

2025 Madison Common Council Candidate Questionnaire

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

Candidate Full Name *

Bill Tishler

Aldermanic District *

11

Home Address *

[Redacted]

Email Address *

[Redacted]

Phone *

[Redacted]

Campaign website (if applicable)

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

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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 running because Madison is my home. I am a product of Madison, I attended Madison Public Schools from kindergarten through high school and earned my degree from UW-Madison, where I have been working for more than 30 years. Madison is where my wife and I chose to raise our family, and it's where we built a life rooted in this community. I am running for a second term because it's my turn to give back to the community that has shaped me.

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

I have worked at the University of Wisconsin-Madison for over 30 years, focusing on distance education and technology. Throughout my career, I've seen how access to technology and education can be significant barriers for individuals, particularly those aspiring to start small businesses.

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

As Madison grows, we must focus on creating safer streets by prioritizing pedestrians and cyclists alongside vehicles. The concept of 15-minute cities, which I've been exploring in a book I'm currently reading, offers a vision of accessible neighborhoods where essential services are just a short walk or bike ride away. While downtown Madison is one example, District 11 is becoming another, particularly in the Hilldale and Hill Farms areas. Embracing this approach can help us build a safer, more connected, and accessible community for everyone.

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

Economic development is the growth and improvement of a community's economy through support for businesses, job creation, and infrastructure enhancements. In District 11, a key issue for businesses right now is street construction, as the City installs new culverts to address flooding. While this work is vital for long-term resilience, it will temporarily disrupt access, making it harder for customers and delivery vehicles to get around. Managing these challenges effectively is essential to supporting local businesses and fostering economic growth.

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

Additionally, I hold an appointment with the Department of Corrections, where I help implement programs that enable incarcerated individuals to earn college degrees. By equipping these individuals with higher education, we can help address labor shortages faced by many small businesses and provide them with the skills needed to succeed in the private sector upon their release.

**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 is characterized by increasing demand, rising costs, and a limited supply of affordable options for middle-income earners, particularly in desirable areas like District 11, where most new construction has been market-rate housing. While the city has made progress in addressing housing needs, the gap between workforce demand and affordable housing availability continues to widen as the population grows and the cost of living rises.

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

Madison's growing population brings both benefits and challenges. On the positive side, it strengthens the economy, adds more workers, and increases cultural diversity. However, because the city is landlocked, there isn't much room to expand housing for the growing number of people.

One big challenge is the lack of affordable housing near jobs. Many new workers have trouble finding homes close to work, leading to long commutes and higher costs. At the same time, there aren't many programs to help older adults move out of single-family homes, which could free up more houses for young families and first-time buyers. Building more senior housing within existing neighborhoods would give older adults the chance to downsize while staying connected to their communities, opening up homes for new families.

To solve these problems, Madison needs to focus on creative housing solutions. Building higher-density housing and homes near public transportation can make better use of the space we have. Offering incentives, like tax breaks or moving help, could encourage older adults to downsize.

Changing zoning rules to allow more multi-family housing and working with developers and employers to build affordable homes near jobs are also important. By planning carefully, Madison can handle its growth, create more housing options, and stay a welcoming and livable city for everyone.

****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 is a key asset for the city, but it faces challenges in keeping up with the needs of a growing workforce. While the system provides solid coverage in many areas, there is room for improvement to ensure it remains accessible, efficient, and equitable.

District 11 is well served by bus routes, making public transit a convenient option for many residents. However, the district has seen excessive road construction and spending on shelters tied to the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project, often at the expense of other needs within the area. While BRT aims to improve transit efficiency citywide, it's essential to balance investments to ensure all neighborhoods benefit equitably.

Priority improvements include better maintenance and upgrades for existing roads and transit infrastructure across all districts, not just those impacted by BRT. Expanding bus frequency and coverage, particularly during peak hours, can further support mobility for the workforce. Additionally, enhancing bike lanes and pedestrian pathways will provide safe and sustainable options for those who prefer active transportation.

To meet the needs of a growing workforce, Madison must prioritize a balanced transportation strategy that improves mobility, minimizes disruptions, and equitably allocates resources across the city, including District 11.

****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.

With declining aid and rising costs, the City of Madison must explore innovative ways to improve efficiency and maintain high-quality services. Some strategies include: 1) Collaborate with neighboring municipalities to consolidate overlapping services to reduce costs. 2) Strengthen collaborations with Dane County and the State of Wisconsin to address large-scale issues like transportation, housing, and public health, reducing duplication and maximizing funding. Maintaining open communication with county and state governments is crucial to securing more resources for Madison. By fostering collaboration and advocating for the city's needs, leaders can ensure the community thrives. 3) Partner with the private sector for more effective service delivery, like affordable housing development or infrastructure maintenance, through cost-sharing agreements or incentives. 4) Invest in energy-efficient infrastructure and green building practices to reduce long-term operational costs, such as solar energy installations on city properties.

****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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