

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 Guequierre

Aldermanic District *

District 19

Home Address *

[Redacted]

Email Address *

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Phone *

[Redacted]

Campaign website (if applicable)

john4madison.vote

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

FB District 19 Alder John Guequierre, Instagram John Guequierre

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?

Madison's greatest current challenges include a structural budget deficit (continuing despite the successful referendum), a shortage of housing, especially affordable housing, accommodating growth, and addressing climate change and resilience. I concluded my extensive background in affordable housing, finance, and sustainability fitted me for these times. I knew that addressing these issues would be controversial regardless of my decisions, that I would face a difficult re-election bid, and it will be. Still, I believe I have more to contribute and want to follow through, especially on our five-year budget plan and numerous opportunities to increase housing. I believe my Common Council work this year demonstrate that provide leadership in these crucial matters.

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

I come from a family of public servants and small business owners. My parent's business was like so many. Every family member was expected to contribute from an early age. I did devote four decades of my life to an executive position in a large company that ultimately went public. Today, I have an active one-person consulting company and am founder and president of a technology startup commercializing medical AI. Also relevant is my eleven years of volunteer mentor to technology startups in Madison, helping them graduate from tiny to small, and some to big.

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

Thanks to a vibrant growing economy, businesses in District 19 are doing well overall. A large portion of District 19 is fully developed into single-family and low-density multi-family housing with supporting neighborhood retail services. By contrast, the corridor north of the Beltline to the Mineral Point corridor and between Gammon and Whitney Way is home to small and big-box retailers, office buildings, and the amazing University Research Park. Another retail and service corridor exists along University Avenue. Retail of all sizes is dealing with the growth of on-line purchases, labor costs and shortages, and supply-line problems - and taxes and regulations. I try to never miss a ribbon-cutting, to celebrate the birth of a new business. I have enjoyed working with businesses needing some help with city services or regulations. Getting to interface with University Research Park and UW Health on their projects that will benefit all of Madison has been a joy.

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

The result of economic development is easy to define: the growth in the production of goods and services that preferably results in a broadly enjoyed wealthier, healthier, happier society. The inner workings of economic development are complicated. My personal belief is that multiple parties need to coordinate their efforts to drive economic development. We have perpetuated a generally capitalist system, because it has worked most of the time. For profit businesses provide the driving force. Our city government can provide an essential catalyst in some cases, consistently provide the services and public infrastructure that are needed and a regulatory structure that assures safety and fairness. Also, the city, assisted by a host of nonprofits and educational institutions that provide the pleasing environment and human support that allows us to attract and prepare a high-quality workforce.

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

When I walk through our government offices, laboratories, university corridors and work sites, I see every shade and color, gender, religion, and health and disability working together to make important things happen. I actually think that is Madison's superpower, driving the generation of wealth and wellbeing in this city and county. Yet the statistics say that we have failed important segments of our population. That is not acceptable, but the task is obviously formidable, or the good people of this City would have made more progress. In my career, I've increased the diversity of every organization I've led for a simple purpose - to assemble the best team possible. I learned that there are so many subconscious cultural barriers that victories come one person at a time, and often it is those "different" people who have the real courage. I've learned that part of the formula is to build a culture of mutual respect and a demonstrated belief that everyone can and is expected to contribute. I'm an old, white, straight, healthy male who has been entitled since birth. I know that I need to approach this whole issue with humility. I would like to believe that the positive relationships I've built with my colleagues in a very diverse Common Council are proof of my sincerity.

**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?

We have a shortage of housing in general and workforce housing in particular that we can describe as a crisis. The shortage is causing the rapid escalation in housing costs. Even someone earning 60% of the area median income is challenged to budget for housing. My consulting work on the West and East Coasts make me aware that there are places with a worse crisis. We still have some chance in Madison to improve housing availability. We have to increase the supply, especially housing affordable by households earning 40% of area median income and less. Our City has worked hard to build up and deploy a toolchest of approaches to financing the gap that allows a developer to provide truly affordable housing. We have also worked hard to preserve our dwindling supply of existing affordable housing. We need to lobby our legislature to address certain obstacles that make providing our "missing middle" difficult to develop, and do what we can with Madison's zoning to accommodate that work. I'm supporting that efforts. We need to explore ways to build more affordably, and I'm supporting the initiatives to increase the use of prefabricated components. I see work we can do to reduce the time and cost of getting to an actual building permit, and even started a conversation with our Building Inspection department on how we might employ artificial intelligence in the effort. Any developer may end up facing a concerted neighborhood opposition. Madison's efforts to foster re-development along our major transit corridors seems to foment less of that kneejerk so-called NIMBYism.

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

The people of Madison over the past few generations have created the economic engine of Wisconsin by inventing and providing the products that the world needs and wants and by fostering an improved natural and cultural environment that people love. The people are going to continue to come. Of course, we could embark on a decade's effort to drive away the businesses and people who are bringing the growth by underinvesting in the infrastructure of all kinds, that accommodates growth and making Madison an uninviting home. There are forces at work that appear to be urging exactly that kind of anti-growth policy. I'm dedicated to the alternative; providing the public infrastructure from sewers, to water, to public transportation, to parks, to paths, to arts and cultural activities that support that growth. My efforts on the plan commission and board of public works have been aimed at that end.

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

The location of our economic and employment center on an isthmus that also is a primary choice for residence creates huge constraints on America's historic reliance on single-occupant automobiles. I strongly believe that Madison's election to support improved public transit in existing major corridors and encourage greater housing density along those corridors is the best decision at this time. In other words, I think that the inauguration of the east-west BRT route deserves celebration. During the year-long debate on the budget, there was a continued blast of misinformation regarding BRT as a major reason for the deficit. As I strived to communicate, the net impact on the average tax bill will be \$9.95 for the entire year of 2025. I hope we can launch the north-south BRT route. We needed intense federal support to launch the east-west route, and the existing pledge of support for our second line may evaporate under the new administration. Let's not give up. Madison is also improving pedestrian and biking routes where it makes sense and within the available resources.

****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.

Madison has identified multiple opportunities to merge agencies, and we are beginning to implement those recommendations. On Wednesday, January 16, I voted with the majority at the Board of Public Works to move the Forestry Division to Streets. There is more consolidation coming, as it should, and I will support it. There are investments we can make in the capital budget that will reduce operating costs for years. For example, a planned Streets facility on the west side will significantly reduce fuel costs and driver hours. There continue to be opportunities to use our IT capabilities to perform some work more efficiently. As I noted earlier, I think we can find some ways to effectively employ artificial intelligence. On Tuesday, January 15 we introduced resolutions that will reduce the hours needed to process demolition permits and I'll support its passage. At least for the last seven years, Madison's city workforce has not increased as fast as its population. One of the reasons I fought for an operating budget with a five-year plan was to include goals for greater efficiency.

****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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