

Responses cannot be edited

Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce Candidate Questionnaire

Please tell us about yourself.

Your Name: *

José Rea

Aldermanic District: *

14

Current Address: *

10 Magnolia Circle, Madison, WI

Email: *

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce Candidate Questionnaire

Instructions: Please state your position on the following issues. Please limit answers to 100 words. Any answers exceeding the word count limitations will be cut after 100 words.

If you have filled out this questionnaire before, you may skip starred** questions or modify previous answers to those questions. If you skip starred answers on this questionnaire, we will re-publish your 2015 answers.

**1. Why are you seeking this office?

As a current Madison Commissioner of Equal Opportunities, I have advocated strongly for those with disabilities and our homeless population. While attending UW-Milwaukee –where I studied political science and pre-law- I was elected by my peers to represent them on our student senate. I remained vocal in making government work for all our students. Seeing my commitment, I was appointed to the Vice-Chancellor’s LGBT Advisory committee where I worked alongside students, faculty and university administrators to improve the on and off campus experience of our LGBT students. I look forward to standing with and fighting for Madison’s diverse communities, too.

**2. What in your background or experiences qualifies you to understand the unique needs facing small businesses?

My family has recently started a small insulation business. Seeing their hard work and determination motivates me to run for elected office so that other hard working families can be properly represented. I look forward to working with experts of economic development and business growth in an effort to find a working solution in the need for greater access to wealth for people of color and other marginalized communities. We all play a role in the success of our community and it is my hope to work with other community leaders to achieve this.

****3. What are the most important issues the businesses in your district face?**

Access to 21st century public transportation is greatly needed in district 14. Many individuals are not able to get to work in a timely manner due to the limited bus schedules. Also, with many low income families working more than one job, it is important for us to seek ways to help these families find good paying jobs. By helping our working families thrive we will then be able to help our local business thrive as well.

4. What is the City of Madison's role in growing the economy? How can the City of Madison best support the growth and retention of jobs?

The City of Madison's role in growing the local economy is to invest and support innovative policies and initiatives to continue this growth. This is done by investing in our people. Investing in higher education, public transportation, small business grants for people of color, creating or funding small business resource centers and above all maintaining a healthy political climate where innovation and ideas can be freely and appropriately explored.

5. How can the City of Madison best attract and retain a diverse and talented workforce?

The City of Madison can attract and retain diverse and talented workforce by investing in them. This is done by allowing greater access to higher education, creating grants for marginalized individuals looking to start their business, allowing mentorships for those looking for guided advice and furthermore cultivate a political climate that allows for economic development. The city of Madison must do all it can to encourage and support marginalized groups to start businesses.

****6. Do you support the use of TIF, and how do you believe it should be utilized moving forward? How would you rate the City of Madison's past use of TIF? (Would you describe the use of TIF as underutilized, over-utilized, or appropriate?)**

I do support the use of TIF, however I believe that it should be used responsibly and in a way that does not harm taxpayers within the city. Hard working families should not have to cover the costs of business who aren't being fair. My goal is to appropriately utilize TIF as equitably as possible on Madison's South Side.

7. What specific initiatives in the Connect Madison economic development strategy

(<http://www.cityofmadison.com/dpced/economicdevelopment/economic-strategy-symposium/554/>) do you support, and which, if any, would you like to see modified? Why?

After reviewing the Connect Madison economic development strategy, I believe many of the strategies are well developed and implementation of all or some will help create a business friendly Madison where our residents will be able to obtain good paying jobs. I will state that I leaned heavily towards strategy one and strategies that allow investment in public transportation, because it seems to be the most equitable.

8. What is your perception of Madison's business brand? How do you think business in Madison is perceived locally, statewide, and nationally?

I believe currently Madison is seeing a rise in start ups and entrepreneurs. We must continue to support and encourage more individuals (in specific marginalized communities) to follow their dreams of economic independence. This is done by working with start up organizations to help fund more resources for small businesses who might need an extra hand in making their business thrive.

9. How do you define economic development? Please elaborate.

I define economic development as creating an environment or climate that allows for an equitable creation of wealth. This entails experts, business owners and government officials to work together. Keeping open communication and having constant dialog with community members to meet the needs of both the city and those in the private sector.

10. The Chamber believes that equity and social mobility are achieved through wealth creation and that the surest way is through an entrepreneurial class of color. The Chamber is launching initiatives to support this goal. What do you believe is the City of Madison's role in creating an entrepreneurial class of color?

The City of Madison's role in creating an entrepreneurial class of color should be to help provide resources for this initiative and to network with local business leaders of color so that they have the greatest say in how this class would function. Allowing individuals to team up with their fellow community members and learn from each other can allow for greater cultivation of innovative ideas and greater distribution of wealth and resources.

11. How can the City of Madison provide better customer service to new or existing businesses that seek approval through the permitting and planning processes? How do you define customer service in this case?

I believe that city officials are and should see themselves as customer service representatives of the public. That is why it is my hope to work alongside community leaders, small business owners and experts in economics to achieve an equitable and innovative way to better serve businesses who are just starting up and those who have been here for decades but might need further resources. Maintaining open communication and allowing the public time for input will allow Madison to be a hub for business growth.

12. If offered an endorsement from the Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce, would you accept it? *

Yes

No

By submitting this candidate questionnaire, you agree that the Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce may publish it with the intent of sharing it with its membership and the general public. *

I acknowledge that the Chamber will publish my answers to this questionnaire

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