

2025 Madison Common Council Candidate Questionnaire

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

Candidate Full Name *

Yannette Figueroa Cole

Aldermanic District *

District 10

Home Address *

[Redacted]

Email Address *

[Redacted]

Phone *

[Redacted]

Campaign website (if applicable)

yannette4madison.com

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

<https://www.facebook.com/YannetteDistrict10>; yannettedistrict10 (IG)

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'm running for re-election in District 10, keeping my campaign promises to center on community members' health and safety issues. My approach centers on serving our most vulnerable community members, knowing that our entire community thrives when we strengthen support for those most in need. I will continue to fight for services that benefit our community, for more transit options, for housing near existing resources, and for providing the essential services that keep our community thriving.

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

As a Business Analyst, I bring to the table extensive experience in system implementations, end-user training, and support of multiple CRM and ERP systems. I am adept at learning and applying new skills and technologies and pride myself on being customer service-oriented. Since 1998, starting with Promega, I have worked for startup biotech companies that developed innovative technology, attracting giants like Roche Diagnostics and Johnson & Johnson to the City. I understand the importance of businesses being agile while focusing on quality assurance, producing a high-quality product, and remaining competitive. My ability to quickly adapt to changing environments with flexibility and agility, along with my excellent analytic reporting skills, has been a key factor in my success. UW's partnerships with the biotech field are a perfect example of promoting economic growth; they bring innovation and attract a vibrant and diverse workforce. These companies help Madison gain attention and visibility from people worldwide, creating opportunities for economic development.

I am acutely aware of the challenges involved when small businesses access city resources and navigate existing tools. My professional experience enables me to identify process failures and provide effective solutions that lead to streamlined steps. I have a proven track record of breaking down complex issues into understandable components, making them more manageable for others. One such complex process is the Alcohol and License Review Committee, which has seen a growth in license applicants who are non-English speakers, including Latinas. The licensing process, particularly for non-English speakers, can be daunting. I have worked directly with the clerk's office and zoning to break down silos, develop cross-training, and streamline the process. By removing barriers for non-English speaking applicants, we can enhance the experience for all applicants.

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

The district lacks walkable and accessible street connections. During my time as an alder, we completed the Hammersley Road redesign, which narrowed the street and added a path for all ages and abilities, making that road safer for all to commute on. District 10 has a handful of shops and restaurants, mainly concentrated on high-traffic areas, making access more challenging for other types of transportation.

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

Economic Development is an ecosystem that looks into the future and carefully measures its positive and negative impact on our communities. It balances profit and the quality of life and well-being of those we serve. This ecosystem is a holistic approach to living wages, job creation & retention, the expansion of housing stock and walkable neighborhoods, and innovation, services, and opportunities that attract tourism and protect the quality of life of our residents. My public safety goals encompass all aspects of a healthy community, including robust transportation, housing, employment, and access to resources and services.

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

Madison can best attract and retain a diverse workforce by being a place where people who want to live here can afford to live in a safe and healthy environment. That means ensuring Madison has safe living conditions at all levels of affordability, from low-income to market-rate living. And making Madison a city where public safety also means access to mental health services, healthy food, job training, care for the unsheltered, and practical and intentional transportation services.

**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?

I would characterize Madison's housing landscape as 1000's of units behind to meet demand and growth. The Affordable Housing Fund policy promotes workforce housing everywhere the City has a robust transit system. My record is clear: I voted yes to promoting density (Legistar 63902) and creating the Transit Overlay District (Legistar 74703), while my opponent said no or abstained from the vote. We must continue to evaluate the zoning code, keep it current, and remove unnecessary barriers.

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

What separates Madison from other cities is the high quality of services our residents receive. The City provides superior essential services and invests 2/3 of the budget in Public Safety. As alders, we create policies that attract developmental opportunities for mixed-income levels, from low-income to affordable to market-rate housing. Moreover, we have to continue to promote walkable neighborhoods that support the growth of small businesses around them and that promotes access to services.

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

We completed the East to West Bus Rapid Transit route, but the new federal administration may jeopardize funding for the BRT from North to South. The Lake Way Project and the John Nolen reconstruction make a rail station near Monona Terrace a great option for the entire downtown area and a central location for commuters.

My top priorities for transportation are making our road infrastructure safe for all usage methods, continuing to invest in accessibility for pedestrians, bikers, and people of all ages and abilities, and making streets welcoming for all residents.

****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.

During my first council meeting in 2021, we made a crucial move to enhance efficiency. We shifted the Parking Enforcement Officers from MPD to Parking Utility, a measure Former Alder Carter rejected. This organizational update effectively transferred the cost of this service from the city levy to the parking utility enterprise. We also created job descriptions that combine the rotation of duties throughout the year, from Parks, Forestry, and Engineering. I introduced a Park Volunteer Coordinator position that enhances community engagement and pays for itself in folds when considering the savings on volunteering hours. My record shows a commitment to finding efficiencies since my first day at the council. I will continue to do so while maintaining the level of services our residents enjoy. The reality is that due to significant population growth, the City is currently running under capacity; we would need over 200 more employees to keep up with demand. Instead of cuts, we must work together, lobbying the state to pay the money they owe the City for services provided and give Madisonian an equitable shared revenue.

****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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