

Madison Council Candidate Questionnaire

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

Candidate Full Name *

Paul Skidmore

Aldermanic District *

9th District, City of Madison

Home Address *

[REDACTED]

Email Address *

[REDACTED]

Phone *

[REDACTED]

Campaign website (if applicable)

friendsofskidmore.com

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

none

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 running for election as 9th district alder because I have a passion for public service I understand the needs, wants and issues of 9th district constituents, and I have the education, knowledge, and experience to effectively represent them on the common council

I spent 20 years serving 9th district constituents, City staff, four Mayors, three city attorneys and others to solve problems I served on many City Boards, Commissions, Committees, Task Forces, and Work Groups I have extensive professional background in public safety, public works, planning and development, and park planning and design

When I first decided to run for alder, I received sage advice from my political mentors To understand the needs, wants and issues of your constituents, you need to get out and talk to them, ask questions, and respond I followed that advice, and it has served me well I spent 20 years knocking on doors and talking to my constituents, attending neighborhood meetings and listening sessions, neighborhood parades, picnics and celebrations, and responding to thousands of emails, phone calls and letters I effectively represented effectively my constituents on the Common Council

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

I have been a full-time small business owner since about 2010. I am currently a licensed and practicing landscape architect, and I offer my services to architect, engineers, developers, and individuals throughout the State of Wisconsin. In addition to my landscape architectural practice, I owned and operated a state licensed private security company in the City of Madison from about 2014 through 2020. We provided private security services to numerous Madison area businesses and property owners. I eventually sold the business, and it continues to operate in Madison. Prior to 2010, I worked as a landscape architect and project manager for several engineering companies and two design-build landscape companies. My duties were primarily project management, marketing and sales, and landscape design. I have been a licensed landscape architect since 1987. I have extensive experience in planning, development, project management, and business management. A key part of my experience is working with business owners, staff, property owners, and regulatory agency boards and staff.

I served as alder of the 9th district, City of Madison for 20 consecutive years (2001 -2021). I served on the Board of Public Works, the Landlord Tenant Issues Committee, Parks Commission, 911 Center Board, Pedestrian Bike Motor Vehicle Commission, MPO, EDC, and CDA, Finance Committee, ALRC and other Commissions, committees and groups that did not deal directly with businesses. During this time, I worked closely with businesses in my district and throughout the City of Madison. I am very active in community issues, particularly public safety, public services, and business development.

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

There are several important issues facing businesses in the 9th district and the City of Madison

- a An important issue facing businesses is safety and security Many Madison businesses, particularly small businesses, are experiencing crimes of opportunity retail theft, burglary, robbery, vandalism, assault and battery, vandalism, and trespassing Also, there are a number of crimes occurring in parking lots of local businesses
 - b Another important, ongoing issue facing businesses in the City of Madison and the 9th district is the difficulty of navigating the many regulatory barriers within the City, particularly the development approval and permitting process
 - c My biggest concern is the possible impact of the proposed Bus Rapid Transit System that will roughly run from East Towne Mall to West Towne Mall, and more specifically, the impact of the recently passed TOD Zoning for the BRT corridor A number of 9th district businesses that are located along the corridor have concerns that the Odana Area Plan will prohibit them from expanding, altering, or improving their properties or businesses
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4. How do you define economic development? Please elaborate.

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

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

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

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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?**

This City has a good history and reputation of supporting people of color in aspects of access to opportunities in the City of Madison, and support for small businesses should be no different. I would submit that a fair and pro-business development process would include:

- a. Assistance in navigating through the process of determining what permits, licenses, and approvals are needed. An ombudsman assigned to any new proposed business might be good for the city as well as the prospective business.
- b. Assistance in identifying what economic development assistance programs are available, and assistance in preparing and submitting applications.

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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?**

I believe that Madison's transportation system has some good components, and some that need improvement. I think that our overall roadway system is basically sound, but it needs upgrading and maintenance. I think that our ped/bike trail system is very good, and that we have sound plans to expand and maintain them. However, I have concerns about our bus transit system. The mayor has made a commitment of implement an aggressive and expensive Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system that many feel has not been fully and properly vetted. Others are also concerned that the BRT system will create pockets in the city that will no longer have reasonable access to bus services. There are also current areas of the city that are not served by busses (e.g., The Blackhawk neighborhood, Elderberry neighborhood, and at least two senior housing centers in the 9th district.) that will continue to not have bus service. There are several ways the city can make improvements that will support mobility for a growing workforce.

- A. The city needs to monitor business development trends and update comprehensive and neighborhood plans to reflect the need for adequate and appropriate workforce housing.
 - B. The city needs to continue to develop and maintain an effective and reliable roadway system to provide safe travel within the City.
 - C. The city needs to continue to plan to plan and implement alternate transit facilities (i.e. ped/bike trail systems) to facilitate non-vehicular travel, including to workplaces.
 - D. The City should revisit the metro bus system plan to make sure that it is comprehensive, cost effective, and efficient.
 - E. The city should also revisit the recently adopted TOD plans to make sure that they do not have unintended consequences on local businesses and other land uses.
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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 believe that I have a realistic view of the City of Madison: I do not think that it is any more or less safe than any other community in our area at this time. That said, I think that Madison is less safe that it was 5 years ago, and significantly less safe that it was 22 years ago when I was first elected to the Common Council. I moved to Madison in 1970 as a UW freshman, and I never really felt unsafe anywhere in the City of Madison at any time of day or night. I observed a dramatic change in my last 5 years of service on the Council. I noted open animosity from some alders as well as some members of the public to the Police Department, as well efforts to cut MPD budgets and not allow them to add personnel and technology to make the city safer. This trend continues, as do the crimes of opportunity, weapons offences, and other crimes that plague many communities. That said, I consider Madison a safe City. I think that the City Council could do more to build a safer community by working cooperatively with the Madison Police Department to reduce crime.

****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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