

2026 Madison Common Council Candidate Questionnaire

The first section of the questionnaire is for your basic contact information and campaign media

Candidate Full Name *

Barbara Harrington-Mckinney

Aldermanic District *

20

Home Address *

[REDACTED]

Email Address *

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Phone *

[REDACTED]

Campaign website (if applicable)

barbaramckinneyformadison.com

Social media accounts, if any

none

Questionnaire - Part 2

Please state your position on the following issues.

Limit answers to 500 words (approx. 3,500 characters). Any answers exceeding the word count limit will be redacted after 3,500 characters.

If you have completed this questionnaire before, you may skip any question that is not starred (**) unless you would like to modify or update an answer submitted in a prior year. If a question is skipped, we will use your most recently submitted answer.

1. Why are you seeking this office?

It was my privilege to represent District 20, located on the southwest of Madison. Elected in 2015, serving in District 1; shifted to District 20 during the redistricting. I committed to one more year. The Council changed to staggered election terms. The even District Alders were up for election after a 1 year term, with odd district Alders next election cycle would serve 1 year. I am completing my 1 year term as Alder of District 20. But the work, my work is not completed. The next Alder elected to District 20 should represent ALL constituents of District 20. I needed to be confident that my replacement would hear the voices of all the people in District 20, support strong neighborhoods, work to build a city where we all had the opportunity to thrive. I remain committed to making Madison a great place to live, work and play. I am experienced and prepared to serve. I care deeply for our community and will continue to bring a strong voice to the issues that impact our daily lives. I am committed to support government policies that hold our city transparent and accountable. I remain committed to Madison as a great place to live, work and play. Unfinished business. I care about the City, and I care about the residents of District 20. With that commitment, I am a candidate for re-election in the April 2026 election.

2. What qualifies you to understand the unique needs facing small businesses?

Education, MBA. Public Policy Administration with a strong record of community engagement. There are challenges before us. The uncertainties at the federal level, and that impact on local government drives me. We are completing the south-west area plan which will guide growth and development for the next 10 years. I was a small business owner for over 10 years before moving to Madison as a financial services manager. My customers were educators and employees of 501(c) non profit organizations creating retirement plans. As a small business owner, I was a self-creator of opportunities to attract, enroll and keep my client base. Today, it continues to be challenging as a small business owner. Then as with now, small business owners often struggle with lack of capital and cash flow. As a commission based business owner, I understand the personal impact of trying to build a successful business. When I arrived in Madison, I no longer had the desire nor energy to navigate the challenges I encountered as a small business owner. The Chamber understands the "unique needs facing small businesses", and provide a range of support services for small business owner.

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

District 20 has many small independent businesses. Since most businesses are small independently owned, better access to capital and support. There are no large big box anchors in District 20.

4. How would you characterize Madison's current workforce housing supply? What strategies would you recommend for the city to meet the diverse needs of workforce housing?

Madison is becoming unaffordable and less equipped to meet the diverse needs of its workforce. Attention to "middle missing" housing has resulted in several properties in District 20. Home owners are struggling, seniors complain that it becoming unaffordable to retire in place, first time home homeowners are find homeownership may be out of reach. The District 20 landscape has many apartment building. Some well kept, others repeatedly are on the building inspecting report of units in abatement.

5. What is your assessment of Madison's transportation system? What priority improvements are needed to support mobility for a growing workforce?

Madison's population is projected to increase over the next 10 years. With this growth comes the challenges of locations for affordable workforce housing. Access to employment opportunities become more critical with projected population growth. Madison benefitted from generous federal funding for our bus transportation when the former transportation director was in charge. The transportation system was in need of updating across the city. Traffic, speeding continues to be challenging across the city. District 20 residents list public safety, speeding major concerns. It is critical to have a transportation system that can get District 20 residents, dependent on public transportation to projected epicenters of employment opportunities. I continue to receive questions about the empty buses.

6. With declining aid and rising costs, local leaders must find creative ways to be more efficient. Some examples include merging services or operational reforms. Please identify ways the City of Madison government can potentially be more efficient.

Transparent and inclusive representation on city boards, committees and commissions are still appointments made by the Mayor. In the past the council environment has been very toxic, community voices less welcomed, less heard. We are elected by the people, their voices often not heard.

**7. Do you consider Madison's property taxes to be too high, too low, or appropriate? Please explain your reasoning and provide specific examples of any fiscal changes you would recommend?

The increase in city revenue through municipal fees and assessments like vehicle registration; tax payers are already struggling with the increases in their recently received tax bills. It is important that the city prioritize their needs vs their wants, less critical are the wishes. Changes at the Federal level are uncertain. I support the city in more aggressively lobbying our state legislators for a larger allocation from the shared revenue formula. Madison is the fastest growing city in the state, but increasingly becoming an unaffordable place to live.

****8.** The City of Madison is in the process of updating its economic development strategy. What policies or initiatives would you like to see incorporated into this plan?

[City of Madison Economic Development Strategy](#)

I have not thoroughly reviewed the Madison Economic Development Strategy. The goal: to guide the actions and investments of the economic development division for the next 5 years and support residents and businesses. The goal: promote people-centered economic development through "shared prosperity". It sounds innovative. It is too early to understand the impact of this Economic Development Strategy. The Common Council voted 16-4 to approve a three-month pilot program in the North Police District to provide more information about how body worn cameras would work citywide. The city could only afford a three-month study. Dane County Judge Everett Mitchell said "a camera would have given necessary information about the controversial killing of Tony Robinson by a police officer. The City funded only three months of the bwc pilot. What is the projected cost and measurable outcome of the five year City of Madison Economic Development Strategy? BWC's have been discussed since 2015 when I was first elected Alder. The City of Madison' is projected to increase in population over the next 10 years,The fastest growing city in the state...and we do not have body-worn cameras for our police officers.

****9.** While data centers are not new to Madison or the region, they are emerging as a major policy issue at all levels of government. What are your positions and views on data center development, and as an alder, how would you approach large development proposals like data centers?

We are in the process of shaping a Madison that works for all. Constiuent priorities; HOUSING AFFORDABILITY. SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS. CLEAN WATER. FINANCIALLY RESPONSIBLE, TRANSPARENT GOVERNMENT. Data centers provide investment opportunities. Madison ranks 11th in tech employment. Described as the backbone of economic growth. We closed the door on economic opportunities of data center development, along side is the development of a five year City Economic Development Strategy pilot. The Chamber, "the thought leader in the industry", spoke against the new data center construction one-year moratorium describing the action as a possible missed opportunity. Madison Chamber is designed for forward thinking, "Future Focused on Economic Mobility and Opportunity." As the staff does on every project, with the data center to thoroughly evaluate project by project as a viable option prior to Council making the decision on the one-year moratorium.

****10.** How do you view Madison's continued population growth? Is it an opportunity or a challenge?

It is both an opportunity and a challenge.

**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 the Chamber will publish my answers to this questionnaire.

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