

Madison Council Candidate Questionnaire

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

Candidate Full Name *

Blake Alvarenga

Aldermanic District *

12

Home Address *

[REDACTED]

Email Address *

[REDACTED]

Phone *

[REDACTED]

Campaign website (if applicable)

blakeformadison.com

Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) accounts, if any

Twitter @Blake4Madison, instagram @blakeformadison, facebook
[https //www facebook com/blakeformadison/](https://www.facebook.com/blakeformadison/)

Questionnaire - Part 2

Please state your position on the following issues.

Please 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 re-post the most recent submitted answer in its place.

1. Why are you seeking this office?

I am seeking this office to be a transparent community leader and to champion economic development and affordable (a k a workforce) housing I also plan to lead efforts to keep Madison's water, air, and earth clean, improve on our public transportation system, and works towards enabling public safety measures

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

I am currently a senior project coordinator consulting at Madison Gas and Electric, as well as a community organizer looking to improve firearm safety in Madison through education and the distribution of gun locks. I have gained a lot of professional experience with project management, interdisciplinary communication, and outreach over the last few years working in project coordination and community outreach. I have worked for over a half dozen Madison-based businesses and have a wide variety of experiences across different industries from manufacturing to restaurants to utilities. I hope to use the skills I've developed to work with city departments, committees, the county, and state to improve the lives of the people of District 12. I have spoken to thousands of people in Madison this past year and I look to use their words, thoughts, and hopes as the backbone of my candidacy.

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

When I've talked to business owners in District 12, they speak of the tenuous nature of doing business under restrictions on customer occupancy to protect public health during this multi year pandemic, the lack of affordable housing near their business, and improving the city infrastructure that supports businesses, whether that is making reliable high speed internet more available, optimizing traffic patterns and rail access for on time freight, or working with the county to expand air travel to other economic centers

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

Economic development from the standpoint of the city is any agreement in which businesses interact with the city to develop land, repurpose standing structures, or alter city planning to better conduct business. Economic development is also matching neighborhoods with business needs. For example, if an area of Madison has a need for a grocery store, the city can use TIF to incentivize a grocery business to come in and serve the needs of that neighborhood.

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

I think Madison is perceived decently from a "buy local" standpoint, where people have a strong drive to patronize businesses with local ties. Nationally, I believe Madison has a lot of work to do, developing our passenger rail and luring the technology sector to our city with a strong academic core ready to fuel economic growth locally.

6. How can Madison best attract and retain a diverse workforce?

By being equitable to people of all races, sexualities, ages, levels of income and mobility we ensure no worker is discriminated against. Being welcoming to all will improve our economy and entice people to move here. Affordable housing, improving transportation and public safety, and being a pleasant place to live will go a long way to keeping our great people and attracting more.

7. What strategies would you recommend for the city to meet the diverse needs of workforce housing?

Rezoning areas to improve housing density and improving the variety of types of housing options will go a long way to meet the needs of those who live in Madison and those who are considering moving here for work.

****8. In what ways can city government support entrepreneurs of color working to start and grow an emerging business in Madison?**

As a person of color I will look to advocate for BIPOC entrepreneurs, whether it is working to develop new construction or working to approve new business licenses. Madison must be equitable in how it performs economic development, and uplifting entrepreneurship in communities of color is a pillar of that.

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

One of the greatest threats to public safety in Madison is vehicle collisions, whether it's with other vehicles, bicyclists, pedestrians, or those using mobility devices. The city has a wide variety of tools at hand that can be used to mitigate these dangers to public health and safety. Traffic calming can help to lower the speed of vehicle traffic. Rightsizing roads can give space for bicyclists to share the road safely. Many intersections can be redesigned to better accommodate safe traffic. I also want to ensure more accessible and equitable public transportation in the form of bus lines and better bicycle access to city roads, which includes expanding BRT access throughout the north side of Madison.

These measures, many of which are ongoing, will go a long way to protect the public and increase the number of people who want to live and work in Madison.

****10. A challenge that often comes with growth are issues impacting crime and safety. Some of these challenges are real; others perceived. In either case, it impacts livability and our ability to recruit and retain talent to Madison. Do you view Madison as a safe community and what is the Common Council's role in building safe communities?**

Madison is a safe community and it is only getting safer. The Common Council supports a number of ongoing efforts to minimize crime and improve public safety. As an alder I will look to continue to work with community leaders to improve safety and public health as well as making sure Madison's tranquility is communicated properly.

****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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