

2025 Madison Common Council Candidate Questionnaire

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

Candidate Full Name *

Joann Pritchett

Aldermanic District *

9th District

Home Address *

[Redacted]

Email Address *

[Redacted]

Phone *

[Redacted]

Campaign website (if applicable)

under construction

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

under construction

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?

ANS: To uphold and to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of: "What is An Alder's Role in the City of Madison." 1) To listen, communicate and advocate for constituents who have elected me to represent them at the table and to be the voice at the table instead of a name on paper representing the 9th District and 2) To propose ideas and/or suggestions for consideration that will ameliorate problems/issues or concerns for the 9th District in general and for the city Of Madison as a whole.

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

ANS: Two years on the Urban Design Commission, coursework in urban planning, lived residential stints in Alabama, New York City, Chicago, Rochester, MN provided me with a tool kit and insight into commercial, multi-use and residential development. My background and experiences provided me with varied opportunities to note changes in demographics and businesses that were thriving vs those that were withering; businesses that were integral parts of the community and were partners who worked together to address issues that were of concern to their respective community and those that took time to get to know you vs those that just wanted your business. It does make a difference!

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

ANS: Failure to assess community and changing demographics as well as short and/or long-term needs. Failing strip malls (once thriving, now struggling with many empty storefronts). Personal safety in and around West Towne Mall after sundown (senior citizen vulnerability). West Towne Mall needs a MAJOR upgrade or a start-from-scratch approach. Novelty and creativity are lacking! For example, compare the availability of offers at Hilldale or Greenway Station with West Towne Mall. Prospective businesses should consider the value of spontaneity and ask random people: "your community could be perfect if it had _____" or "I wish my community had a business like _____ that's in Hilldale." The notion that people will automatically support your business just because you are there is fraught with limitations.

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

ANS: Economic development (in my mind) includes a healthy mix of available businesses and services ranging from health care to transportation, to housing, to health care, to entertainment to schools, etc. that anticipates the short and long-term demographic needs of an established community and/or surrounding growing communities, a healthy partnership between businesses and communities, a business that is NOT just there to make money but one that is an integral part of the community, one that evolves with the community and its needed resources. In a nutshell, when the community struggles, the businesses struggle.

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

ANS: Using the old adage "variety is the spice of life," Madison should consider addressing and surveying whether businesses reflect the age, sex and racial composition of the city. Partner with UW--Extension and offer classes on necessary tools/financing/skills for starting businesses for diverse groups. Not every business will succeed! I left Rochester, MN because there was nothing there for me (after my workday). Variety/novelty (or "how long will the flavor last" must be addressed). Taking some time to address what the community wants is basic to retaining a diverse workforce. Do homework by visiting diverse communities that enriches one's understanding of others. Invest in diversity instead of incestuous homogeneity (e.g., how many nail salons do we really need?). Why are most plumbing businesses 99% white? Ask current businesses about their strategies to be inclusive. Is it preparedness for the job, education, do they have apprenticeship programs, how do they invest in potential/prospective hires, etc.

**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?

ANS: There is a workforce housing shortage and a landscape with built-in obstacles: price, needed services (e.g., transportation, nearby schools, shopping) created and enabled by a failure to be creative, assuming that the Madison of the 1980's would hold steady for years to come. Communication and partnerships with communities do not exist. There is no seat at the table for affected communities until AFTER a determination has been made to develop a property. The city should consider surveying similar communities beyond the boundaries of Madison, WI and ask what they did to meet the workforce housing needs in their respective communities. Survey current residents to determine WHY and what were their housing needs before they settled on their current location. Consider addressing the possibility of rehabilitating and repurposing existing vacant buildings into 100-125sq.ft spaces with community kitchens and dining spaces. Survey strip malls, (Copp's at Tokay and Whitney Way) and other vacant buildings with repurposing potential. Discuss with the Habitat for Humanity organization strategies that they use to determine and meet housing needs. Benefit: All or most have access to transportation and other needed services). We gotta be more creative!

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

ANS: When compared with Austin, TX, Lansing, MI or Lincoln, NE, all are growing cities with growing needs. All are university towns with a diverse workforce, the seat of state government, etc. However, the actual footprint of Madison does not align with the current and continued increase in population. A well thought out plan for single family housing vs multi-family housing has not and was not addressed. The assumption seemingly was everything would remain the same and without major change. City planners neglected to understand that "there is nothing permanent but change." Evidence: Look at the number of new single-family homes built in Madison within the last 20-30 years. Everybody cannot live in a single-family home in the city of Madison. Instead, where there are available footprints, city planners/developers MUST communicate and PARTNER with quaint and well-established neighborhoods what a population dense structure would look like in some well-established communities and address issues/concerns/consequences like (does this structure fit in with existing structures, water run-off, drainage, parking, services, safety, etc.). The look and feel of well established neighborhoods should not be destroyed because of errors, a lack of planning or not understanding growth trends by city planners and developers.

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

ANS: A lack of creativity and conversations with businesses whose workforce live outside of Madison was a missed opportunity by city planners. If individuals knew about reliable and alternative transportation options, the probability of opting in would be positive. Just think about the benefits! Commuter/transportation hubs should/could be sponsored by businesses (e.g., vans provided by UW-Madison) for those living in outlying areas (e.g., Mount Horeb, Blue Mounds, Brooklyn, Oregon, etc.). Offering incentives would be a plus. Within the city (downtown and campus area) BRT works for some while marginalized communities who rely on public transportation (especially night shift workers) are at a distinct disadvantage. Disaster looms at some areas (Mineral Point Rd. at Whitney Way) and represents a potential killing field for those not knowing how to navigate the terrain. During all of my working years at the university, I utilized public transportation and can attest to the before and after changes in public transportation. On-going assessments and modifications (where needed) must be done to ensure the safety of BRT ridership. To improve traffic flow, revisit the need for so many NO TURN ON RED signs or specify hours for NO TURN ON RED.

****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.

ANS: First and foremost, Madison does not have evaluation strategies in place to determine what works and what does not work or summary evaluations of completed or failed projects. For example, where is the summary evaluation of the flooding that occurred on Odana Rd., Grand Canyon and Mineral Pt. Rd.? Was a lack of maintenance at storm-water drainage sites the problem? Recall, several businesses were lost while others sustained major damage and business losses. When looking at merging services or addressing operational reforms, evaluation strategies must be included for addressing when or why a strategy or intervention should be expanded, modified or stopped completely. For example: What are the benefits, savings expectations, what are the costs, delay(s) in receiving services, staffing, location (under one roof vs a different location), hours of operation, who decides when the input from those delivering the service and/or those receiving the service has been muted). As a city, we cannot continue to throw money at projects without an evaluation plan that includes outcome expectations BEFORE implementing the project; a plan that does not include or value community partnering, or a plan that does not communicate directly or indirectly with stakeholders (in a timely manner) project progress or when unexpected problems are encountered.

****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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