

2025 Madison Common Council Candidate Questionnaire

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

Candidate Full Name *

Derek Field

Aldermanic District *

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Home Address *

[REDACTED]

Email Address *

[REDACTED]

Phone *

[REDACTED]

Campaign website (if applicable)

voteforderekfield.com

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

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61570502661787>

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 Alder because our neighborhoods on the Far East Side are safe, beautiful, and affordable and I want to work to keep them that way. In my second term, I want to work on violence prevention and public safety issues, which have been a challenge in parts of my district. I also want to make sure that the in-progress Southeast Area Plan reflects improvements to infrastructure and City services needed to support our growing community. Finally, I continue to believe that the City needs to allow and encourage a diverse variety of housing options in response to the current mismatch between the supply and demand for housing.

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

I was raised on my family's small farm which was a daily education in the significance of forces like food prices, equipment costs, and even the weather for financial security. I have a bachelor's degree in economics and a master's degree in public affairs, which together help me understand the consequences of policy topics like taxation and regulation.

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

Businesses in my district struggle to attract and retain workers. They're also struggling to navigate the post-pandemic period of inflation in supply costs, construction costs, and land costs.

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

I think that economic development in Madison means having a strong and skilled workforce, a diverse business community of employers, responsible and sustainable growth of infrastructure and housing, and a safety net that meets the basic needs of our community's most vulnerable.

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

Madison can attract and retain a diverse workforce by making itself a better place to live for people of color. The data available tells us that Madison isn't a great place to live for some communities who are underserved by our schools and have worse outcomes from interactions with the police. The City should continue supporting the development of affordable housing in parts of the City with access to services, as well as programs that provide a path to homeownership for families of color through down payment assistance, homebuyer education assistance, and similar initiatives - offered right in diverse neighborhoods and underserved parts of the City.

****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?**

The City's Housing Snapshot Report (as well as other data-driven housing market reporting) show that growth in demand for housing continues to outpace the new supply, a trend that is especially true at lower-income end of the housing market. Our community's overall economic prosperity makes Madison an attractive place to live and work, attracting more workers, but that has the consequence of driving up the Area Median Income. As a result, the rent price of income-restricted housing priced to be "affordable" for households at a given fraction of AMI goes up - putting more pressure on lower-income households trying to find or retain housing. This makes it even more important that the City support the development of more affordable rental and owner-occupied housing through the policy and budget initiatives that are available to local government. I believe it's tremendously important that these resources are targeted to developments located in supportive areas of the City that have access to transit, jobs, and community services, which the City's Affordable Housing Fund currently does.

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

I view Madison's continued population growth as a result of our amazing community's strength and prosperity. The success and growth of our area's major employers means that more people move here for work, and they stick around and start their families here because of the City's natural beauty, fantastic neighborhoods, and many cultural amenities. I expect this growth to continue as our local employment economy continues to grow and diversify. I also think that other parts of the country will continue to struggle with extreme weather, water supply challenges, rising property insurance costs, and other issues that are less prevalent in the midwest. Madison's growth does present growing pains including the need for expanded infrastructure and the increased need for community services like healthcare, education, childcare, and recreation. The City government needs to account for these needs in land use planning, development approvals, and infrastructure budgeting. Meeting this need is one of my highest priorities for the City and for my district - the Southeast Area Plan being a key opportunity to do so in the next year.

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

Public transit is an essential alternative to single-occupant car rides in order for the City to grow sustainably and offer transportation options between home, work, services, and leisure. I'm a regular Metro bus-rider myself and understand the importance of reliable, accessible transit with flexible service hours. Given our strong growth projections and limited space, Madison needs to make it easier for residents to get around without necessarily having a place to store a car on both ends of trips - saving road capacity and parking spaces for those residents who need to continue using their cars. I support targeting more intensive development patterns along high-frequency transit routes and other ways to reduce barriers to public transit. I also think we need to continue supporting Paratransit for those who need that essential, accessible service.

****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.**

I've learned that the City has been exploring efficiencies in its budget for more than a decade. It will be essential that this continues in order to keep balancing budgets. I think the City should continue exploring cost-sharing agreements to share our overhead costs with other nearby local governments for shared services like Metro and CARES. I also think that the City needs to continue exploring incremental reductions in certain City services, like the recent cuts to street median maintenance and large item pick-up for properties who don't pay the Resource Recovery Fee (which I sponsored). In the future, I think the City can explore shutting off the water fountains at Monona Terrace and the Square, doing less superficial auto-body maintenance on City fleet vehicles, and potentially other low-impact cuts that were proposed in City agencies 5% reduction scenarios prepared as part of the 2025 Operating Budget development process in summer of 2024. I've also demonstrated that I'm willing to vote against certain projects and programs where I don't thin the cost-benefit justifies the project or program.

****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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