


South Bend's  
next generation

**SB** 

## A note from Kyle

Every South Bend resident has a responsibility to elevate the level of discourse regarding our city's future. We must ascend from the land of arguments to the realm of ideas. While strong leadership is essential, vision is what has proven most elusive over the last fifty years in South Bend. I am seeking a seat on the South Bend Common Council in order to promote a vision for our city.

I hope you will take note of the unique manner in which I am promoting this concept. Waging a campaign for elected office without talking about the candidate might seem peculiar. Yet after my brief opening remarks, the focus of this document shifts away from me. I want to rise above talking about myself and focus on talking about South Bend. While this is certainly an untraditional campaign strategy, the SB4g movement is anything but a traditional political campaign.

Running for office as an independent candidate is admittedly an ambitious undertaking. But my candidacy is no more ambitious than the task at hand. The challenges facing our city are too great to be solved by any one person or any one party. I hope my lack of political party affiliation serves as evidence of my genuine intent to do things differently. To those who say my fresh approach will never work, my response is simple: "What about the way South Bend has elected leaders for the last fifty years has worked?"



Independent status is certainly not the fast track to a career in politics. However, I view public service as a calling, not a career. I would rather take the difficult path than bow to conventional wisdom. When fellow residents consider where they realistically fall on the political spectrum, I expect my stand for cooperation and common sense will be a fruitful one.

We usually ask two questions regarding candidates for office: 1) "Who is this person?" and 2) "What will he or she do?" My focus herein is on answering question number two, because the SB4g concept is my chief selling point. I offer myself not as the solution, but merely as a focused, analytical attorney who can provide a tangible vehicle for the vision.

Idealism notwithstanding, our system dictates we vote for a person, not a concept. While these pages do not touch on my personal experiences and qualities, I am happy to share my story with anyone. I encourage you to visit my website at [www.kylechamberlin.com](http://www.kylechamberlin.com) for more information about my background, and I would love to speak with you directly.

The SB4g vision outlined herein may be my proposal, but by no means do I seek to be its exclusive champion. In order to realize progress, residents, businesses, and government all must adopt a next-generation mindset. Elected terms are fleeting, but ideas can span generations. Instead of a tenuous four-year solution, I am proposing a fifty-year outlook.

I encourage you to digest this document with an open mind. Think less about the way things have always been done and more about the potential our city has. The issues facing South Bend are complex, and they deserve thorough discourse. I recognize that asking you to read these pages of dense text is akin to asking for twenty minutes of your day. I challenge you to join the conversation about the future of our city with this investment of time.

# SB<sub>4g</sub>

Read with a critical eye. If you see something I am missing or have a complementary idea, please visit my website and let me know! SB4g is an organic concept, and our collective knowledge will only make it stronger. Finally, **if you like what you read, please consider supporting my candidacy for South Bend Common Council.**

# What is SB4g?

While it is easy to become discouraged about revitalization prospects in South Bend, many are cognizant of the city's boundless potential. South Bend is the product of a thriving past, and many of the advantages that facilitated that success are still sitting in our laps. We need look no further than our own history to find the blueprint for a successful South Bend.

The year 2011 will see the first mainstream adoption of "4G" telephone technology, which facilitates the multimedia services we increasingly expect from our wireless devices. Recognizing that complacency leads to atrophy, phone designers reinvent their product on a continual basis. As mobile phones enter their fourth generation, our city approaches a similar milestone. The story of our South Bend's development can be told in three distinct chapters.

South Bend would not exist without the St. Joseph River. **Location defined the city's economy** from incorporation in 1865 to the eve of World War I. South Bend gained a national reputation based on its position as a hub for the exchange of goods and ideas.

The **next fifty year saw the glory days** about which senior residents still reminisce. The roaring twenties and the post-World War II boom brought financial prosperity to South Bend. Visionary business leaders put the hardworking residents of South Bend to work in fields as diverse as the citizens' ethnic backgrounds. Quality of life soared in tandem with the fortunes of the factories during South Bend's second generation.

Unfortunately, our **third generation has not been as bright**. A result of complacency as much as a changing economy, South Bend's manufacturing base dried up. Local leaders failed to anticipate the changing economy and today still operate the city as if it were 1960.

We will soon enter the next fifty years. In 2065, **what will be the story of South Bend's fourth generation?** The natural and human resources that elevated South Bend to past prominence are still here. New assets, like strengthened partnerships with our local institutions of higher education and energetic young leaders, are now at our disposal. Will the complacency continue, or will we expect more of our city?

**At this critical juncture, we need more than just a master plan – we need a vision.** We need a revolution of thought replacing complacency with progress. SB4g is an approach, not a platform. You won't find a lot of pictures or salesmanship in these pages – just ideas. Presented for your consideration is this vision for South Bend's fourth generation: SB4g.

## Focusing our efforts

Municipal governments have finite resources. A city that tries to be everything to everyone will end up disappointing more often than not. The 167 pages of South Bend's existing City Plan are meaningless if none of the goals are fully realized.

**The solution: do less, better.** Effective governance is a balancing act between proactive and reactive policy. Too many external variables exist to realistically plan twenty years in advance and then sit back and expect the future to mirror your ideal image. What good is a twenty-year plan without a five-year strategy?

In those situations where reactive governing is necessary, the city should have guiding principles in place that provide a framework for decision-making. And in all situations, city leaders must be focused on defined, attainable goals. SB4g provides that focus.

Exploit your strengths and improve your weaknesses. SB4g highlights South Bend's three biggest positives in addition to three areas requiring significant attention. All council decisions should be made with a greater end-goal in mind. **The simple analysis outlined in these pages provides a starting point for focused decision-making.**

Existing Strengths:	Greatest Needs:
1) Location & river	1) Commerce & education
2) Higher education	2) Public safety
3) Healthcare	3) Focused governance

## Existing strengths

Recent leaders of South Bend have commendably recognized the following characteristics of our city as strengths. Unfortunately, a lack of focus frequently blunted the power of these resources. Fully leveraging the intrinsic value of these strengths will provide a foundation for improvement.

### 1) Location & river

South Bend's location is no accident. Our area has been a hub of trade since Native Americans were its only full-time residents. While the river was the highway of its day, today we sit at the intersection of major interstates and rail lines. Northern Indiana is naturally attractive to distribution businesses, and we must attract more of these large enterprises.

Though the St. Joseph River is no longer an efficient means of transportation, it is not without value. **Recent investment in public spaces along the river is a start, but parks alone do not bring commercial development.** Visionary leaders in cities like Pittsburgh and Oklahoma City have revitalized aging downtowns with waterways as the centerpiece. Our golden ticket passes through the heart of town with acres of underutilized, and even vacant, land overlooking its banks.

### 2) Higher education

The South Bend campuses of both Indiana University and Ivy Tech Community College are currently at record levels of enrollment. The majority of these budding nurses, paralegals, and entrepreneurs were raised right here in Michiana. If jobs are available, many will proudly join the ranks of South Bend's emerging young professional community. **But if our city has nothing to offer the best and brightest of this generation, they will be forced to leave town for greener pastures.**

Human capital is not the only resource we risk losing; ideas have legs of their own. Research at the University of Notre Dame and Indiana University School of Medicine – South Bend can produce rich commercial opportunities. With our current nanotechnology initiative, hopes for revenue-producing patents are higher than ever. But this will all be meaningless for local residents if we fail to create a business-friendly environment that welcomes emerging enterprises with open arms.

The University of Notre Dame, St. Joseph County's largest employer, is an invaluable local asset, particularly during trying economic times. But University officials will be the first to say they would be elated to see their institution knocked off the top ten employers list by growing local businesses. Notre Dame cannot reach its internal goals without a robust South Bend, and in recent years the University has shown an unprecedented willingness to help move South Bend forward. The city should take full advantage of this partnership.

#### The Pittsburgh Story

When steel production went abroad, Pittsburgh's economy was left in shambles. With soaring unemployment and deteriorating infrastructure, the city faced a crossroads in the 1980s. City leaders went all in on higher education and healthcare, industries with strong existing institutions in the city, and the "Eds and Meds" strategy paid off. As new jobs were created, quality-of-life issues could also be addressed. The centerpiece of redevelopment in the now prospering downtown preceded even the steel industry – rivers.

### 3) Healthcare institutions

The Michiana area is rich with gifted doctors and progressive healthcare organizations. In addition to the respected institutions that call South Bend home, there are many growing healthcare providers beyond the city's borders. While it is certainly desirable for tax revenue purposes to have a proportional share of these institutions located within city limits, those located elsewhere in the Michiana area should not be ignored simply on account of their mailing address. We need to ensure that South Bend is not left behind on account of an "us versus them" mentality.

Bolstered by the State of Indiana's physician-friendly environment, Michiana is transforming into a healthcare destination. Healthcare is, and will continue to be, an expanding industry. **Instead of longing for the types of jobs that may never return, we must focus on those industries which offer the most potential for sustained strength.**

# Greatest needs

## 1) Commerce & education

A stable economy will always be the single most important factor in creating a successful community. Unemployment is a scourge on cities, and South Bend will not have a successful fourth generation without competitive paying jobs and qualified workers to fill them.

While states and the federal government are empowered to engage the economy head-on, local governments have very different powers. **The strides South Bend must take to ensure adequate employment opportunities fall into two principal categories: 1) business environment and 2) education.**

On the first issue, the question can be reframed from, “What can the city do to create jobs?” to, “What must the city **avoid** doing in order to facilitate commerce?” High taxes and a perception that our area is not “business-friendly” must be addressed in turn. The former will never improve without concrete changes to our local tax structure. St. Joseph County and the State of Indiana must be viewed as partners, not adversaries, when reconsidering our tax laws. The perception issue can be partially remedied for free by our elected officials. Leaders who exude a professional, forward-thinking image will provide an immediate boost.

The economy and education are paired here as concern number one because the two are inextricably linked. South Bend cannot be the community it aspires to be without a robust system of secondary education. Currently, the City of South Bend has no meaningful voice in the direction of the South Bend Community School Corporation. The city must not only reach out to the school system to find out how it can be of assistance, but it also must follow through on those overtures with action.

## 2) Public safety

Far too many South Bend residents feel unsafe in their own neighborhood. Public safety is perhaps the most important local government function, and it is by far the biggest expenditure of tax dollars. Other issues come and go, but proper management of police and fire departments is a perpetual concern of city government.

While the South Bend Police do admirable work, they are not the only piece of the puzzle. City officers can investigate and arrest, but they have no power to charge and punish. The vast majority of crimes are committed by a small subset of the population; we know who the offenders are. The fastest way to lower crime rates is to keep these individuals in treatment or in prison. **South Bend leaders must hold accountable those St. Joseph County officials responsible for keeping criminals off the streets.**

## 3) Focused governance

We have two basic expectations of government, provision of quality services and low taxes, which seem on the surface to be competing. Yet these two demands need not be mutually exclusive. We pay taxes for a sole purpose: provision of necessary services that no private organization would be able or willing to provide on its own. Citizens should not be expected to pay for a government that tries to do everything. Successful municipalities are those which are efficient and focused – not bloated and wandering.

While government alone cannot make a successful city, a community’s progress can be stymied by municipal leaders who do not understand their role. Realization of the SB4g vision will require an embrace of its culture by all citizens, starting with elected officials. **The City of South Bend must be a facilitator, not a benefactor.**

Local leaders must also break free of the traditional political structure so ingrained in our society. Rarely do conflicting political ideologies have any bearing on decisions made at the local level, yet so often we see municipal and county progress halted in the name of partisanship. Finally, elected officials must be free from bias when hiring employees, making appointments, and choosing whom to contract with. The fourth generation of South Bend needs leaders who make decisions based on what will move the city forward, not based on “the way it’s always been done.”

# SB4g and the Common Council

SB4g is a frame of mind, not an agenda. **The mayor is tasked with formulating plans; the council's role is to scrutinize them.** The legislative role requires the ability to provide thorough, unbiased scrutiny of proposed laws. With proper preparation, listening, and analysis, voting becomes the easy part. Keeping the role of the council in mind, this document has presented a decision-making paradigm instead of a platform. That said, some functional improvements on behalf of the council will be required in order to realize fourth-generation success.

## Basic expectations

### Professionalism

All representatives of South Bend, be they elected, appointed, or hired, must behave in a professional manner. Rambling statements on the local news and emails riddled with grammatical errors reflect poorly on our city – details do matter. South Bend is the fourth-largest municipal corporation in Indiana, and its leaders should conduct themselves with the professionalism merited by an organization of its scope.

### Preparation

Ignorance of law and procedure are too often the norm at council proceedings. Council members who ask questions on the most basic of issues, those that could easily be answered by advance research, can only be concluded to be 1) woefully under-qualified for the position or 2) negligent in the duties of the elected position. Individual preparation for meetings must be demanded of those given the privilege of serving our city.

### Issue competency

The Common Council frequently tackles complex issues. This introduction to the SB4g vision utilizes paragraphs instead of pictures for a reason. While our overall strategy must be simplified, individual questions of law will remain complicated. The multifaceted challenges facing South Bend deserve nothing less than the most competent adversaries leading the charge.

## Ideas to explore

### Elected official term limits

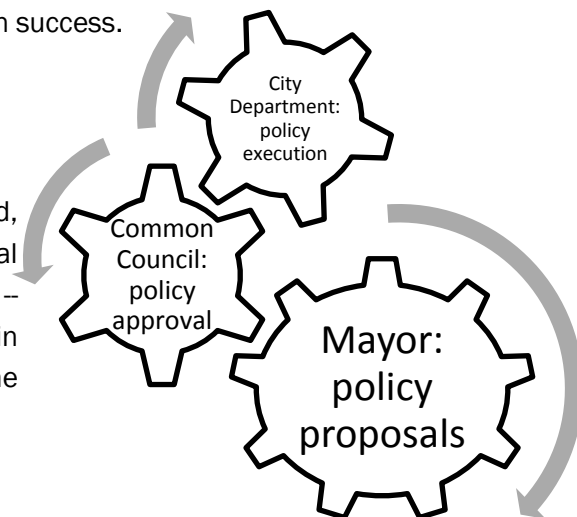
Complacency equals decline. Limiting individuals to no more than two full consecutive terms in municipal office will keep fresh ideas flowing. Career council members, much like career mayors, are detrimental to innovation. Term limits will not create a vacuum of institutional memory, as municipal employees greatly outnumber our eleven elected officials. Local term limits have proven successful in some of our nation's biggest cities, and similar restrictions here will keep South Bend moving forward.

### Traveling council meetings

Too often, citizens want a voice in the governance of South Bend but do not know where to begin. While housing multiple local government departments in one building provides some efficiencies, our County-City Building can be an intimidating and confusing venue for those who do not regularly conduct business there. Spreading official proceedings to venues around the city will provide more residents a window into the business of South Bend.

### Neighborhood issue reporter

When you have a matter requiring council attention, getting in touch with your district representative should be simple. Part-time council members will not always be in their office to field phone calls, but they should be easy to contact. A city of South Bend's size should have an easy-to-navigate website, and council email addresses should not be hidden. A simple electronic form can be utilized to both identify one's district representative and send a message.



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