

2025 Madison Common Council Candidate Questionnaire

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

Candidate Full Name *

Ulrike Dieterle

Aldermanic District *

5

Home Address *

[Redacted]

Email Address *

[Redacted]

Phone *

[Redacted]

Campaign website (if applicable)

N/A

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

N/A

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 for alder because I want to give voters a choice and because I feel it is my responsible to contribute however I can. I will advocate for and communicate effectively with residents of District 5. I will serve as a conduit between the district and Common Council to educate myself and constituents about issues impacting our district and the city. I will not push my own agenda, but rather represent the voices of people in District 5.

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

While I personally have little experience in the small business sector, save a failed endeavor to start a very specialized bookselling business after my retirement, I have more experience helping and observing family members running their businesses. I assisted my brother-in-law in his optical shop in Cincinnati. I worked directly with customers demonstrating and assisting with our inventory as well as working behind the scenes to process recordkeeping. Both sons are small business owners, one in China and the other in Cincinnati. Observing the ups and downs of family business ventures has given me insight into the joys and tribulations of a small business owner. I am also a staunch supporter of locally owned businesses here in Madison, preferring, whenever possible, to frequent local merchants bricks & mortar establishments.

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

I observe two basic issues facing businesses in District 5 – extensive street construction which makes access to businesses difficult and property development which pushes small businesses out of existing properties where they have grown their customer base. I hope to learn more by contacting businesses on University Ave., Regent Ave. and Mineral Pt Road during the course of my campaign.

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

Economic development consists strategies formulated to foster growth, promote innovation, enhance opportunities and improve the quality of life. Economic development is a chair with many legs, including quality of and access to jobs, training and educational opportunities, public safety and public transportation systems, access to quality healthcare, an adequate supply of affordable housing, supporting a living income and expanding natural resources and landscapes. I would add to that the availability of leisure activities in safe surroundings.

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

Madison is fortunate to have a world class university which serves as a hub of innovation and inspiration. Many graduates have created innovative opportunities in the sciences. Madison also supports a vibrant business community with national and global brands that attract and maintain a diverse workforce. Madison's natural beauty supports many leisure-time activities that appeal to both young and old through every season. Madison has a vibrant restaurant culture and a thriving service sector, many diverse NGOs and, as the seat of state government, many related jobs. Retaining a diverse workforce demands a supportive structure of adequate housing, good schools, safe neighborhoods, a healthy business climate and access to affordable healthcare and natural resources.

**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, as many other communities across the country, is suffering from a shortage of affordable housing. While Madison is being applauded for more housing starts in recent years, especially apartments, there are a number of state restrictions that slow potential developments, e.g. inclusionary zoning. Certain types of remedies, e.g. rent controls, are also impossible under existing state law. While Madison zoning ordinances have become more growth focused in past years, there is still much work to be done. Elected officials must work with the legislature to loosen restrictions on growth.

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

As Madison is projected to see a population increase of more than 100,000 over the next 25 years, it is imperative that a supportive infrastructure be in place to ensure a quality of life community, Madison will need to increase housing options, maintain and expand modes of transportation, expand healthcare and public safety sectors while staying on budget. Growing pains can be an impetus for new approaches in outreach. Madison needs to expand and strengthen its partnerships and collaborations with its many unique neighborhoods, its educational institutions, the private sector, faith-based organizations, NGOs and surrounding city/municipal governments. For example, new approaches to minimize homelessness might include a broader base of partners resulting in shared interests and responsibilities. The existing CARES problem is a great start. More is needed.

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

Recent changes to the bus system have not served everyone as well as the system it replaced. For me, and for many of my neighbors, the BRT results in longer walks to the stations and longer walks to destinations. The BRT scheduling is also not keeping to their promise of every 15 minutes. With some of the crazy "traffic calming" designs, roads are becoming more congested. Traffic lights are longer and the recent appearance of "no turn on red" signs have popped up everywhere slowing traffic movement even more. The BRT design should have included a line to the airport as well. In general, I think the current approaches have been counterproductive and need improvement. Drivers are frustrated.

****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.**

The City of Madison needs to work within its budget. More painful adjustments will be required in coming years. Taking a hard look at all programs, especially those serving small numbers, would be reasonable. The City cannot continue to raise property taxes without negatively impacting housing sales and rental costs. Having an adversarial relationship with the state legislature is also not helpful. The City, i.e. the Mayor, needs to wear a path between MLK Blvd and the Capitol and work to convince the legislature it is beneficial for the entire State of Wisconsin to provide more aid to its capital city. This should have been going on for decades. Working collaboratively with other groups, e.g. faith-based groups, the private sector, NGOs, neighborhood groups, other government and educational entities, on larger issues that impact the entire city like homelessness may spread the cost of and participation in programs more equitably. A good start would be to eliminate 4 of the 5 positions listed on the City's org chart under "Mayoral Staff" and go forward from there.

****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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