

# Madison Council Candidate Questionnaire

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

Candidate Full Name \*

Julia Matthews

Aldermanic District \*

12

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Campaign website (if applicable)

[www.juliamatthewsfor12.com](http://www.juliamatthewsfor12.com)

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

[https //www facebook com/juliamatthewsfor12](https://www.facebook.com/juliamatthewsfor12)

## 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 want to serve as Alder because I love Madison and I think the city has a lot to offer, but there are many racial and economic disparities that need to be addressed for Madison to be great for all its residents. Acknowledging these disparities is only the smallest first step, but I will use that lens for every aspect of my work as Alder and every policy/development I am involved in advocating for (or against). Changes to the city and specifically District 12 will be necessary to accommodate Madison's unprecedented growth in the coming decades and it will be especially important to make sure those changes work to lessen existing racial and wealth disparities instead of making them worse. As a younger person, I am also passionate about the community engagement aspect of working as an Alderperson. I believe that all voices have value and want to make sure I am proactive about reaching people who have not always had the privilege, ability, or bandwidth to participate in city politics.

My financial situation has changed very recently which has allowed me to have the extra time and bandwidth to put into city government. There were multiple times in my life as a young adult where I only had extra time for work and would work as many hours as I could to barely make ends meet, so I am especially understanding that not everyone has time to jump through hoops to have their voices heard. I am a lifelong Madison resident and during that time I've lived, worked, gone to school, and had to commute (with and without a car) all over the city. I have worked in a variety of fields, at varying levels of financial security, and almost always worked more than 1 job at a time. I am a renter and have both witnessed and experienced stable housing become more and more out of reach. As a younger person, I am especially committed to looking at the future of the city through sustainable growth, while still prioritizing the many features that make Madison a unique place. As Madison continues to grow, I don't want any existing residents to be pushed out and I don't want the only new housing stock to be so expensive that the only people able to move to the city are the people with the highest salaries. With the growth and continued development, I want to be sure that we are able to find a balance that doesn't sacrifice the green spaces and incredible nature that makes Madison such a lovely place to be. I also want to look at ways that the city can increase access to resources for families who are at risk of being priced out of the city of Madison due to rising rent and home prices, the cost of childcare, and limitations on public transit in the most affordable neighborhoods.

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

My Mom had a restaurant for several years while I was in highschool and I worked very closely with her at the restaurant during summers and weekends and after school I saw first hand a lot of the challenges that small business owners face. With that, I also saw how it is even harder to succeed when you have to rent your space because there is even less cushion for variations in business.

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

I think location can be an issue for businesses that are further out from East Washington Avenue and not embedded in an existing neighborhood. This is especially the case for the area directly surrounding the airport and other historically/primarily industrial areas.

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

To me, economic development is working towards building a financially healthy and sustainable community by improving living conditions for all people in the community through housing security and fostering business stability. On the housing side, this includes WHEDA and use of TIF to help facilitate new housing development in the city. For fostering of business, there are a lot of general programs through the office of business resources, and there are many more targeted programs from both the city and the community that support minority owned business ventures.

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

Madison's business brand, for worse and mostly better, will always be at least somewhat tied to the University of Wisconsin-Madison, because of its perennial ranking as a top 10 research institution nationwide and the highly educated population it trains and employs. There has been a significant shift in the past decade however, as entities such as gener8tor, StartingBlock Madison, Doyenne, and the Chamber have cultivated a burgeoning startup scene by harnessing the STEM expertise from UW. This exciting development has challenged the accurate perceptions that are derived from Madison's status as an iconic, and famously eclectic, college town. However, there are also many neighborhood and small businesses around Madison that are flourishing completely separate from the university. District 12 has several such clusters of bustling business tucked right between or within residential neighborhoods.

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

Work to keep the cost of living reasonable and keep up with new housing development so it is possible for people with a variety of backgrounds and income levels to move to Madison. It's also important to look at costs for families, especially looking at access to childcare.

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

The city needs to use all available tools to address the current housing crisis in Madison, especially as the population continues to grow. With that, it is extremely important that we are able to increase housing across the entire spectrum of sizes and costs. We need homeownership options, condos, affordable housing, and lower market rate units, and we need rentals that are big enough for families to make it possible and reasonable for a diverse group of people to be able to live and work in the city at all income levels.

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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?

The city can support entrepreneurs of color through business incubators, programs to give visibility like the pop-up shop program, following through on the creation of the Public Market, and fulfilling the Market Ready program. The city can also look to existing nonprofits in the area focusing on supporting diverse entrepreneurs and give additional support to those programs. I know one of the biggest challenges for starting a new business (and just one of the largest overall expenses of any business) can be renting space, so another way the city could support entrepreneurs of color could be a program that helps people finance purchase of their own spaces or maybe using unoccupied city owned spaces to rent at well below market rates to people as they are just starting out or looking to expand their business.

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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 Transit Oriented Development Overlay along with Bus Rapid Transit will definitely go far to improve overall transit quality and access around the city as well as promoting density growth along those improved transit corridors. With the Metro Redesign, there will also need to be improvements in the future to restore access to North and South Madison that was diminished by the overall redesign.

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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?**

I fundamentally understand and believe that safety is extremely important and that perceptions can play a huge role in how community members view the safety of where they live. I also believe Madison is a very safe place to live. As Madison grows, it will be extremely important to make sure housing infrastructure and jobs grow to match the new population as communities are much more safe when people in the communities have the resources they need to live and thrive. This is one area where the Common Council is responsible for facilitating sustainable growth in the city. I know my role as Alder will be to take all feedback and feelings about safety and try to incorporate them into solutions or give information on existing programs that promote safe communities. I am willing and ready to have those conversations!

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**\*\*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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