

2025 Madison Common Council Candidate Questionnaire

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

Candidate Full Name *

Julia Matthews

Aldermanic District *

12

Home Address *

[Redacted]

Email Address *

[Redacted]

Phone *

[Redacted]

Campaign website (if applicable)

<https://juliamatthewsfor12.com/>

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

Facebook: juliamatthewsfor12 Instagram: juliafordistrict12

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 want to serve as Alder because I love Madison and I think the city has a lot to offer, but there are many racial and economic disparities that need to be addressed for Madison to be great for all its residents. Affordable, attainable, and equitable access to housing is a big priority for me, as well as responsible growth in the district. We need more housing across all types and for all family incomes and sizes to address the housing crisis and the impending growth that is expected for the city. Madison has seen significant growth in recent years, and there is no sign it will stop any time soon. This continued growth brings opportunities for our city but also challenges, especially for District 12. It is essential to welcome these changes thoughtfully and responsibly to ensure they address existing racial and economic disparities rather than make them worse. I am committed to applying an equity lens to every policy or development I advocate for or oppose.

Community engagement is at the heart of my vision for serving as Alder. I believe everyone's voice matters, and I am dedicated to reaching residents who have historically been excluded or unable to participate in city politics. By ensuring that all perspectives are heard, we can build a stronger, more inclusive Madison that works for everyone.

I am a lifelong Madison resident, and during that time I've lived, worked, gone to school, and found community all over the city. My experiences navigating Madison, both with and without a car, have given me a firsthand understanding of the importance of a reliable and accessible public transit system. Public transit is a critical lifeline that connects residents to jobs, schools, healthcare, and community resources, and it must meet the needs of everyone in the city. The upcoming North-South Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line represents a transformative opportunity to improve transit access in under-served areas, but it must be developed with meaningful community input to ensure it serves all residents equitably.

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

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

I think location can be an issue for businesses that are further out from East Washington Avenue and not embedded in an existing neighborhood. This is especially the case for the area directly surrounding the airport and other historically/primarily industrial areas. In addition, outdated zoning ordinances limit growth of business and industry, limiting potential for development and further community expansion. By creating smart growth in business and housing we can create new opportunities in historically underutilized areas of District 12.

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

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

Work to keep the cost of living reasonable and keep up with new housing development so it is possible for people with a variety of backgrounds and income levels to move to Madison. It's also important to look at costs for families as prices across the board are rising. Alongside attracting new and diverse workers, we must focus on retaining the existing diverse workforce that Madison has. As Madison continues to grow, I don't want any existing residents to be pushed out and lose the current diversity that Madison is proud to have.

****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?

District 12 has a lot of new housing in development that could be considered workforce housing, but the area also includes some of the more affordable neighborhoods for existing housing as well. Overall, the city needs to use all available tools to address the current housing crisis in Madison, especially as the population continues to grow. With that, it is extremely important that we are able to increase housing across the entire spectrum of sizes and costs. We need the full spectrum of homeownership options, condos, affordable housing, and market rate units in addition to lower cost options. We need rentals that are big enough for families to make it possible and reasonable for families of all incomes and sizes to call Madison home.

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

Madison's continued, and projected, population growth is inevitable and must be welcomed. Madison is seen as a very desirable place to live, for businesses to thrive, and for families to grow. This growth is not without its challenges. Challenges include keeping up with housing and other infrastructure to accommodate this rapid growth, while also working to prevent cost of living from increasing to a point where longtime Madison residents are being forced out of their homes. The opportunities include having a larger pool of people to bring their expertise to Madison, and continuing investment into projects that make Madison a better place to live.

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

The Transit Oriented Development Overlay along with Bus Rapid Transit will go far to improve overall transit quality and access around the city as well as density growth along those improved transit corridors. There will also need to be improvements in the future to restore access to North and South Madison that was diminished by the recent metro redesign. The transit system needs to operate at a level where it can be relied upon as a consistent method of transportation. The new system seems much better for getting across town than the system of the early 2010's, however there are still some issues with consistency that make it hard to fully rely on.

****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.**

It's important to identify ways the city can operate more efficiently while maintaining the high quality of services residents rely on. I will explore opportunities for merging similar programs to improve administrative efficiency and still ensure service quality remains high. Recent Common Council approvals, like moving Parking Enforcement outside the property tax levy, demonstrate how creative solutions can reduce reliance on property taxes. Identifying similar opportunities will be key to avoiding tax increases if the state continues to not give the city an adequate amount of shared revenue and not fully fund the municipal payments program.

While inter-agency administrative consolidation may offer cost savings, current staffing levels appear appropriate from what I see. As a new alder, I will collaborate with agency heads and draw on the experience of seasoned alders to analyze potential efficiencies. Any proposed changes must prioritize the needs of District 12 residents and other city communities, particularly underserved areas. Operational changes must also carefully account for their effects on city services, employees, and families. Future efficiency measures should focus on attrition and include meaningful engagement with labor unions and employee groups to ensure a fair and thoughtful process.

I would also like to see if there is anything that could meet the definition of supporting tourism required to have any funding come from room tax instead of the operating budget. I am definitely inclined to look for creative solutions to increase efficiency and reduce the need for cuts in 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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