

# Madison Council Candidate Questionnaire

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

Candidate Full Name \*

John W Duncan

Aldermanic District \*

District 1

Home Address \*

[REDACTED]

Email Address \*

[REDACTED]

Phone \*

[REDACTED]

Campaign website (if applicable)

[www.duncanformadison.com](http://www.duncanformadison.com)

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Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) accounts, if any

[https //www facebook com/JohnWDuncanWI](https://www.facebook.com/JohnWDuncanWI), [https //twitter com/JohnWDuncanWI](https://twitter.com/JohnWDuncanWI),  
[https //www instagram com/johnwduncanwi/](https://www.instagram.com/johnwduncanwi/)

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## 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 a product of public schools, a former non profit leader, and a community organizer who is passionate about good government I have been immersed in the fight for LGBTQ+ equality and civil rights for much of my life, and I am ready to continue advocating for all my neighbors here in Madison

I believe that my professional and personal experiences make me the right person to represent my community At a critical time when the rights of vulnerable populations are being chipped away at the state and federal levels, I believe I can be a powerful advocate to fight for these rights and protections at the city level

Our city is at an exciting crossroads I know that bold, progressive leadership can help make Madison a better place for everyone no matter who they are, where they come from, or how they imagine their future To accomplish this, we need elected officials who will listen to the stories and experiences of their constituents and use what they learn to represent the needs of their district, with particular attention on the needs of historically marginalized communities I am running for Common Council to be that kind of compassionate and responsive representative for my community

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

I have spent my entire career in the legal healthcare field, working for a non-profit organization, a quasi-governmental agency, and several large for-profit corporations. I understand the unique needs, demands, and challenges facing each of these settings. As Alder, I will rely on these experiences to shape municipal policy that will ensure the flourishing of local businesses and support small business owners.

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

District 1 has seen an explosion of new homes in recent years but very few opportunities for business expansion. Current zoning seems to be an impediment to new businesses opening in the area. In addition to zoning challenges, limited access to public transit and a lack of affordable housing are significant concerns that face local businesses seeking to attract a diverse, robust workforce.

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

In simple terms, I view economic development as the investments made in neighborhoods that result in economic well-being. I believe such investments should not solely focus on creating wealth but should also factor in the quality of life of the residents of a neighborhood and city. Economic development should include investments in businesses, infrastructure, housing, and services that promote equity in the creation of wealth for all residents.

5. What is your perception of Madison's business brand? How do you think Madison is perceived locally and nationally?

I believe that Madison has a unique mix of businesses—from corporations that are leaders in their fields to small businesses that provide quality products and services and everything in between. When I think about Madison's business brand, one word that comes to mind is "quality." Overall, I believe Madison has an overwhelmingly positive reputation locally and nationally as a great place to visit, live, and work.

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

Madison routinely appears on “best places to live” lists, mainly because housing has been affordable, salaries are competitive, and protections for historically marginalized communities have been enacted. For Madison to continue attracting and retaining a diverse workforce, we must continue to ensure that housing remains affordable, protections against discrimination are expanded, and good quality, high-paying jobs are available. We must focus on making Madison an attractive place to work, live, and thrive.

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7. What strategies would you recommend for the city to meet the diverse needs of workforce housing?

In the past, the Dane Workforce Housing Fund has created affordable workforce housing in the area with support from the Madison Common Council. The Council should continue to support similar efforts. Additionally, I support direct investments by the city in local rental units, partnerships that give local and regional non-profit organizations priority access to public grants and city resources to expand affordable housing, as well as city-funded rent-to-own arrangements for historically excluded groups.

I also support the city’s efforts to adapt zoning rules to ease restrictions on creating higher-density residences in certain areas. This will make it easier for owners to supplement their income through rental dollars.

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\*\*8. In what ways can city government support entrepreneurs of color working to start and grow an emerging business in Madison?

Access to capital has historically been among the most significant barriers to entrepreneurs of color. City government can play a role in assisting entrepreneurs with access to capital to establish and grow their businesses through microloans, minority small-business grants, and minority business loans. In addition, the city of Madison should continue partnering with the Madison Black and Latino Chambers of Commerce, as well as supporting the work of the Urban League’s Black Business Hub.

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**\*\*9. What is your assessment of Madison's transportation system? What priority improvements are needed to support mobility for a growing workforce?**

The unfortunate reality facing growing cities throughout the country, including Madison, is that budget dollars are limited. This often leads to tough decisions, especially when it involves public transportation. I support the decision to increase the frequency and capacity of bus service along high-demand routes in the city, even though it required the reduction of service and stops throughout other parts of the city. I believe that the city has carefully considered how these changes will fit into the overall expansion of Madison, and I applaud the Common Council's recent creation of a Transit-Oriented Development Overlay District to maximize access to public transportation along those routes. However, we need significant additional investments in transportation to connect more of our city. I look forward to supporting such an expansion as Alder.

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**\*\*10. A challenge that often comes with growth are issues impacting crime and safety. Some of these challenges are real; others perceived. In either case, it impacts livability and our ability to recruit and retain talent to Madison. Do you view Madison as a safe community and what is the Common Council's role in building safe communities?**

Overall, I believe that Madison is a safe city. Although crime has increased as the city has grown, Madison remains well below the average crime rate among comparably sized cities. Public safety is an essential function of local governments, and we should invest heavily in keeping people safe. A substantial amount of our city budget is allocated to the police department. I support redirecting some of those funds currently budgeted for policing to programs prioritizing non-police intervention and resources. Examples of this that I would support include the expansion of the Madison CARES program, more treatment-oriented solutions to non-violent drug offenses, and greater access to mental health services. Our goal should be to minimize the need for police intervention in the first place. We can accomplish this by shifting our focus to addressing the underlying conditions that often lead to crime.

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**\*\*If offered an endorsement from the Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce, would you accept it?**

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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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