

Madison Council Candidate Questionnaire

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

Candidate Full Name *

Marsha Rummel

Aldermanic District *

District 6

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Campaign website (if applicable)

www.marsha4d6.com

Social Media (Facebook, 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've been a social justice activist for over 30 years and served as the District 6 alder on the Madison Common Council for 14 years from 2007 2021 Redistricting left the new District 6 without an alder and I decided to run again to continue to work to make a better city for residents

I am proud of my record Over ten years, my persistence and leadership helped revitalize the E Washington corridor from Blair St to Union Corners, which includes affordable and market rate housing, commercial buildings, tech and arts incubator spaces, a city owned parking structure, grocery store, health clinic and a new park I used innovative strategies like land banking and then leveraged financial resources including tax incremental financing, new markets tax credits, historic preservation credits, Section 42 WHEDA tax credits and DNR/US EPA brownfields grants to support the revitalization of this important gateway I worked with my County colleagues to fund the Beacon Day Resource Center to serve homeless individuals My persistence also helped restore the historic Garver Feed Mill and create a new destination for Madison

I am well prepared to work on behalf of my constituents and the city and I am ready to serve again I enjoy engaging residents in local government, making sure everyone understands people have the power to shape policy through the democratic process

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

I worked for over 20 years for the Rainbow Bookstore Coop in downtown Madison. As a manager of an independent progressive bookstore, I coordinated all aspects of operating a small retail business, from the nuts and bolts of daily operations to long range planning and implementation. I maintained relationships with vendors, negotiated leases, paid sales and payroll taxes, managed POS software, and prepared annual budgets. I initiated strategies to survive market challenges, including competition with big box stores and online retailers like Amazon. I understand how the deck is often stacked against small businesses that pay sales taxes, living wages and benefits, and keep money in the local economy. I saw the pressures on rents on State St as food and beverage establishments squeezed out traditional retailers.

For 7 years, I worked for the Wisconsin Department of Revenue with a 3 year stint in the Tax Operations Bureau reviewing Wisconsin corporate income tax returns and income tax withholding reports. From late 2021- early 2022, my unit in the Audit Bureau handled calls from businesses applying for the "We're All In" grants from the Dept Of Administration.

I previously served for 14 years as District 6 alder and worked closely with business owners and real estate developers with proposals in the district. During the planning for the Capitol East District I worked with area stakeholders and groups like DMI to plan for residential and employment uses in the corridor. I worked closely with the city and businesses during the reconstruction of Williamson St.

As an alder and DOR employee, I was very familiar with how COVID turned daily life upside down and how at both levels, the government stepped up to assist workers and business owners. Local businesses, especially the hospitality industry, are struggling to adapt to the new post-pandemic employment and rental markets. I know community members want local neighborhood serving business districts to thrive.

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

Internet retail During the pandemic, consumers dramatically moved to online retail in ways that were deadly to many local retail businesses Online sales has been an evolving trend as traditional retail has been upended by the giants like Amazon We have seen several empty storefronts on Willy St and throughout the city as the face of retailing has changed Some new mixed use buildings have struggled to fill storefronts

Scarcity of employees There are many reasons for that scarcity but one of the major reasons is the lack of workforce housing We are facing a housing crisis and it isn't enough to build more market rate housing Many workers cannot afford the new construction and can't always find affordable housing near where they work The relative ease of finding remote work vs finding housing near a place of employment is fueling the scarcity In the case of restaurant workers and other face to face essential workers, it may also be the lack of health insurance and sick leave These are areas we need to address

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

1. Economic development must support the well-being of the local community
 2. Economic development should emphasize local business owners, local employees, and safely bolster city brand.
 3. Economic development must work not just to avoid environmental degradation but also to actively restore environmental health.
 4. Economic development must situate itself in the fight to mitigate the effects of climate emergency, not to worsen them.
 5. Economic development must also be about building community and neighborhoods, not disinvestment or indifference. Residents have a right to participate in planning.
 6. Neighborhoods are not the enemy of economic development. Rather they are the strongest proponents of economic development when inclusive, respectful of residents, and done well
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5. What is your perception of Madison's business brand? How do you think Madison is perceived locally and nationally?

Nationally, Madison is perceived as an innovative and exciting place to live and one of the ten best places in the country. Lakes, outdoor recreation, foodies, UW, and tech entrepreneurs.

Locally, the perception is mixed. Some believe that Madison is too restrictive, too controlling of development and business. "We can't get anything approved— No one cares about business." Others believe that Madison has become far too pro-business— "Anything goes. No one cares about residents and renters". Still others believe the legacy of segregation and lack of economic opportunity means we still live with "Two Madisons".

My own perception is that Madison thrives in spite of its progressive views on development and business, that we do have wealth and opportunity gap for blacks and other people of color, and our funky/bohemian cultural and political reputation add to our brand allure.

We should be making sure that our brand is innovative, economically regenerative, climate-focused, and human scale. We want to be known for appropriate infill, water quality, green jobs, transit linked to land use, inclusive access to the internet, and more (and well-placed) workforce and affordable housing. We need to be reflective, careful, and absolutely focused on that more inclusive, more just, and more economically vital brand.

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

Strive to be cutting edge in all we do. Ensure that young people who go to school here, whether it is K-12 or college, have the skills and opportunities to find sustainable and career ladder jobs that come with incentives and good salaries. Deepen partnerships with the UW, Madison College and other technical education programs to make sure we connect employees to employers with the skills they need. Ensure that parents feel that our public schools will help their kids thrive and that we respect teachers and other school based professionals. Offer cultural and recreational activities for a range of tastes and interests. Build more affordable housing with the help of nonprofit and cooperative developers. Green our streets with canopy trees and ensure all new buildings have zero net emissions. Address racial disparities in Dane County and actively welcome a racially and economically diverse population as vital to our success as a city. Create real city life beyond the central core areas, with interesting walkable neighborhoods, connected to services, transit and pedestrian/bike infrastructure so that residents don't have to rely on owning a car. Bring Amtrak!

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

We need to scale up affordable housing efforts and create affordable housing that is not market based. I support partnerships with nonprofits and cooperatives, land banking and land trusts, and downpayment assistance. We need to better use Tax Incremental Finance funds.

Promoting affordable and stable housing is vital if we are to address racial disparities in health, education, and generational wealth and ensure everyone has a right to live in the city. I support using more of our city resources from the Affordable Housing Fund, TIF, HOME and CDBG funds to promote affordable home ownership as opposed to underwriting market rate rental housing.

I would like to study forming a municipal bank to recapture revenues currently devoted to paying interest and principal and redirect them into funding affordable housing, climate resilience, free/low cost public transit and community and economic development.

I support linking transportation and land use to reduce the need for a car.

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

I am proud of the work the city did to develop the Market Ready program for new vendors in the Madison Public Market. Most of the cohort of new businesses that were mentored were people of color. I believe the program showed how applying an equity lens to our work resulted in innovation. The city should continue to use community and economic development funds to assist entrepreneurs of color.

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

The long overdue redesign of the Metro transfer station system is welcome. I support city plans that link transportation and land use that will help reduce the costs of housing. If you live close to a high frequency transit corridor with infrastructure for bicycle pathways, many people can live without a car. The new routes and implementation of BRT should address equity concerns. We need to continue to focus on promoting appropriate development in the growth areas identified in the comprehensive plan. We need to reduce automobile usage in favor of mass transit but also acknowledge the trend toward electric vehicles as a so-called 'green' solution. Assuming this trend does not diminish we will need to add EV charging stations as part of new buildings and new street infrastructure. Amtrak!

****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 believe Madison is a safe community. As a member of the Common Council, I will take a community care approach to public safety. I support early childhood programs, childcare, youth mentoring, parental wellness, food security, employment, and education. Providing stable and affordable housing is key. I would expand the CARES program to allow paramedics and mental health professionals to respond to behavioral health emergencies and divert people from jail. We need public discussions about how we want to be policed, how to fund police services effectively, and how to repair the disparities experienced by people of color in the criminal justice system in Dane County.

Public safety must also include the provision of safe drinking water and food security. Our drinking water is contaminated with PFAS and other industrial pollutants and subsistence fisher people are eating contaminated fish from local waterways.

The coming of F-35s with the public health risks from elevated noise for residents of the north and east sides is something that local governments will have to address.

****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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