

Madison Council Candidate Questionnaire

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

Candidate Full Name *

Mike Verveer

Aldermanic District *

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Home Address *

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Campaign website (if applicable)

mikeerverveer.com

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

www.facebook.com/aldermikeerverveer/

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?

As a longtime representative of the district, I have effectively fought for the people and interests of the downtown in City Hall for many years. I am proud of my accomplishments and would like the opportunity to continue the privilege of working on behalf of 4th Aldermanic District stakeholders.

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

I have worked in small businesses, including my own solo law practice. I will continue to be accessible and responsive to the small business community downtown. I'm a longtime member of Madison's Central Business Improvement District Board and regularly participate in all Greater State Street Business Association meetings.

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

Recovery from the lasting impacts of the pandemic is the main issue currently facing downtown businesses. The number of downtown employees still working either partially or primarily from home continues to adversely impact downtown businesses. They are still adapting to the post-pandemic remote and hybrid work environment.

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

Economic development is anything a community does to foster and create a healthy economy Economic development generally improves the standard of living through the creation of jobs, the support of innovation and the creation of an overall better quality of life Governments must encourage economic development to yield sustained economic growth

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

Madison's business brand is generally excellent in my estimation. Thanks to significant work done by so many in our community, Madison has a great national reputation. The many homegrown businesses of national and international stature, and the University of Wisconsin's standing as one of the top research institutions in the world are powerful influences. The local perception of our business brand I'm afraid may not be as high simply because our successes might be overlooked in our backyard.

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

Madison must be a place where all people are invited and feel welcome to live, work, learn and play. The community must value diversity, equity and inclusion in order to attract and retain a diverse workforce. We have to intentionally create pathways for historically underrepresented groups to succeed. Local employers have made diversity, equity and inclusion a crucial, transformational element in the workplace, but it is critical within society as well.

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

The lack of workforce housing is a significant crisis. The housing cost burden continues to be very difficult for far too many residents. The City budget appropriates significant local, state and federal resources to affordable housing initiatives. Most notably, the Affordable Housing Fund (AHF) that assists in the creation of new rental housing is no longer limited to Section 42 housing projects and rental housing; I was proud to support those initiatives. However, Madison must do much more to help people struggling in our community. These strategies have not produced enough units to meet the extreme need. The City's existing financing for homeownership development, program and services needs to receive a larger share of AHF funding with a focus on fostering homeownership for historically marginalized communities. Prioritization of affordable housing initiatives must continue in our annual budget process. Tax Increment Financing is another financial source that the City hasn't utilized to its full potential to create affordable housing. We need to develop significant incentives in the zoning code to encourage affordable housing creation. For example, density and height bonuses.

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

The City Economic Development Division rightly prioritizes assisting small businesses, especially entrepreneurs of color. Valuable financial and technical assistance is offered. The City's Small Business Equity and Recovery Program (SBER) assisted many entrepreneurs of color since the pandemic. Entrepreneurs of color need support from the City to continue to recover from the pandemic and beyond. SBER funding largely was from American Rescue Plan Act. The City should continue to fund SBER programs from local funds, including Tax Incremental Financing, particularly the Commercial Ownership Assistance Program and Pop-Up Shop Program (Culture Collectives).

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

The hallmark of a thriving city is a robust transit system that provides residents with viable transportation choices and improves the quality of life. The Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Metro Transit Network Redesign initiatives deserve enthusiastic support overall. They will be transformative if implemented as planned. The wholesale redesign of the Metro system will provide much more direct service and improve reliability when implemented this June. If the redesign fails to meet expectations and does not actually make the service easier to use for all, it is imperative that Metro, their consultants and the Transportation Commission must address shortcomings as soon as possible. Transit-dependent community member's voices must be prioritized. The same can be said when the East-West BRT is operational in late 2024. From an equity perspective, development of a North-South BRT route will provide equal access to high-quality transit service and reduce disparities. The potential of bringing Amtrak passenger rail service to Madison is exciting for many reasons. A study is underway to identify a recommended location for a potential future Amtrak Station. Community engagement needs to be robust to yield a successful outcome.

****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?**

Madison is a very safe community. Statistics bare that out; however, many do not feel safe in our community. All residents deserve to feel safe. The perception of Madison being unsafe is a serious concern. Public safety is the bedrock function of municipal government, and the Common Council plays a significant role in public safety. We must continue to prioritize funding all aspects of public safety. Madison has long addressed public safety with a comprehensive approach beginning with prevention. We have correctly invested significant resources in all aspects of public safety innovations. We should further expand the use of a public health approach to curb violent crimes. Madison Police Department community-oriented policing approaches are successful and should continue.

****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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