

2025 Madison Common Council Candidate Questionnaire

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

Candidate Full Name *

Abdirahman Siad

Aldermanic District *

District7

Home Address *

[Redacted]

Email Address *

[Redacted]

Phone *

[Redacted]

Campaign website (if applicable)

siadfordistrict7.com

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

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 passionate about building a more inclusive, equitable, and thriving community for all residents. As someone who has experienced the challenges and opportunities of living in Madison, the city can do more to address pressing issues such as Affordable Housing, Racial Equity, Public Safety, Economic Development, Reliable Transportation, and Sustainability. I bring a unique perspective as an immigrant, a parent, and someone deeply committed to social justice and community service. Madison has been a home to me and my family for more than 35 years and deserves leaders dedicated to tackling its challenges head-on while prioritizing collaboration, transparency, and accountability. I hope to be a voice for our shared values and work tirelessly to create a city where everyone—regardless of their background—has the opportunity to thrive. My campaign is grounded in community representation—ensuring that all voices, especially those historically underrepresented, are heard and reflected in city policies. I have lived in my district for the past 27 years and have seen it grow from farmland to a thriving district want to advocate for residents.

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

I have an Executive MBA from UW Madison and over 27 years of experience in Information Technology. I spearheaded complex business and technological projects for major organizations in our city, giving me both knowledge and experience to understand and resolve issues small businesses face in our city. Additionally, coming from an immigrant background, I have been deeply engaged with the Madison community and have had the privilege of working alongside small business owners, entrepreneurs, and community leaders and understand the unique challenges faced by minority-owned businesses. These include limited access to financing, language barriers, and the need for mentorship. My advocacy for equitable practices ensures that every entrepreneur, regardless of their background, can succeed. As a technology expert with over 27 years of experience, I am committed to implementing innovative solutions that prioritize inclusivity and meet the changing demands of residents, businesses, and public institutions.

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

District 7 is mostly a family-oriented and residential district with no major businesses. Businesses face several challenges that impact their growth and success. These include access funding, workforce, and affordable commercial space. Other issues include a lack of dependable transportation, technology, and access to digital tools that will help small businesses to be competitive. Finally, city processes for resources is not easier for entrepreneurs to start and expand their businesses. Providing clear guidance and reduce bureaucratic delays will be helpful to small business. My business and technology background will allow me to help my district become a hub for good-paying jobs and attract a diverse workforce.

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

Economic development is the process of expanding the economic well-being, and quality of life and creating opportunities for individuals and communities with growth and diversification of the economy. Economic development's main benefits include creating jobs, increasing incomes, and advancing an environment that promotes business innovation, investment, and sustainable growth.

The focus of effective economic development should be Improving infrastructure to support businesses and residents, creating inclusive access to education, workforce training, and skills development, especially for underserved communities, and removing barriers for underrepresented communities. Economic development should focus on building a flourishing and strong community where everyone can succeed.

Outcome of Economic Development:

Increased employment opportunities for all residents, with a focus on equity.

A thriving small business ecosystem that contributes to a vibrant local economy.

Stronger connections between education, workforce training, and employment.

A more inclusive economy that ensures all Madison residents have the opportunity to succeed.

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

Madison can best attract and retain a diverse workforce through comprehensive strategies that focus on inclusivity, opportunity, and support systems by providing workforce development and training programs and by collaborating with its educational institutions including UW Madison and other colleges. We should also create an inclusive workforce by collaborating with other entities to enhance and foster the best DEI programs that will serve underserved communities. A diverse workforce can create an inclusive environment where all residents have equal opportunity to contribute to the city's social and economic development. Here are key approaches:

Develop mixed-income housing close to employment hubs to ensure workers can afford to live where they work.

Ensure all workers earn a living wage that keeps pace with Madison's cost of living.

Improve Digital Infrastructure by providing high-speed internet access citywide to support remote work opportunities.

~Partner with UW-Madison, Madison College, and local high schools to connect students with job opportunities.

~Expand Internship and Apprenticeship Programs by offering targeted programs for women, people of color, immigrants, and other underrepresented groups to bridge the gap to full-time employment.

~Strengthen public schools and increase access to affordable childcare to make Madison more family friendly.

~Improve the city's transportation system to make commuting easier for all workers, particularly those in underserved areas.

**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 reflects a growing city grappling with the dual challenges of high demand and limited affordable supply. While the city has made efforts to address housing needs, several issues continue to exist. For example, many middle-income workers, including teachers, healthcare workers, and service industry employees, are spending more than 30% of their income on housing, leaving limited resources for other essentials. Another issue is workforce housing is often located far from employment hubs, requiring long commutes and increasing transportation cost specially in my district 7. Finally, restrictive Madison zoning regulations and community opposition to density can delay or deter new developments, especially in high-opportunity areas. Following are some strategies I would recommend:

~Encourage Missing Middle Housing by rezoning areas to allow for duplexes, triplexes, and small multifamily units in traditionally single-family neighborhoods.

~Simplify permitting processes for developers building affordable and workforce housing.

~Offer tax incentives and subsidies to encourage private developers to include affordable units in market-rate projects.

~Help first-time homebuyers, particularly from underrepresented communities, secure housing.

~Leverage Public Land by utilizing city-owned land for workforce housing projects to reduce costs and expedite development.

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

Madison's continued population growth is both a blessing and a challenge and is a sign of its strength and appeal as a thriving city with resilient economic, educational, and cultural opportunities. However, this growth also presents significant challenges that require thoughtful planning and collaboration to promote sustainable development which can provide an excellent quality of life. Opportunities include, Improved Infrastructure and Services, Inclusive Workforce and Economic Development and Sustainable Urban Development. Some challenges include Housing Supply, Environmental Sustainability, Transportation Infrastructure and the drain on public schools. The increase in population growth will place strain on public schools which creates budget issues. With strategic planning, equity-focused policies, and sustainable development practices, the city can harness its growth to create a more inclusive, vibrant, and resilient community. As an Alder, I would prioritize collaboration, innovation, and equity to ensure Madison thrives for all its residents.

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

Our city's transportation is a crucial part of its economic health and growth. Madison's transportation system has strengths, including a robust bus network, walkable neighborhoods, and bike-friendly infrastructure. However, as the city grows, the system faces challenges in accommodating a larger and more diverse population, particularly for commuters and underserved areas. For example, in my district 7 there is limited connectivity to public transit which creates barriers for workers commuting to job hubs. Secondly, traffic congestion during peak hours is growing, particularly on major streets on District 7 as workers commute from Epic. Finally, equity concerns persist, as low-income and underserved communities may not have reliable access to transportation options.

Although Madison is known for its good sustainability, it still faces issues and has several areas that require improvements. These include the need for more transit coverage, particularly in the underserved communities. There are several priority enhancements to support potential workforce growth including reducing traffic congestion and integrating diverse forms of transportation. Remote work and incentives for carpooling could help ease the transportation challenges.

****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.

Given the challenges of rising costs and limited aid, the city government must find ways to be more efficient. Efficiency requires innovation, collaboration, and a willingness to embrace change. By merging services, leveraging technology, and focusing on outcomes, Madison can maintain high-quality services while managing costs responsibly. These strategies not only safeguard fiscal responsibility but also build a more resilient, effective government. Below are recommendations to enhance efficiency through collaboration, innovation, and operational reforms:

****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.

This form was created inside of Wisconsin Alumni Association.

Google Forms