create new partnerships between the City and cutting-edge, local companies to implement technology solutions in our City and infrastructure. And we will prioritize talent programs and tech training to ensure that our residents have access to the jobs of the future.

We also need to support entrepreneurship beyond the tech ecosystem, particularly the community-based businesses that make up the majority of our local economy and employment. We will remove barriers for the residents that want to start or expand a business and look to invest in projects like the West Side Small Business Development Center on Lincolnway West and incubator spaces like LangLab.

Mueller's Plan

- Help established businesses leverage technology by supporting the South Bend-Elkhart Regional Partnership's Industry 4.0 efforts
- Support innovation hubs for established companies to spin out new ventures and/or lines of business
- Promote innovation and technology-driven startups by backing the Regional Partnership's efforts to increase the number of federally funded SBIR/STTR grants awarded in the region
- Market South Bend as a "Beta City" where startups can quickly test innovative ideas and establish a base of operations
- Foster data and wireless industries as fields where South Bend can lead in innovation
- Empower community-based businesses by streamlining the business permitting process and convening Community Development Financial

Institutions to increase access to capital for community-based businesses

- Leverage City investments in Innovation Park and Ignition Park to support commercialization of university research
- Encourage growth of creative incubator spaces in the model of LangLab and Vested Interest
- Create Opportunity Fund to help provide financing options for minority small businesses to reduce barriers to entry

STRENGTHENING OUR INFRASTRUCTURE

Background

To continue improving the quality of life for our residents, South Bend needs to invest in advanced and resilient infrastructure. Maintenance alone is not enough. Burgeoning industry, a growing population, and the compounding effects of climate change all make it necessary to aggressively pursue new solutions and approaches to our infrastructure.

As mayor, strategic investments in our infrastructure will be a key part of my administration. We must have plans for how our city can lay strong physical foundations for future growth. We must also maintain our existing infrastructure to maintain a high quality of life and safe conditions for our residents. We can use data modeling and new targeting techniques to identify likely issues before they happen, shortening response times and providing a higher degree of service from the City.

Potholes are unsightly hazards that can cause damage to vehicles and create unsafe driving conditions. I will commit to improving the City's response times to road hazards like potholes and seek new materials that will last longer through our harsh weather conditions.

Mueller's Plan

- Fund additional road maintenance by drawing on state entities and funds, toll road revenue, and local sources
- Improve pothole response time through data analysis, resource optimization, and predictive models
- Partner with AEP to expedite replacement and installation of streetlights

- Implement new upgrades to sewer and flood control systems to minimize property damage in the case of floods
- Publish comprehensive repaving schedule to improve predictability and frequency of repairs

EMBRACING CLEAN ENERGY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Background

In addition to preparing for the effects of a changing climate, we need to embrace the benefits of clean energy, sustainability, and best practices for stewardship of our natural resources.

We must prioritize the use of sustainable technologies in our new initiatives, while improving existing infrastructure to address extreme weather and other climate-related threats.

Distributed power generation with solar panels and community solar programs can build wealth in our communities by generating energy locally rather than paying out-of-state power companies. With the falling cost of solar energy, solar installer is the fastest growing job in the country. We can attract more good jobs by embracing clean energy as a city.

Our city has a history of promoting green initiatives. Mayor Steve Luecke launched The South Bend Green Ribbon Commission in 2009 to engage residents on environmental issues and enact green initiatives in the city. Mayor Pete Buttigieg joined the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, a group of leaders dedicated to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, enhancing community resilience to impacts of climate change, and increasing access to sustainable energy. As mayor, I will continue this legacy. I will push to reduce our carbon emissions, embrace clean energy, and focus on sustainable building practices.

Mueller's Plan

- Prioritize sustainability in new infrastructure and building practices
- Develop a plan to reduce City carbon levels from current inventory of emissions to meet sustainable targets
- Work with community partners to deploy more renewable energy and

energy efficiency solutions

- Advocate for clean energy and sustainability policies with the state legislature
- Continue deploying alternative fuel and electric vehicles in the City's fleet, and invest in infrastructure like charging stations

PUBLIC SAFETY: MAKING OUR NEIGHBORHOODS SAFE FOR EVERYONE

South Bend must be a place where people feel safe, in their homes, neighborhoods, and streets. While violent crime is down, even one death or shooting is one too many. Crime and violence have no place in our city.

As Mayor, I will focus on building trust between the community and law enforcement and providing opportunities for our at-risk youth. Together, we can make South Bend a safer, stronger home for all of our residents.

2025 VISION

All neighborhoods engaged, historically low rates of violent crime and property crime, thriving youth-engagement programs, and a reputation as a regional leader in relationship policing.

BUILDING TRUST AND IMPLEMENTING INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS

Background

It is critical for our residents to feel that they can trust and rely upon our law enforcement officers, and equally important for officers to trust and rely on our community in which they serve.

As Mayor, I will work to implement and continue best practices for community-relationship policing, including regular foot patrols, setting meet 'n greets in neighborhoods, and having officers regularly check in with residents. To ensure that our law enforcement reflects the community they serve, I will push for the recruitment and retention of diversity within the department. We need a neighborhood-focused approach to policing in addition to prevention and intervention strategies.

My platform prioritizes programs and strategies that have a track record of success and place an emphasis on serving people. We will implement and expand these programs and strategies that help prevent crime and

create pathways to success. We must win the race to South Bend's youth - in addition to making high-quality pre-K accessible, we must implement programs for our young residents that open new doors like summer employment, mentoring initiatives, and the Police Athletic League. It is important to receive input directly from our young residents, which is why I will strongly support and enhance our South Bend Youth Task Force.

In addition to providing pathways, we must also implement strategies that reduce violence, like expanding the Group Violence Intervention. We must increase the visibility and approachability of our police officers through community events and regular check-ins. As mayor, I will prioritize training and retaining skilled officers who reflect our community's diversity, sensibilities, and values-- because we're all on the same side regarding violence in our city-with the shared goal of seeing it end.

Mueller's Plan

- Promote community policing programs like foot patrols, neighborhood "meet 'n' greets," and regular resident check-ins that build trust between police officers and community members
- Increase resources for the Police Athletic League to engage the community and build relationships between officers and our youth
- Expand the Group Violence Intervention Strategy to incorporate additional community leaders and mentors and ensure that different levels of government are fully aligned
- Institute summer youth employment program to provide youth with training and mentorship experiences, while expanding and resourcing public safety departments' cadet and intern programs
- Recruit and retain diversity to create a police department that reflects the community and builds understanding of community needs
- Expand training for officers and city services to respond to mental health crises and drug overdoses
- Continue recruiting, developing, and expanding programming for the South Bend Youth Task Force

PROVIDING NECESSARY RESOURCES, PROGRAMS, AND SUPPORT

Background

As recently as this February, the South Bend police department faced a double-digit shortfall in the number of officers. When city safety services like police and fire are understaffed or underfunded, departments are stretched thin between crises and don't have the resources or personnel necessary to implement the additional strategies, programs and services that can and should deepen relationships with the community.

We need to equip our police, firefighters, and emergency medical response teams with the resources they need to be effective community assets. Whether it is innovative new solutions that can pinpoint gunshots miles away or algorithms that can improve care and response time for our paramedic services, we owe it to our community to add those ideas to our toolbox. Better safety services increase quality of life, lower insurance costs for businesses, and foster neighborhood and citywide relationships free from not only the specter of violence, but the fear of it as well.

Mueller's Plan

- Staff police and fire departments to necessary levels
- Invest in new and upgraded fire station infrastructure to improve firefighter health
- Deploy shotspotter technology where necessary to improve emergency response time
- Invest in health and wellness services for police officers and firefighters
- Support new community paramedicine program to reduce costs for patients and relieve strain on emergency rooms

NEIGHBORHOODS: INVESTING IN OUR NEXT CHAPTER

From the far West Side to Miami Village, our neighborhoods are the soul of South Bend. We must invest in strong neighborhoods where people can live, raise families, and enjoy retirement.

As mayor, one of my top priorities will be improving the quality of life in our neighborhoods and ensuring that all our residents share in the benefits of our growth. I will invest resources in commercial corridors to drive economic growth and support opportunities for all residents. I will also continue investing in the basics. We need safe, vibrant, and thriving neighborhoods across the entire city. To do this, we must invigorate our neighborhoods and invest in infrastructure to improve streets, sidewalks, and lighting. We must remove barriers to development and update zoning regulations so that it is easier for neighbors to invest in their own communities.

The success of our neighborhoods is critical to the future of the city. We must build on our progress to make South Bend one of the most vibrant and enjoyable places to live in the Midwest. My plan for neighborhoods calls for us to rebuild, repair, and reimagine what is possible in our communities.

2025 VISION

Walkable and safe neighborhoods with public spaces, retail stores, resilient infrastructure, and a strong feeling of community.

REBUILD

Background

We need to write the next chapter of our neighborhoods. The previous administration's 1,000 houses in 1,000 days was an ambitious start to the process, but left many vacant lots. As mayor, I will seek to expand on this program to rebuild our community.

We will streamline a side-lot program that makes it easier for neighbors to purchase vacant lots adjoining their property. We will partner with investors and community groups like Cross Communities and 466 Works to revitalize the city by building affordable family homes that match the needs of the community.

Mueller's Plan

- Continue pilots for new family housing on vacant lots with Cross Communities and 466 Works on Sherman and Harrison and in the SE neighborhood
- Support capacity building measures for future development partners in neighborhoods
- Partner with city council members to improve zoning codes to foster more neighborhood scale development
- Ensure that economic growth downtown works in conjunction with residential development
- Streamline a side-lot program to facilitate and incentivize the purchase of neighboring vacant lots

REPAIR

Background

The City must find ways of helping residents maintain their property, especially our seniors. I expanded the City's home repair program, and I would continue this program as mayor. I will invest in infrastructure, from streets to sidewalks to streetlights, and I will work to address the problem of lead paint in our aging homes.

Our City must get the basics right: infrastructure and public works. Economic development and safety programs rely on the existence of quality infrastructure. We must invest in curbs, sidewalks, and public lighting to ensure that every neighborhood has the same quality of infrastructure. We will prioritize road improvement projects to make the City more accessible. We will add lighting to dark streets and improve sidewalks so our residents can move around safely. We will keep gathering input from

the community to make sure that we are responsive and using our resources well, investing in our infrastructure to strengthen South Bend's success as a twenty-first century city.

Mueller's Plan

- Continue the South Bend Home Repair program to help low and middle-income and elderly residents repair their homes
- Expand on existing lead initiatives with \$3M in local, state, and federal funding to ensure our children and homes are safe from lead risk
- Adopt creative financing solutions to help sidewalk repairs for residents in need
- Facilitate communication for residents to report road and sidewalk defects to the City and ensure rapid response
- Continue Code partnerships for neighborhood cleanup, and develop coordinated neighborhood resource programs that align City grants and Code Enforcement effort

REIMAGINE

Background

Robust neighborhood infrastructure and high-quality shared public spaces are the building blocks of community. That's why we want to create additional green spaces and parks to keep improving our streets and neighborhoods. We will make sure that our zoning and permitting laws facilitate commonsense development for the entire community, so that our City feels open and accessible to every resident.

We must consider new uses for our vacant lots and public spaces. We should push for restaurants, groceries, and retail stores, and we should explore ideas for new green spaces like pocket parks, urban farms, and other green initiatives. We will bring commerce to neighborhood main streets and investment into neighborhoods with vacant lots.

Mueller's Plan

- Complete \$43 million investment into South Bend parks and trails
- Enhance business development incentives on neighborhood main

streets to ensure access to commercial amenities in all neighborhoods

- Continue West Side Main Streets plan with upcoming improvements to Western Avenue from Falcon to Dundee and East of Walnut, as well as Lincolnway West around the Wilber and Olive nodes
- Continue neighborhood plans around the City Cemetery and in the SE neighborhood
- Spearhead new Neighborhood Main Streets investments in Mishawaka Avenue, Miami Street, Portage Avenue, Linden Avenue, and Eddy Street
- Continue expanded facade grant program for Neighborhood Main Streets to help maintain small businesses
- Prioritize neighborhood plan development in underserved areas
- Work with the Incremental Development Alliance and other partners to train and facilitate market access for small developers in high-density areas
- Pursue partnerships to ensure every neighborhood has access to groceries and healthy food options
- Work to create new community gardens and solar arrays on vacant lots in the community

EDUCATION: ESTABLISHING CRADLE-TO-CAREER LEARNING

It is critical for the City to be an active and engaged partner with schools, students and parents to ensure that South Bend children enter school ready to learn, have the opportunity to receive a high-quality education, and are poised for success in college or careers. We need to ensure children from all backgrounds enter our school system equipped to learn.

2025 VISION

Universal access to
high-quality early
education for all of our
residents

Access to economic opportunities outside of school builds on in-classroom learning to prepare students for career success. The City has a vital role in providing pathways to internships, training opportunities, and jobs for our youth.

The City's success must be measured by whether our students are able to achieve in school and whether they can thrive upon graduation, regardless of family income or background. To meet this goal, we need robust early childhood education, strong partnerships with local educational institutions, and opportunities for students to gain real-world experience through internships, summer jobs, and technical education.

Access to Universal Pre-K: Providing Strong Starts from Early Childhood

Background

Access to learning resources and opportunities at a young age yields dividends for child development. Studies have shown that by age 3, a child from a lower income background will hear 30 million fewer words than a child from a higher income background, hindering later vocabulary growth. By 3rd grade, children who receive high-quality pre-Kinder-

garten education have a higher reading level than their peers. We need to ensure that all of our children have a strong start to their education and that all families have equitable access to the tools and support they need. We will expand educational partnerships with the goal of universal access to high-quality Pre-K.

We must advocate for resources and support from the state government, but we also cannot wait for them to act. South Bend must lead locally on this issue.

Mueller's Plan

- Expand incentives for existing neighborhood child care locations to increase their quality of education and number of children served
- Advocate for universal access and affordability with State officials
- Partner with the Library and Community Foundation to expand early education programming at the Main Library.
- Support early childhood learning centers at the new Robinson Center and renovated Studebaker buildings
- Partner with the United Way and the private sector to construct a high-quality early education center in the Southeast neighborhood, providing an option for third shift workers and refining a model to be replicated elsewhere
- Support parents, pediatricians, businesses, faith leaders, social services, and others to help close the word gap that develops in early childhood and sets many children at a disadvantage
- Develop strategies with providers, parents and community institutions to more effectively leverage State and federal resources, ensuring that no dollar is left on the table.

PARTNERING WITH SCHOOLS

Background

Although the South Bend Community Schools Corporation (SBCSC) is an independent entity from the City, successful outcomes in the City and Schools are heavily interconnected. The City can help attract teachers, build public-private partnerships between institutions and business-

es, and provide internship and economic opportunities to students and graduates. We need to establish regular communication, close working relationships, and work towards our common vision of a top-quality education for all of our students.

It is important for South Bend to have a variety of educational options, but our public schools are a critical cornerstone of our community. If elected, I will be a champion for all our high schools, middle schools, and elementary schools. Every one of our students must have the support they need to thrive.

Mueller's Plan

- Continue and expand after school programming at the MLK Center and recently renovated Charles Black Center
- Finalize School-City Compact with new Superintendent, School Board, and Common Council, establishing a public reporting mechanism for School and City performance
- Align state, local, and private partners to expand number of in-school Pre-K students
- Ensure School Resource Officers are building positive relationships with students and families
- Create a program to attract top education talent by offering home-buying incentives for new teachers
- Build strategic connections with SBCSC and Purdue Poly, Ivy Tech, Notre Dame, Bethel, and IUSB to develop talent pipelines to local employers
- Enhance communication and coordination between the City and the SBCSC by instituting monthly meetings between the Mayor and Superintendent and assigning a City representative to attend School Board meetings and coordinate with SBCSC staff
- Improve transparency through annual public briefings to the School Board and Common Council
- Take steps to provide bilingual education to both pre-K and adults
- Coordinate with employers to ensure Career & Technical Education (CTE) and internship opportunities are aligned with needs in emerging industries, like the data economy, green infrastructure, and renewable energy

- Explore ways of sharing facilities and purchasing with schools to reduce costs and strengthen the relationship between our City and our schools

INCREASING APPRENTICESHIPS AND BUILDING SKILLS

Background

Our residents and businesses thrive when there are strong pipelines for workers with all levels of education to contribute to the local economy. Setting our students up for success requires innovative, industry-led workforce development programming, training opportunities in emerging workforces, and the cultivation of a “lifelong learning” approach to career-long skills development.

If elected, I will expand access to technology and tech education so that no one falls into the ‘digital divide’. As we embrace new advancements and look towards the jobs of the future, we must take steps to ensure that we are not leaving any residents behind.

Mueller’s Plan

- Support at-risk high school students by connecting them with skills development programs, mentors, and pathways to entry-level jobs such as Jobs for America’s Graduates Program
- Expand Pathways On-Demand partnership with Purdue MEP to train our workforce for specific positions needed by local employers
- Offer paid internships in City departments to build tangible skills and establish a talent pipeline
- Leverage emerging technologies to establish a lifelong learning platform that can enhance credentials and match job-seekers with available positions
- Work with the SB-Elkhart Regional Partnership on information technology sector apprenticeships to build IT ecosystem and talent
- Expand the Center for Learning, Information, Connectivity, and Knowledge (CLICK) program so each resident is no more than a 15-minute walk from digital resources
- Support the South Bend Code School, including grants for low income

students and neighborhood CLICK programs with the Parks Foundation

- Establish summer and entry level youth employment programs in partnership with private sector employers and community organizations to provide job openings, soft skills and training opportunities, and other support

INCLUSION: EXPANDING ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITIES

The story of South Bend is the story of working families. Too often, we see how our country's wealth and rapid technological advancement have benefitted some, but not all. Discrimination, unequal access, and child care and transportation costs create barriers to good jobs and livable wages. We need to provide opportunities to all of our citizens, no matter their background or zip code.

2025 VISION

South Bend will be a national model for inclusive growth as successful economic empowerment pilots expand to full scale.

Economic growth under Mayor Pete changed the direction of our City. We will continue this drive, making sure that solutions are developed with our diverse communities and serve our most vulnerable neighbors. We will create pathways to employment in good, livable wage jobs. We will continue to pursue innovative pilots to address the needs of our community and will responsibly scale those with the highest impact. We will address the unique needs of our aging population, as well as those with disabilities and suffering from addiction. We will support and empower our small businesses and minority- and women-owned enterprises. Through all of these efforts, we will prioritize a process of inclusive decision making, to ensure that all voices are heard and the best solutions are found for our residents.

We will only be successful when the economy is working for all of South Bend's neighborhoods and all of South Bend's residents.

REMOVING BARRIERS TO GOOD JOBS

Background

South Bend should be a city where every resident can have access to a good job. But for too long, the economy has left many of our neighbors behind. As in many places, a small group of people has seen higher

wealth growth and better opportunities than the rest of the population. We need to address this gap by ensuring better access to good jobs and providing equitable opportunities for all residents regardless of their zip code. We will work with underrepresented groups to identify the best ways to support their success and ensure that their interests are part of the city's future. We will continue to pilot community-based programs and scale up the ones that work.

As Chief of Staff, I implemented a minimum wage for all city workers and as Mayor, I would continue to provide a living wage for our workers. While minimum wage is under state control, we must continue to lead by example and encourage our local employers to join us in making South Bend a city with jobs that pay enough to support workers and their families.

We will address the barriers that block many of our neighbors from gainful, livable-wage employment, including unfair hiring processes. We will create a "Second Chance" program to support job readiness and provide wraparound services to improve opportunities. And by prioritizing diversity and inclusion in City workforce recruitment, we will lead by example.

Once employed, many of our neighbors continue to face employment barriers of transportation and childcare costs. We will increase access to childcare programs to lower the burden on working families. We will promote innovative solutions and public-private partnerships to provide affordable transportation options for low income and shift workers.

Mueller's Plan

- Increase access to quality, affordable childcare
- Develop public-private partnerships to provide additional transit options for lower-income workers, building on our Mayor's Challenge award from Bloomberg Philanthropies
- Partner with organizations and local businesses to provide training and employment opportunities for rehabilitated residents
- Expand Economic Empowerment programs like financial literacy training, Love Your Block, and eviction legal defense fund
- Continue to fund workforce development programs like Pathways for

- residents who want to build their skills and advance their career
- Lead by example in diversity recruitment and inclusive policies for the City workforce

FOSTERING AN INCLUSIVE ECONOMY

Background

Minority and women-owned businesses have been a critical part of South Bend's past and they must be part of our next chapter. To build a truly inclusive economy in our City, we need to work with all of the leaders in our business community to alter the structural barriers that have led to persistent inequality. The opening of the West Side Business Development Center was an important step to support the generation of new wealth and to strengthen the entire community through business growth. As Chief of Staff, I helped create the Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Compliance and formed a new 'Engagement and Economic Empowerment' team.

As we move forward, we need to make sure our entire community is involved in the conversation of how we will address the disparities in our City. We will convene business owners to evaluate barriers and how the City can overcome them with programs or policies. We will invest in additional methods of gathering resident input, such as door-to-door surveys and quantitative studies.

Financing was identified by minority business owners as a central barrier to the growth of minority-owned businesses. We will work with minority business owners and pursue opportunities with national and regional lenders for catalyzing small business growth.

Mueller's Plan

- Build upon the efforts of the Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Compliance and the Engagement and Economic Empowerment team to provide opportunities and pursue equitable policymaking
- Create an Opportunity Fund to help provide financing options for minority small businesses to reduce barriers to entry

- Build capacity of women and minority businesses with coaching and networking opportunities
- Continue the Municipal ID program
- Ensure fairness in City purchasing by fully deploying policies recommended by the Diversity Purchasing Study
- Help provide direct technical assistance to neighborhood associations so that residents can apply for City programs and services
- Gather more resident input through neighbor to neighbor surveys, quantitative surveys, and our Engagement Team meeting residents where they are
- Encourage development and private investment on the West Side to provide additional commercial options and retail stores to residents
- Engage local employers to follow the City's lead on inclusive policies

ASSISTING VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

Background

South Bend must be a city where everyone can thrive, regardless of race, gender, orientation, age, or zip code. We believe that our city ought to be measured not by the success of its wealthiest residents, but rather by the experience of its most vulnerable members. We will provide support and create opportunities for the entire community so that everyone can share in the City's progress. This means putting in the work to ensure that City programs and resources are accessible to all populations, and are targeted to serve our most vulnerable. It also means fighting discrimination and ensuring equal employment opportunity, fair housing, public accommodations, and education for all individuals, regardless of ethnic group, sex, sexual orientation or gender identity, nationality, or disability.

We will support our seniors and their quality of life by providing transportation, living support, and access to assistive technology that can help them age-in-place. We will work with healthcare providers and community organizations to help those suffering from drug and opioid addiction and will raise awareness through education on how our residents can look out for their neighbors.

To help our residents experiencing homelessness, we have taken steps to establish a one-stop intake center, create permanent supporter housing, and coordinate care with other service providers. We must keep working tirelessly to help our vulnerable neighbors, while ensuring that everyone is respectful of our neighbors and city regulations.

Poverty is a critical issue in our city. Over 25% of our residents are below the poverty line. This is not acceptable. Raising income and lowering barriers to opportunity will be a top priority for my administration. We will work with our direct service providers to assist our homeless population and provide paths to social services and permanent housing. We must support service providers and invest in skills-training and career pathways.

Mueller's Plan

- Ensure that the city's most vulnerable residents have access to good jobs, housing, and the services that they need
- Pursue certification as an AARP 'Livable Community' to demonstrate our commitment to helping seniors age in place and welcome older tourists to our city
- Implement income-based sewer and water rates so that low and fixed income residents are able to afford utilities
- Provide access to quality child care services so that the future leaders of our City have the resources that they need to thrive
- Make transportation and assisted living services available to the senior community
- Work with healthcare providers and treatment centers to implement best-practice policy solutions to support those raise awareness suffering from drug and opioid addiction
- Ensure that City resources are accessible to all communities by using inclusive language, offering translated materials, and addressing barriers to awareness
- Pursue a housing-first approach to homelessness, supported by an intake center, coordinated care among service agencies, and scattered site permanent supportive housing
- Support programs and policies that encourage immigration and engage new residents

- Continue the City's Municipal ID program

FAIR AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Background

South Bend has increased the number of affordable homes over the past several years, but we can still do more. We must update zoning restrictions to create more housing opportunities for the City's most vulnerable members. Too often, renters and homeowners do not have the knowledge or resources to contest eviction or foreclosure proceedings. We will ensure that the law fairly protects all residents of the South Bend community.

Mueller's Plan

- Address predatory lending practices that prevent hard-working residents from the choice to own their home
- Continue to implement the City's rental inspection program to ensure housing units are safe
- Utilize Community Development Financial Institutions and federal funding to increase access to affordable housing
- Partner with eviction defense organizations to protect residents without the means to fairly contest eviction
- Partner with Common Council members to update zoning restrictions to allow more housing options and make more affordable housing available
- Support innovative rent-to-own programs that build wealth in our community
- Expand on existing lead initiatives with \$3M in local, state, and federal funding to ensure our children and homes are safe from lead risk