

1. What local changes do you support to reduce the city's impact on climate change?

I am fully supportive of gathering data and evaluating all solutions that would help, directly or indirectly, improve our City's efficiency and reduce our negative impact on the environment.

My Administration would proactively release the information (raw and summary) we gather on a frequent and continuous basis, providing the Public with consistent feedback opportunities to make sure we are seizing timely changes. This will provide a framework to minimize our lock-in to long term, unsustainable solutions.

Another key area my Administration would immediately focus on is improving social infrastructure. This would allow us to reconnect and engage together, as a community, fostering a compelling sense of stewardship for ourselves and surroundings (sidewalks, streets, parks, neighborhoods, city centers, Libraries, community centers, schools, local businesses, etc.)

We need to facilitate the discovery of why some individuals view aspects of the Commons in West Lafayette as unworthy of respect--environmental or otherwise.

We need to directly engage the Public and provide opportunities for them to be an integral part of this process. We must afford everyone a seat at the table so we can discuss ideas, put them into practice, and collaborate with our fellow community members. We must create a system that has strong feedback loops and opportunities to iterate based on the new knowledge we gain each and every time.

Mutual knowledge is the key for systemic change.

Included here is a non-exhaustive list of areas to evaluate further, in no particular order:

- Urban design
- Infrastructure
- Transportation (mass and human powered)
- Greenspaces
- Renewable energy
- Local economy
- Building design, efficiency, materials
- Waste (reuse, reduction, recycling, treatment)
- Sustainable roofing
- Vendors and supply chains

It takes a Community to raise a City. We would love to hear from you. Please reach out to our campaign and share your ideas.

2. What can the city do to address the issues of children and families living in poverty and homelessness in the community?

We need to understand where we have been, where we are, and where we want to be in regards to poverty and homelessness. The methods we use to generate this understanding is critical to ensure that we are measuring our community as completely as possible.

According to [Census.gov](https://www.census.gov), 41.1% of our residents live at or below the poverty line. We also know that the cost of housing, food, and goods is increasing and our current community resources are being heavily utilized.

Outside of the census, we can gain an additional perspective of the historical trends surrounding poverty and homelessness for families in our community through data submitted to the Indiana Department of Education. The City of West Lafayette shares boundaries with the West Lafayette Community School Corporation and the Tippecanoe School Corporation.

Income eligibility requirements in Indiana are as follows:

Reduced lunch: 185% of the Federal poverty guidelines

Free lunch: 130% of the Federal poverty guidelines

West Lafayette Community School Corporation reported the following in:

2015-2016: one homeless student, 324 free lunch students, and 78 reduced lunch students

2016-2017: three homeless students, 303 free, and 80 reduced

2017-2018: one homeless student, 296 free, and 80 reduced

Tippecanoe School Corporation reported the following in:

2015-2016: 71 homeless students, 3710 free lunch students, and 817 reduced lunch students

2016-2017: 124 homeless students, 3607 free, and 813 reduced

2017-2018: 146 homeless students, 3882 free, and 839 reduced

(IDOE source:

<https://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/elme/homeless-student-free-reduced-lunch-2013-2018.xls>
x)

My Administration would help by directly engaging the community, asking questions, listening, and making sure that those who need assistance have the tools to discover, navigate, obtain, and utilize it.

We would also be proactive in working with our community resources to ensure they are supported to fulfill the needs of our community. Some of these organizations include:

- Family Promise
- Lafayette Transitional Housing
- Lafayette Urban Ministry
- ACE Campus Food Pantry
- Food Finders
- West Lafayette Farmers Market
- Mental Health America
- West Lafayette School Corporation
- Tippecanoe School Corporation
- West Lafayette Public Library
- Tippecanoe County Public Library

With mutual knowledge around poverty and homelessness in West Lafayette, we can improve and expand upon existing successful strategies to increase their positive impact.

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3. What can the mayor's office do to increase the transparency of the actions and decisions made on behalf of the citizens of the community?

Where to begin.

Simply: Proactive transparency, timely communication, and genuine engagement.

An open and accountable government is a core political philosophy of mine which will be carried over into my Administration.

Whether answering the League's Vote411 questions, talking with residents at their home, or attending a public event, access to robust information about the Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How our City and our government functions (or doesn't) is a consistent topic in local political discourse.

Most politically engaged community members know that it is difficult to get at the data that underpins the actions and decisions of the representatives we elect. This lack of understanding is carried over to the dozens of people our elected officials appoint to the multitude of boards and commissions in West Lafayette and Tippecanoe County.

The City is developing incredibly fast, making it absolutely critical that the Public has timely access to rich source data.

For example, in August of 2019, the Dennis Administration failed to put the initial West Lafayette Downtown Plan Public Forum event and information on the City's web site or calendar. This was brought to the City's attention and still, as of October 1st, the WL Downtown Plan is not available on their web site.

Is it surprising that the Public has felt disconnected from the brainstorming, design, and initial proposal process? If a citizen or group wanted to understand the Why of the Downtown Plan, it is presently impossible to do so since there are no publicly available recordings, minutes, or summaries of discussions from the closed-door Steering Committee meetings that took place for almost a year. This is not good governance.

The current West Lafayette City web site, which was updated in 2016 to a later version of eGov, is an example of the Dennis Administration's lack of understanding on how to effectively utilize the Internet as a tool to inform, educate, and engage the Public in the civics process. It is apparent that these deficiencies are systemic in the operational processes of the City.

It is incredibly difficult to perform research and educate yourself as a citizen (or group) about the issues, especially ones that are years in the making. For instance, full text searches are not always available due to image-only versions of documents being uploaded and archived, lack of machine readable formats, and data simply missing.

The Dennis Administration does include most board and commission agendas online, however, not all supplemental data is provided digitally, ahead of the meeting. This prevents members of Public to educate and organize themselves in a timely fashion. Mayor Dennis has "hinted in the past that much of the work transacted at city hall in the past can now be done electronically [...]" [1] And yet the Public still cannot always find the source data it needs.

Data custodianship will be a top priority for my Administration, ensuring that the Public not only has access to timely information, but that the operational processes and procedures have a "public access first" philosophy.

We must design our information systems to allow access to Public Records by default and replace the current "public must seek and we may frustrate access" philosophy. The Public has already invested a great deal of money (taxes) in the City to initially create this information. Changing our City's operational philosophy away from a data gatekeeper mentality will allow us to become more efficient. We can then focus on engaging the Public in effective communication and education programs to share the reasoning behind our decisions.

These operational changes would also contribute to efficiency gains for internal departments, boards, commissions, City Councilors, and others.

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[1]: WBAA, <https://www.wbaa.org/post/wl-residents-decide-future-city-hall-if-one-even-needed>

4. It is a challenge for many students and other residents of the community to find affordable housing while making many sacrifices to make ends meet. What steps would you take to alleviate this issue?

Affordable property is critical to creating a robust community. My administration would assist in the understanding and education of the current and future housing, rental, commercial, and industrial properties. We would proactively publish this information to ensure the community has the data it needs to be informed and organize around the issue.

The economic environment, including employee compensation, plays an integral role in creating affordable housing in West Lafayette. My Administration would work with area entrepreneurs and business owners to create and expand local businesses with local dollars. We need a vibrant and resilient local business community for West Lafayette to thrive.

Residents are constantly evaluating the Greater Lafayette area on a wide variety of metrics: economic opportunities, environmental offerings, senses of place, affordability, and others. We need to make sure that the community is engaged and that we develop systems that allow West Lafayette to be affordable, approachable, and desirable for a variety of income levels.

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5. What steps can the mayor's office take to address the crisis of opioid addiction in West Lafayette?

Mental Health America (MHA) states: *We believe everyone has the capacity to resolve their own problems with support.*

My Administration would actively support the community, especially those in crisis.

The reality of addiction, opioid and otherwise, is complex. We must understand our community's history with addiction, where we are today, and where we want to be in the future.

My Administration would start by actively engaging the community, asking questions, listening, and making sure that those who need assistance have the tools to discover, navigate, obtain, and utilize it.

Creating an open dialogue, free from judgement, will help reduce the stigma around addiction.

We would also work with local organizations like MHA Wabash Valley (Crisis Center Hotline #: 765-742-0244), NAMI West Central Indiana, Valley Oaks, etc. to ensure they are supported to fulfill the needs of our community.

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