

# 2025 Madison Common Council Candidate Questionnaire

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

Candidate Full Name \*

John W. Duncan

Aldermanic District \*

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Home Address \*

[Redacted]

Email Address \*

[Redacted]

Phone \*

[Redacted]

Campaign website (if applicable)

<https://www.duncanformadison.com>

Social media (Facebook, X [formerly Twitter], etc.) accounts, if any

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/JohnWDuncanWI>

X: <https://x.com/JohnWDuncanWI>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/johnwduncanwi/>

## 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 reelection to the Common Council because I believe in the strength of our community and the need for continued progress. In my current term, my colleagues and I have made significant strides, investing in affordable housing, sustainable infrastructure, and comprehensive public safety.

While our accomplishments have improved the lives of many Madisonians, there is still work to be done. In my next term, I will continue to dedicate my efforts to addressing key issues such as affordable housing, environmental sustainability, and inclusive economic development. Every resident's voice matters, and our policies should reflect our community's diverse needs.

I will also continue prioritizing strong community engagement. By listening and collaborating with residents, we can create innovative solutions that align with our shared vision. And I aim to ensure our council improves transparency, accountability, and responsiveness.

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

I have devoted my career to the legal healthcare sector, working for non-profit organizations, a quasi-governmental agency, and major for-profit corporations. This diverse experience has provided me with a profound understanding of the unique needs, challenges, and demands across these environments. As Alder, I've leveraged these insights to champion municipal policies that foster local business growth and empower small business owners. If re-elected, I will continue to advocate for these critical initiatives.

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

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

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

In the past, Madison routinely appeared on "best places to live" lists, mainly because housing was affordable, salaries were competitive, and protections for historically marginalized communities were in place. For Madison to continue attracting and retaining a diverse workforce, we must continue to attract businesses to Madison and promote pro-housing and zoning policies that ensure enough stock of affordable and accessible housing is available throughout the city. We must focus on making Madison an attractive place to work, live, and thrive.

**\*\*6. How would you characterize Madison's current workforce housing landscape? What strategies would you recommend for the city to meet the diverse needs of workforce housing?**

Madison's workforce housing landscape currently faces several challenges that merit our attention. Many middle-income workers, including teachers, healthcare professionals, and service industry employees, are finding it increasingly difficult to secure affordable housing. As demand continues to rise, the disparity between income levels and housing costs is expanding, resulting in significant financial strain for many workers with limited options. In order to effectively address these pressing issues, it is essential for the city to adopt a proactive and collaborative approach to ensure that housing is both accessible and sustainable. Below are some strategies that could be considered:

1. **Incentivizing Workforce Housing Development:** The city could explore targeted incentives for developers to promote the creation of more affordable housing aimed at middle-income workers. Such incentives might include tax credits, zoning enhancements, or funding support to stimulate mixed-income developments. Additionally, streamlining the approval process for projects focused on workforce housing could help minimize barriers to development.
2. **Increasing Housing Density:** To enhance the variety of available housing options, it would be beneficial to embrace higher density in carefully selected areas, such as those near job centers and transit corridors. Allowing for multi-family housing, duplexes, and accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in certain neighborhoods should be done through the area plan revision process and relaxing current zoning ordinances.
3. **Strengthening Tenant Protections:** Ensuring housing stability for renters is crucial to meeting workforce housing needs. The city should invest in tenant protections that include enhanced eviction protections and assistance programs for low- and moderate-income renters. Such measures could help prevent displacement and promote more affordable housing for workers.
4. **Building Employer Partnerships:** Local employers have a vital role to play in addressing workforce housing challenges. The city can foster partnerships between employers and housing developers to encourage the creation of workforce housing near significant job centers. Employers could also provide housing assistance or collaborate with the city on affordable housing initiatives to support their employees in securing stable housing.

By implementing these thoughtful strategies, we can work together to better meet the housing needs of Madison's workforce. This will not only support essential workers and middle-income families in finding stable, affordable homes but also contribute to a thriving economy and foster a stronger, more inclusive community for all residents.

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**\*\*7. How do you view Madison's continued population growth? What are the opportunities and challenges that come with it?**

Madison's population growth presents significant opportunities, such as economic expansion, increased diversity, and improved infrastructure. A growing population can bolster sectors like healthcare, technology, and education, leading to job creation and attracting investment. Additionally, diversity enriches our community and fosters innovation, making Madison even more vibrant. New residents also drive demand for better amenities and services, ultimately enhancing the quality of life.

However, this growth brings challenges. Housing affordability and availability are major concerns. Rising demand could push prices higher, making it more difficult for middle and low-income residents to find affordable housing. The city needs to promote more diverse housing options to address these needs. Furthermore, with the state government underfunding cities like Madison, we are already experiencing strain on public services, as city employees are tasked with supporting more residents with fewer resources. An increased population will further stress these services and the city's infrastructure.

Equity is another challenge we face. We must ensure that growth benefits all communities, avoiding displacement and gentrification. Prioritizing equitable access to housing, services, and opportunities is essential. Additionally, managing environmental sustainability is crucial. Urban expansion must be balanced with the protection of green spaces and natural resources to preserve Madison's appeal for future generations.

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**\*\*8. What is your assessment of Madison's transportation system? What priority improvements are needed to support mobility for a growing workforce?**

Madison's transportation system has made significant progress in recent years, but it still faces challenges that must be addressed to meet the mobility needs of a growing workforce. The city has a solid foundation with its bus system, bike lanes, and walkable areas; however, we need to prioritize improvements to enhance transportation efficiency, equity, and sustainability as Madison continues to grow.

The public transit system, including Bus Rapid Transit, provides essential services to many residents, and the city is relatively bike-friendly, featuring dedicated bike lanes and paths. The downtown area is walkable, and recent improvements to pedestrian infrastructure are a positive step forward.

To build on these efforts, we should focus on expanding access to the Metro transit system, establishing protected bike and pedestrian pathways, and improving overall accessibility. Additionally, the city should consider rezoning to create walkable neighborhoods throughout Madison, which would reduce the need for long commutes and provide easier access to employment, retail, and entertainment options.

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**\*\*9.** 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.

The City of Madison has shown remarkable capability in identifying redundancies, streamlining services, and minimizing waste. In recent years, we have effectively managed to reduce operating costs, all while facing increased demand for services and infrastructure due to our community's rapid population growth. Our city staff have risen to the challenge, delivering more with fewer financial resources.

Further demands for "efficiency" must be carefully balanced with growing needs for city services that our residents and businesses rely on. Any such strategy will need to look for deeper cuts in our largest operating budget expenditure categories and a possible evaluation of areas where Dane County could step in to provide essential services.

**\*\*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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