

ONYEKA OSHIONWU

Mayor for Göttingen

Göttingen can do more

My plan for our city

Dear people of Göttingen, dear everyone who calls Göttingen home,

I love our city.

Born and raised here, I have been politically and socially active for many years – since 2021 also as honorary Deputy Mayor. I know Göttingen with all its strengths and weaknesses. And I know: this city has immense potential.

Göttingen is a special place. Ideas that change the world are born here. Our university and our research enjoy a stellar international reputation. Our companies develop technologies of the future. Our skilled trades train apprentices with passion. Thousands of people volunteer day after day in their local communities, with the fire brigade, in social projects or for their neighborhoods.

At the same time, we see our city fall short of what it could be every day. There is not nearly enough affordable housing. Schools and public buildings urgently need renovation. Recent heatwaves show how vulnerable our city has become. The city center is changing. Families worry about good childcare, companies are looking for skilled workers, and our administration is slow.

These challenges will not solve themselves. **But they are solvable.**

I do not want to manage the status quo. **I want to shape what is possible.**

While doing that we do not have to reinvent the wheel every time. Other cities have already found workable and affordable solutions we can learn from and adapt. As Mayor of Göttingen I want to bring people together. I will listen, decide transparently and involve the many bright minds of our city in decision-making. Because the best ideas rarely emerge in the mayor's office alone.

My goal is a Göttingen that by 2034 has become even more livable: **climate-friendly, economically strong, socially just and open to new ideas.** A city where families are cared for, companies invest, students stay, older people can live independent lives, and young people can build their future.

How we can set out on that path is what I describe in this brochure. It is the product of many conversations, discussions and participation formats such as my series "Göttingen, rede mit!". A Wahlprogramm ("manifesto") written by Göttingen, for Göttingen.

I warmly invite you to walk this path together with me.

Because I am convinced:

Göttingen can do more. And together we can show just how much.

Onyeka Oshionwu

About Me

- **Honorary Deputy Mayor** since 2021 and member of the Bündnis 90/Die Grünen council group
- **Made in Göttingen** – born and raised here, school-leaving exams at the Hainberg-Gymnasium
- For over 15 years a **flight attendant** with Lufthansa
- Alongside that, **studies in politics/economics and English (Master of Education)** at the universities of Göttingen and Stellenbosch (South Africa)
- I **teach** young offenders in the open prison in Göttingen
- **I love volunteering:** in my youth with "Jugend hilft", later in Alaska at a homeless shelter and as a biathlon coach; today as Schöffin at the regional court, on the board of trustees of the Hospiz an der Lutter and on the advisory board of the support association for the UMG palliative care centre

- Awarded the **Helene Weber Prize** by the Federal Ministry for Education, Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth for my work in local politics – an encouragement to take on more responsibility
- **Strongly connected at federal and state level** – in the Network of Young Mayors, the Helene Weber Kolleg, Re:Form and the network of the OECD Centre on Well-being, Inclusion, Sustainability and Equal Opportunity (WISE)
- In my free time, playing sport and reading are my passions. I also enjoy time with my family, my long-term partner, my grandparents and my 101-year-old friend Gertraute

MORE FUTURE CITY

Climate and health

Protecting our environment means protecting our people. As Mayor, I will consistently drive climate adaptation forward, together with the citizens' energy cooperative, associations, initiatives and experts. Göttingen should be bolder on its path to climate neutrality and **expand renewable energy faster**.

cool through the summer

I will launch a **municipal heat protection plan**. It will bring more shade to our streets, more drinking fountains, and cooler spaces in public buildings. It will also improve information for everyone at high risk, including older people, young children, and those with pre-existing conditions or without housing.

Safe in every weather

We must also take heavy rainfall and other crises more seriously. I will strengthen flood prevention and civil protection. Special attention will go to daycare centers, care facilities, hospital wards and shelters, where people cannot help themselves in an emergency. Through safety trainings and emergency drills we will build our citizens' ability to cope in a crisis.

More green, more shade, more quality of life

Göttingen needs more green spaces. Not as decoration, but as protection. I will examine any new sealing of surfaces very carefully. Where land is built on or sealed, other surfaces should be opened to keep a balance. I also want to promote more **trees, fruit trees and raised beds** across the city. This makes Göttingen greener and cooler and brings nature and regional food into everyday life. Göttingen can do more urban green – and with it more quality of life for all.

Housing and building

A home you can afford must not come down to luck. I want people across a wide range of incomes to live well in Göttingen, today and in the future.

Finding solutions together

For me as Mayor it is essential to create more affordable housing and to plan new neighbourhoods together with the people who live here. I will strengthen the **communal housing agency** so that anyone wanting to redivide or downsize their living space can find support quickly. For precarious living situations I want to adopt the **“Bunte 111” model**, where owners, residents and the city develop solutions together so that nobody has to live in a dilapidated house. I want to expand the "Housing First" strategy so that people without a home first receive one, and then whatever further support they need.

Affordability

I will strengthen **municipal housing construction, cooperatives and community housing projects**. Vienna shows what is possible: the city and public-interest housing companies have ensured permanently affordable homes for decades. At the same time, I want to create more barrier-free housing and tackle vacancies. I will set up a municipal service center to prevent rent gouging that offers advice and works with the tenants' association.

Getting around well and safely

For me, mobility means freedom, whether on foot, by bike, by bus or by car. I want everyone to reach their destination safely and with ease, without playing the different modes of transport off against each other.

Arriving safely

In 2025, 449 people were injured in road accidents in Göttingen. I want to at least halve that figure during my term of office. I will systematically defuse accident blackspots and, wherever possible, **separate cycle, pedestrian and car traffic more clearly** – for example on Weender Landstraße. **Implementing the “Radentscheid”, the cycling referendum, is central.** I will regularly review whether measures are working and adjust them if necessary.

Getting to school

Traffic dropping children off at our schools creates additional congestion and delays in the morning. The city can provide information and advise on concepts such as **walking bus or biking buses** – accompanied cycling and walking routes at peak times – so that children no longer have to be driven to primary school by their parents.

New paths in transportation

Good public transport must be reliable, affordable and easy to use. I also want us to try out new approaches. In the Rhine-Main region, for example, tests are under way on how autonomous vehicles can complement public transport. This also includes making **parking in our multi-story car parks cheaper** and thus more attractive. This will create space on city-center streets for shaded seating, benches or outdoor dining. Because Göttingen can do more than a coexistence of transport modes – we need them to work well together.

MORE PARTICIPATION

Sport and volunteering

Volunteers are the backbone of our city. Göttingen runs on people who get involved – sports clubs, the fire brigade, the rescue service, social work. Those who stand up for others deserve more than applause: they deserve reliable support.

Support instead of obstruct

I will **strengthen the volunteer agency** (*Freiwilligenagentur*) and **make funding applications simpler**. Anyone who gets involved for our city should spend as little time as possible on bureaucracy. I also want to sit down with volunteers on a regular basis. No one knows better than they do what would make their work easier.

Space for community

I want to **develop the Kiesesee carefully, create new sports facilities** and **support clubs with their building projects**. Together with city marketing I also want to broker spaces so that initiatives and clubs find good locations to do their important work. In Göttingen West I want to build a **covered outdoor sports court** quickly and, for sports needs in all districts, create pragmatic, workable solutions together with the clubs.

Achieving more together

I want to make even better use of the existing **services of the district** (*Landkreis*), instead of creating parallel structures. At the same time, the city will lead by example under my leadership and support its own employees in volunteering for charitable projects and clubs.

Culture and participation

One quality of our city is its diverse arts and culture landscape. **Culture makes Göttingen come alive.** It brings people together, encourages reflection and creates places of encounter. I want as many people as possible to be able to take part, regardless of age and income.

Culture for everyone

I want to preserve the **Haus der Kulturen**. I want to further strengthen the **musa** and the **KAZ** and create spaces for young culture to prosper. I want to make the *Kulturpforte* better known, so that people with little money can more easily attend concerts, theatre or museums. I am aiming for a **FamilyCard modelled on Stuttgart**, enabling all children and young people to take part in leisure and educational activities.

Securing our cultural institutions

I want to push forward the **renovation of the Deutsches Theater** and secure funding from the federal government, the state and private partnerships. At the same time, I want to work with cultural institutions to find out how we can get more people to partake in the programs they offer.

Fair opportunities

All children and young people deserve equal opportunities. That is why I will **process applications for education and participation benefits faster through a new team** and **secure the anti-discrimination office permanently**. Good education and cultural participation must not depend on the size of your wallet.

Citizen participation and democracy

I am convinced: **good decisions are made where people can have their say**. That is why I want to bring citizens in at the start, not present them with decisions that have already been made. At the same time, nothing works without trust. Göttingen's neighborhood centers create exactly this trust with the people in the district; I want to strengthen that work.

Getting into conversation with each other

I will strengthen the local councils and advisory boards, link them more closely and, where there are no local councils, introduce regular citizens' forums. With my format "**Göttingen, rede mit!**" I have experienced how many good ideas emerge when people talk with each other instead of about each other. This series of five forums has also substantially shaped my political program, which you are reading right now.

More transparency and co-determination

With a **city app** I will make participation easier. I also want to introduce a **participatory budget**. Citizens themselves decide on part of the municipal budget and can get projects going directly. I also want to examine how we can make municipal companies, like for example the "Stadtwerke", more transparent. Because Göttingen can do more when politics listens, explains and shapes things together with people.

MAKING MORE POSSIBLE

Administration and digitalisation

You notice good administration above all when it simply works. I want requests to be dealt with quickly and people to be able to understand how decisions come about. I will lead an administration that is geared to people's real situations rather than to rigid responsibilities. Administration must make everyday life easier, not more complicated.

Simpler and faster

I will **offer more services digitally and shorten processing times step by step**. At the same time, I want to **improve cooperation between departments**. Anyone with a concern should not be sent from door to door but be able to deal with everything in one place.

Learning from the best

Other cities show how modern administration can work. I do not want to reinvent the wheel, but simply adapt good ideas that work elsewhere. One example are the **"flexible teams" in the Kiel administration**, which act as jokers and provide support wherever there is currently a lot to do. At the same time, I want to make the **City of Göttingen more attractive as an employer** and invest in good leadership, modern recruitment and further training.

Digital and personal

Digitalization should shorten the way but not replace contact with people. That is why I will **regularly reassess** whether new services really make everyday life easier. Because Göttingen can do more than manage forms. With my motions on the **city app and the "citizens' suitcase"** we are taking a first step towards an administration that is where the people are.

City center and tourism

Our city center is the heart of Göttingen in the heart of Germany. It should be a place where people enjoy shopping, living, working and meeting. That is why I will closely accompany city marketing's **strategy against vacant premises**, so that empty spaces are filled with life again. For more **cleanliness**, additional animal-proof bins and more frequent cleaning will be financed through a **packaging waste levy**.

Living in the center

The city center is not only a place to shop but also home to many people. That is why I will strengthen its quality of life, for example with a **social center**, public toilets and cool places to stay on hot days. With a regular **city-center assembly** I will bring residents, retailers and restaurateurs around one table. Conflicts between outdoor dining, parking spaces and good accessibility will be resolved together with those affected.

The city library of the future

I will develop our **city library** on the Helsinki model into an **open living room of the city**: with modern learning and lounge spaces, media labs, a play world for children and a digital area with 3D printers podcast, music and green screen studios.

More guests. More life.

With its university, its festivals, its history and its good location, Göttingen has the ideal conditions for developing a tourism strategy. With strong retail and gastronomy, **places to linger without having to consume** and strong city marketing, we create reasons to stay longer, to come back and to recommend Göttingen.

Economy and science

A strong economy creates jobs, secures prosperity and gives our city a future. With its excellent research, innovative companies, strong crafts and creative minds, Göttingen has the best conditions for this. I want to make better use of that potential.

Ideas that create jobs

Göttingen is the **city of knowledge**. With the university, the PFH, the HAWK and the Max Planck, Fraunhofer and Leibniz institutes, we have enormous potential. I want research to translate more quickly into good jobs, successful companies and innovation for our region. For that we need a **City Campus** and an urban culture that keeps start-ups here.

Strong economy. Strong partners.

Companies need an administration that makes things possible. That is why I will create a **central contact point** that makes approvals faster, simpler and more reliable. Vacant commercial spaces can be used better through a **register of commercial sites**. With sufficient space and better conditions for training, business succession and skilled workers, I will strengthen the **skilled trades**.

A Göttingen think tank

In addition to citizens' assemblies, I want to launch an independent **Göttingen Think Tank**. There, people from science, business, the trades, culture, associations and civil society work on the big questions of the future. Because Göttingen can do more when we bring the knowledge of our city together.

MORE CITY FOR EVERYONE

Children, young people and families

Children deserve the best opportunities, regardless of where they grow up or how much money their parents have. I want Göttingen to be a city where families enjoy living and young people can see their future.

Growing up well and having a say

I will further expand play and leisure areas and involve children and young people more strongly in decisions. I want to intensify cooperation with the **youth parliament** and the **youth centers**. **Anyone who lives in a city should also be able to help shape it.**

Strong for life

I want to pay more attention to the **mental health of young people**. My preferred model is an approach from Bochum, where schools, daycare centers and specialists work together to recognize emotional strain early and support children better.

The best education

I will work closely with schools and daycare centers. **Good communication between the administrative leadership, youth welfare services, schools and daycare centers** is the precondition for responding to the situation and needs on the ground and for improving the quality of what we offer together. Good conditions for inclusion must exist everywhere. Families should also be able to find out faster via the city app what services are available to them. Schools should get an overview of all extracurricular learning opportunities via a central platform. I also want to examine whether Göttingen can become a pilot city for identifying pre-school support needs in a structured way and supporting children in need of assistance before they start school.

Barrier-free in old age too

It matters to me that people in Göttingen can live self-determined, active and well-supported lives at every age. **Anyone who has shaped our city over decades deserves a city that also works well in old age.** For that we need a Göttingen that removes barriers, enables participation and consistently takes the needs of older people into account.

Living well

I want to promote **barrier-free homes and paths, strengthen meeting places** and support new forms of living such as **multi-generation houses**. Connected neighborhoods help people to live independently for as long as possible.

Together instead of lonely

Loneliness affects people of every age. That is why I want to connect associations, churches, culture, sport and social institutions better, promote meeting places in the districts and strengthen the neighborhood centers.

Digitally included

Digitalization must not exclude anyone. I will set up a **mentoring program** in which volunteers support older people in using smartphones, tablets or online services.

Shaping things together

Older people have a great wealth of experience that we should use more. That is why I will promote **regular exchange with senior citizens** and involve their concerns in political decisions at an early stage. Such exchange is most fruitful when it takes place across the generations – and that is what I stand for. Because a generation-friendly city is a city where everyone can live well and gladly.

At Home in Göttingen

Göttingen lives from the people who are at home here – and from those who newly come to us. **I want everyone who lives in our city to arrive quickly and be able to contribute.**

Arriving well

I will further expand **welcome and advisory services** and **make information more easily accessible**. Nobody should have to fight their way alone through responsibilities and forms. Together with companies, universities and educational institutions I want to **strengthen language support** and make it easier to enter training and employment. Language skills and **good connections** with daycare centres, schools, associations and civil society help ensure that not only newcomers themselves but also their families quickly feel at home in Göttingen.

Where respect is at home

I want Göttingen to be a city where everyone feels safe and welcome. That is why I want to implement the action plan against gender-based and domestic violence, along with my motion "Göttingen safe at night" as quickly as possible. No one should have to fear exclusion, hatred or violence because of their sexual orientation, background, faith or way of life.

Diversity as a strength

Our city thrives on its openness. I will work to ensure that everyone can contribute their abilities and take part in community life. I want to strengthen social cohesion and encourage encounters in associations, neighborhoods and volunteering. When people see their future here and get involved, it also strengthens our science, our economy and our whole city. I am convinced: Göttingen can do more when we understand diversity as a strength.