

Questionnaire for Mayoral Candidates of Tbilisi¹

Please answer the following questions in no more than 250 words each. You can leave some questions unanswered if you believe they do not merit being addressed by a separate policy or if you do not have specific positions on those issues.

General Views / Political Platform Summary

1. What do you think are the main priorities for the city's development?

In 2017, our mission was to turn Tbilisi into a city full of life, where environmental standards would be established, transport infrastructure would be improved, development would be planned, and infrastructure would be updated following the examples of the best cities in Europe. Today, our mission is to make those benefits standard in every district of the capital so that every district has a high standard of infrastructure and every resident has access to municipal services and all other benefits that the government can offer. "More life in every district!" - This would be our response to every challenge facing Tbilisi and our mission for the next four years!

Development and Economy

2. Please provide a concise description of your vision or plan, if you have one, for Tbilisi's long-term economic development.

The candidate's answer to this question is unknown.

3. In your view, what are the main problems impeding Tbilisi's economic development?

The candidate's answer to this question is unknown.

4. In your view, what advantages or capabilities does Tbilisi have that you could utilize to promote its economic and urban development?

The candidate's answer to this question is unknown.

5. What are your budgetary priorities? Please provide a concise description of your budgetary policy.

The candidate's answer to this question is unknown.

6. What are your plans for improving Tbilisi's business and commercial infrastructure and attracting investments to the city?

¹ Information about this platform was retrieved from the Georgian Dream website. *Source:* <https://gd.ge/programs>

Business Support Program – Our team has developed a package of economic benefits that would provide the following:

1. Full exemption of leaseholders from payment from 2021 to 2022. Up to seven hundred leaseholders would benefit from this initiative up to a total of eleven million laris.
2. Owners of outdoor cafés would be exempt from rent payments until the end of 2022. This would benefit as many as 160 cafés up to a total of 800 million laris.
3. As many as one hundred leaseholders and outdoor café owners would be able to extend their leases for two more years under the same conditions stipulated in the initial contracts. Moreover, the municipality would offer contract renewal until January 1, 2024, for those leaseholders whose contracts expired or were terminated before the contract end date from January 1, 2020 to the present or whose contracts are set to expire before January 2022. This offer would also apply to leaseholders whose contracts are now over but who continue to use the property.
4. Penalties amounting to millions of laris that were issued or would be issued to thousands of leaseholders for non-payment of rent would be written off.
5. Every tourist facility would be eligible for a one-time exemption from the cleaning fee.

Urban Development / City Planning / Home Construction

7. What measures would you take to create better housing conditions for the city's residents?

Caring for our citizens was my primary mission and objective four years ago when I respectfully requested your trust and support. That remains and will always be my main priority. Throughout this period, our team has implemented several social projects to support our city and each of its citizens. However, it is never enough. The problems of our fellow citizens are very important both for me personally and for my team, and we are ready to work even harder to create a better tomorrow for the citizens of Tbilisi. The issue of homeless families is currently one of our most acute social problems. Unfortunately, many families have lost their homes for a variety of reasons. My team and I have developed effective plans and strategies to solve this problem and are in the process of gradually implementing them. With close cooperation between the private sector and the municipality, our aim is to have zero unfinished constructions in Tbilisi and provide each homeless or indigent family with a home by the end of our four-year term. The concept of a Caring City is based on the principle of equality, which considers the needs of citizens on the one hand and the interests of the private sector on the other. The projects that we have already started have gained even more importance because of the pandemic, and we would continue providing benefits to support those who have experienced losses from the economic crisis.

8. What are your plans for ensuring the cleanliness of the city's streets?

The candidate's answer to this question is unknown.

Infrastructure and Transportation

9. What measures would you take to improve the safety and comfort of pedestrians in the city?

We would fully overhaul the following streets: Akaki Tsereteli Street, Vaja Pshavela Avenue, Rustaveli Avenue, Melikishvili Avenue, Queen Ketevan Avenue, and Beliasvili Street. We would also completely overhaul University Street, Krtsanisi Street, Godziashvili Street, and the Kojori highway. During these rehabilitation projects, we would upgrade underground and above-ground communications networks and install new fire hydrants. These rehabilitation projects would also include the rebuilding of sidewalks, curbstones, and street pavement. We would also install pavement markings for bus, bicycle, and safe pedestrian lanes.

10. What measures would you take to improve the public transportation system?

We plan to implement the following Tbilisi transport infrastructure projects over the next four years:

- **An Intelligent Transportation System (ITS)** - This is an advanced application that would provide innovative services for different modes of transport and traffic management and enable users to be better informed and make safer, more coordinated, and “smarter” use of transport networks.
- **380 additional busses for Tbilisi** - Two hundred eighteen-meter busses and 180 eight-meter busses would be added to the existing bus fleet that we have already upgraded.
- **Minibus upgrade** – A complete upgrade of the minibus fleet would be finalized and yellow busses replaced by new minibuses by the end of this year.
- **Construction of ten transit corridors** - For the effective operation of public transport, we would construct ten transit corridors.
- **New rail cars in Tbilisi Metro** - Forty new cars would be added to Tbilisi Metro over the next two years.
- **Renovation of Metro stations** - We would renovate Metro stations with financial support from the EBRD. Sixty million euros would be allocated for this project.
- **Introduction of fixed-term passenger tickets** - We would introduce different types of fixed-term passenger tickets and restructure the public transport network based on the best practices of European cities.
- **Introduction of two new cable car transport corridors** - Cable car systems fully comply with our urban-transport development vision for the capital. We would construct two new cable car transport projects.
- **An additional 315 kilometers of bicycle routes** - This would provide an interconnected network for comfortable bicycle transportation.
- **The third phase of Tbilisi taxi service reform** – Implementing the third phase of taxi service reform would improve the quality of taxi services in Tbilisi and create favorable economic conditions for taxi drivers.

11. What measures would you take to improve road safety conditions in the city?

Over the next four years, we would spend up to two million laris on road infrastructure projects such as:

- Construction of a motor bridge between University Street and Bagebi. The new intersection would be constructed near the Tiger and Knight monument and would connect Marshal Gelovani Avenue

and the right bank of the river. A new connecting road would be constructed between Kipshidze Street and Chabua Amirejibi Highway.

- Full rehabilitation of the Mindeli bridge, which was constructed in 1989 and requires rehabilitation. We would also rehabilitate the Metekhi bridge, which was built in 1951, and the Shalikashvili (Didube) bridge, which was built in 1953.
- A complete overhaul of the following streets: Akaki Tsereteli Street, Vaja Pshavela Avenue, Rustaveli Avenue, Melikishvili Avenue, Queen Ketevan Avenue, and Beliashvili Street. We would also completely overhaul University Street, Krtsanisi Street, Godziashvili Street, and the Kojori highway. During these rehabilitation projects, we would upgrade underground and above-ground communications networks and install new fire hydrants. These rehabilitation projects would include the rebuilding of sidewalks, curbstones, and street pavement. We would also install pavement markings for bus, bicycle, and safe pedestrian lanes.
- A complete overhaul of the Republic Square tunnel and the unground motorway, both of which started operation in 1981 and require refurbishment. The underground motorway on Heroes Square would also be completely overhauled since it started operation in 1978 and requires refurbishment. Moreover, we plan to overhaul sewage collection, drainage systems, and road surfaces in Dighomi village and the Avkhala and Ivertubani settlements.
- An overhaul of the Metekhi underground motorways. We would refurbish the entire 2500-meter-long distance in both directions with a budget of two hundred million laris.
- We would also refurbish up to one thousand streets in all ten districts of Tbilisi. This would include upgrading the roadway, sidewalks, underground communications, and outdoor lighting networks. Water, sewage, drainage, outdoor lighting, and road infrastructure repair work would continue in newly connected areas of Tbilisi.

12. What measures would you take to improve mobility within the city for people with disabilities?

A personal assistance program for people with disabilities – The services provided by the program would be financed in accordance with special standards. This service would help people with disabilities get an education, perform tasks, receive public services, and engage in everyday activities. The goal of the program would be to support independent lifestyles for people with special needs and improve their quality of life.

13. What measures would you take to address problems related to stray animals?

The candidate's answer to this question is unknown.

Culture and Education

14. What programs would you implement to enhance Tbilisi's cultural life?

- **Renovating museums** – We would fully restore the Kostava Museum and renovate the exhibitions. We would also restore the Ilia Chavchavadze House Museum on Chubinashvili Street and the Mikheil Javakhishvili House Museum. We would allocate space for the Tbilisi Museum of Toys and Dolls, which has been without a home since 2012 and reopen it to visitors. As part of our program

to make Tbilisi a world book capital, the first Georgian music printing house would be transformed into the Ilia Chavchavadze Literary Memorial Museum.

- **Renovating six art schools** (See the detailed list in the candidate's campaign platform).
- **Rehabilitating and restoring Akhmeteli Theatre in Gldani** – We have finalized plans to build an updated theater and renovate one of its wings. We would fully equip the building to international standards and renovate and furnish the exterior, interior, and main stage with modern sound and lighting systems.
- **Restoring monuments in both pantheons** -The Tbilisi Pantheon for writers and public figures includes the Mtatsminda and Didube Pantheons. These contain nearly six hundred graves (Mtatsminda - 60, Didube - more than 500). Of these, two hundred graves and twenty-five statues are damaged and require restoration. We would design a special project and gradually begin restoration work.
- **Creating thematic art hubs** – We would create a modern educational and workshop space for art groups in the dendrological park. This space would allow art groups to organize training sessions, masterclasses, and workshops to support artists' work.
- **Financing projects to support ethnic minorities and national projects** - The goal of this program would be to enhance the artistic expression of ethnic minorities in Tbilisi and support the city's multiculturalism. The project would help integrate ethnic minorities into society, provide dignified conditions for coexistence, and promote national values and traditions.

15. What measures would you take in your capacity as mayor to improve the quality of education and make it more affordable?

Funding the education of children from large families and people with disabilities - To make education more accessible to students from large families and people with disabilities, we need to fund their studies in licensed educational institutions. We would finance more than six hundred students every year.

Safety and Crime

16. What measures would you take to fight and prevent crime?

The candidate's answer to this question is unknown.

Healthcare and Social Policy

17. Please describe your social policies and the kinds of social programs you would implement to improve the quality of life in the city.

Our fellow citizens' problems are very important for me personally and for my team, and we are ready to work even harder to create a better tomorrow for the citizens of Tbilisi. The issue of homeless families is currently one of our most acute social problems. Unfortunately, many families have lost their homes for a variety of reasons. My team and I have developed effective plans and strategies to solve this problem and are in the process of gradually implementing them. With close cooperation between the private sector and

the municipality, our aim is to have zero unfinished constructions in Tbilisi and provide each homeless or indigent family with a home by the end of our four-year term. The concept of a Caring City is based on the principle of equality, which considers the needs of citizens on the one hand and the interests of the private sector on the other. The projects that we have already started have gained even more importance because of the pandemic, and we would continue providing benefits to support those who have experienced losses from the economic crisis. The Caring City program would consist of the following projects:

- **No Family Homeless** – To overcome this critical issue, our team would take a systemic approach with a new program in the municipality budget. As part of this program, new homes would be purchased for homeless families and would be given to them to own. By the end of the program, no family would be without a home.
- **No Construction Unfinished** – The Tbilisi municipality has been addressing the problem of unfinished constructions since 2018. We have created a special commission for this purpose, and it has identified 197 unfinished projects with thirteen thousand families affected. Based on their analysis, one million square meters of housing needs to be built to provide homes for the families that have incurred losses from unfinished constructions.

18. How do you plan to improve general healthcare indicators in Tbilisi?

The following healthcare programs would be added to ongoing ones:

- **Expansion of oncology medication program** – We would increase the number of diseases included in the medication funding subprogram to include rheumatoid arthritis and Hodgkin's lymphoma.
- **Joint endoprosthesis program** – We would make financing available for endoprostheses for pelvic-thigh and knee joint replacements for Tbilisi residents.
- **Regular screening** - We would conduct regular cancer screenings and examinations for the population.
- **Multiple sclerosis examination program** – We would extend the financing for multiple sclerosis medications. This program would make patients with this diagnosis eligible for funding for advanced examinations such as MRIs.
- **Breast cancer diagnostics** – The municipality would fund diagnostics, MRI examinations, breast ultrasounds, and other laboratory tests for breast cancer to make breast cancer diagnostics and accurate diagnoses more accessible.
- **Disease-screening expansion** – We would extend the screening program to cover cervical cancer screening via HPV testing. This would make advanced and modern examinations accessible to the city's residents.
- **Personal assistance program for people with disabilities** – The services provided by the program would be financed in accordance with special standards. The service would help people with disabilities get an education, perform tasks, receive public services, and engage in everyday activities. The goal of the program would be to improve the quality of life and support an independent lifestyle for people with special needs.

- **Financing advanced examinations for underprivileged citizens** – This program would provide underprivileged citizens funding to cover advanced examinations such as angiography, computed tomography (CT), and MRI scans.

19. How do you plan to improve social conditions for homeless people?

No Family Homeless – To overcome this critical issue, our team would take a systemic approach with a new program in the municipality budget. As part of this program, new homes would be purchased for homeless families and given to them to own. By the end of the program, no family would be without a home.

Ecology, Recreation, and Sport

20. How do you plan to improve Tbilisi's ecological condition?

Environmental protection has become one of Tbilisi's main priorities, and the budget assigned for this issue increases every year. Supporting healthy lifestyles is one of the municipality's main objectives, and we would continue to build new parks in every district of Tbilisi. We would renovate existing parks and provide additional recreation areas. Over the next four years, we would build fifteen new parks, revive three hundred hectares of dying forests, reduce air pollution, and implement waste separation. We plan to spend 300 million laris on environmental issues and implement several other large-scale projects as part of our Healthy City program.

21. What measures would you take to expand and develop recreational areas and parks in the city?

Over the next four years, we would build fifteen new parks, revive three hundred hectares of dying forests, reduce air pollution, and implement waste separation. We plan to spend 300 million laris on environmental issues and implement several other large-scale projects as part of our Healthy City program. The following projects would be implemented as part of our Healthy City program.

Fifteen new parks in Tbilisi – The program would include building and equipping fifteen new parks in the city (See the detailed list in the candidate's campaign platform).

- **Park infrastructure rehabilitation in Pushkin Square.**
- **Clean air for Tbilisi** – We would build new parks and recreation zones over the next four years to improve the air quality in Tbilisi. We would also convert the transport network to entirely eco-friendly vehicles and tighten regulations for placement and sale of toxic materials.
- **Waste Management** – We would initiate a waste management system over the coming years by introducing waste separation and recycling and closing and remediating environmentally damaging landfills. We will fully implement a source separation system for paper, glass, metal, and plastic waste by 2025.
- **Making your neighborhood greener** – Starting next year, neighborhood groups of apartment owners would be able to start greening their yards with financial support from the municipality. This would

both increase the number of green spaces in the districts and raise public awareness of environmental issues.

- **Forest restoration project** – Three hundred hectares of dying forest would be restored in cooperation with the Kartu Foundation over the next four years. We would also add more green spaces in urban areas, replace diseased trees, and install green islands throughout the city.

22. How do you plan to improve sports activities, promote healthy lifestyles, and develop the city’s recreation and sports infrastructure?

Sports for all young and old – As part of our sports rehabilitation program, we would offer special discount packages for medical checkups and rehabilitation services for everyone under eighteen involved in sports activities. These services would be free for underprivileged and disabled people. For the elderly, all services at sports centers under municipal management would be free to people over sixty-five during preassigned times of the day.

Tbilisi school and university leagues – This project would create different sports clubs in schools and universities. These clubs would participate in school or university leagues. The municipality would provide training for school sports instructors and equip schools with the necessary sports equipment. Up to three hundred schools and thirty-nine universities in Tbilisi would participate in the project. The municipality would continue to support Tbilisi’s Football Master League. Over the next four years, the number of teams participating in the league would increase to two hundred.

Sports Infrastructure - A project for building ten municipal youth centers is currently underway, and eight more centers would be built over the next four years. We would also continue building sports stadiums. Eventually, more than five hundred sports fields would be built in every region of Tbilisi.

Multifunctional youth village – We would build a 300,000-square-meter multifunctional youth village in the green area of Kojori and equip it with modern technologies. The space would include an educational institution, residential areas, festival spaces, and recreation and sports infrastructure. A youth-center concept on such a scale would be unique in Europe and could host large-scale youth projects of international and local importance any time of the year.

Youth-center modernization project – We would modernize youth centers in every district of Tbilisi. We would create informal, modern coworking spaces for educational events and training. We would completely renovate three youth centers and construct an additional seven adhering to modern design standards. More than ten thousand young people would benefit from these improved spaces and from youth services that meet European standards.

Cultural Heritage

23. What measures would you take to preserve Tbilisi’s historical appearance?

We have a four-year plan worth 350,000,000 laris for implementing the following projects in Tbilisi:

- **Rehabilitation of Gorgasali Boulevard** – As part of this project, we would build a recreation boulevard on the right bank of the Mtkvari River from Abanotbani to the Ortachala hydropower station. This would add nine hectares of green area to the city and would attract youth to the historical part of the city. We would also connect the left and right banks of the river with a pedestrian bridge. This would create a new pedestrian-only route which would be beneficial for the environment in the neighboring areas and attractive to tourists. We would allocate 150,000,000 laris to this project.
- **Narikala Castle rehabilitation** – The project includes the restoration of the southern citadel, which is of strategic importance and value. The restoration would encompass the whole route from the Tower of Istanbul to the so-called Small Door to the Botanical Garden. The project would highlight the importance of protecting this monument and make it an active tourism destination and source of sustainable income. We would allocate 10,000,000 laris to this project.
- **Restoration of Baratashvili Wall** – This project includes eight different buildings, of which seven are cultural heritage assets. As a result of this project, the historical defensive wall of Tbilisi would be preserved and connected to the previously restored Pushkin and Orbeliani squares. This project would improve living conditions in these areas and raise the value of the real estate. We would allocate 35,000,000 laris to this project.
- **Overhaul of Sul Khan Saba and Ingorokva Streets** - We would completely renovate twenty-four buildings as part of this project. This area is an important part of central Tbilisi with unique architecture and an active tourist zone. The project would improve residents' living conditions and overhaul dilapidated communication infrastructure. It would also make the area more attractive to tourists and raise the value of the real estate. We would allocate 84,000,000 laris to this project.

24. What do you think about the possible demolition of the Art Museum?

The candidate's answer to this question is unknown.

Other Issues

25. In July 2021, there was large-scale violence against the LGBTQIA+ community and journalists. What is your position on this issue?

The candidate's answer to this question is unknown.

26. As mayor, given the capabilities of the office and your political role, how would you protect and promote the right to freedom of assembly and association?

The candidate's answer to this question is unknown.

27. How would you address problems related to unfinished construction projects and derelict or damaged buildings?

We take full responsibility for resolving this critically important issue for our citizens and starting a program to replace dilapidated buildings throughout Tbilisi!

- The replacement program would start in 2022 and replace all buildings that were built during the Soviet era and are currently dilapidated.
- All buildings that are condemned and that have exceeded their operational lifespan would be replaced.
- The municipality would finance the replacement of the buildings based on the consent of each apartment owner.
- The Tbilisi municipality would provide each apartment owner with a new and refurbished apartment.
- If necessary, the municipality would cover the costs of owners' rent until the construction is over.
- The municipality would develop a standard architectural design based on a competition that would be relevant and appropriate to the appearance of each specific district. Eventually, Soviet architecture would be replaced by modern Georgian architecture.
- During the replacement process, we would not increase the footprints of these buildings. This would prevent urban areas from becoming overcrowded. We would also limit the number of floors, with buildings averaging eight stories being built in place of five-story buildings.
- The project would also include the demolition of garages to make spaces for recreation areas.
- The project would be built by private construction companies selected through official tender procedures. The companies would be compensated with additional apartments in these new buildings and a subsidy from the municipality that would be determined by the tender.
- After the replacement project, the value of apartments would increase by sixty to seventy percent for the benefit of owners.
- Each apartment owner would continue to live in the same neighborhood but in a newly renovated and refurbished environment. They would receive the exact same size of living area as they own today.
- Each building would be energy efficient, leading to lower utility fees for those living in the apartments.

28. What is your position regarding the construction of the Tbilisi railway bypass?

The candidate's answer to this question is unknown.

29. The Mtkvari River, an integral part of Tbilisi, is at this point underdeveloped. How do you think it could be used more effectively for transportation or recreation?

The candidate's answer to this question is unknown.