

# Madison Council Candidate Questionnaire

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

Candidate Full Name \*

Nasra H Wehelie

Aldermanic District \*

District 7

Home Address \*

[REDACTED]

Email Address \*

[REDACTED]

Phone \*

[REDACTED]

Campaign website (if applicable)

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

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Questionnaire - Part 2

**NOTE: Answers to questions highlighted in yellow were taken from the candidates 2021 submission**

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?**

The impetus for my interest in this position is many folds including my proven desire to improve the lives of those underserved and solve some of the challenging issue our city faces including homelessness, socioeconomic disparity and community safety. My background as an immigrant, black, female and Muslim prepared me to find equitable solutions to problems big or small. I am a leader who understands the issues at hand, listen to the constituent's problems and advocates for them.

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

As a small business owner and MBA holder, I understand the challenges small businesses face. At the start of my consulting business in 2008, I was able to work with SBA, WWBIC and became Small Business Advisory Council at the Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce. Some of the challenges small businesses face are venture capital, marketing, technology building clientele.

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

Businesses in my district are faced with challenging issues including how to safely service their customers, manage their businesses, retain their employees and provide them with good living wages and healthcare benefits.

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

Economic development is the process to improve the quality of life of a community, city and state by building local wealth, creating and retaining jobs, and building local diverse talents. Economic development can mean different things to different people at different times; however, the gist of it should be an inclusive one where no one is left behind, and fruits of the hard work is shared among its citizens. It should also be sustainable and be able to withstand hard economic times.

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

Madison is the host of highly recognized educational institutions like UW, Madison and tech companies such as Epic Systems and Google. It is a center of the state government. However, the city faces socioeconomic, educational racial disparities.

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

Business communities and other governmental entities committed to serving diverse communities should create a culture of inclusion and belonging by aligning the mission of their organization to the broader equity issues faced by the communities they serve. Additionally, recognition of unconscious bias's helps organizations to be deliberate about addressing issues of inclusivity. Organizations need to proactively engage more than just the senior leadership to drive meaningful culture change

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

The city should transform its transportation system to attract and better serve diverse workforce. This includes timely bus systems designed to meet worker needs. Additionally, the city should support ensure high quality technology that enable seamless telecommuting. As for housing, the city should assemble, diverse stakeholders comprised of city, county and key partner representatives who can provide recommendations regarding housing policy and affordable housing funding priorities.

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

Minority business startups face challenges including lack of funding, training, and opportunities to enter the new markets. When applying for funding with the city, entrepreneurs of color go through a long tough process. For the city to be successful in promoting minority businesses, it must streamline the processes, and continue hiring staff who understand the unique challenges and opportunities facing these business owners. Additionally, the city should explore supporting incubators and accelerators and provide resources to support these entrepreneurs. Working collaboratively with these innovators and founders will help drive high growth potential and impactful startups.

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

Although Madison has an adequate transportation system, currently, the system does not cover the need of all residents as the population grows. Although the City is implementing Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system in order to improve its current transit system, some areas have been left behind including the far West side, North and South of Madison. The proposed BRT system includes east/west service through downtown and the University campus areas. The city needs to look into some of those districts including my district, to increase bus routes to cover the need of growing young families for job opportunities in various areas of the city.

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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?**

Building a safe community for Madison residents requires a multidimensional approach that includes collaboration and coordination among different communities, faith-based organizations, local government, business community, and law enforcement to create an effective approach to community safety. The role of Common Council should be implementing strategies and support programs that promote community engagement, community policing, and youth programs such as mentoring and after school activities. Additionally, a Public Health approach to violence intervention is critical to public safety. For example, expanding mental health services to address issues including depression, anxiety, and substance use are fundamental to resolving crime and public safety concerns.

Regarding recruitment and retaining talent, the business community needs to transform workplace environments to become more diverse, inclusive and equitable.

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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.

This form was created inside of Wisconsin Alumni Association.

Google Forms