

Madison Council Candidate Questionnaire

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

Candidate Full Name *

Victor Toniolo

Aldermanic District *

12

Home Address *

[REDACTED]

Email Address *

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Phone *

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Campaign website (if applicable)

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100088276304761>

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

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100088276304761>

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?

First and foremost, I wish to serve so that I can answer any and all questions from my constituents. Having lived in Madison for my entire adult life, I've always received thorough responses from my alders when I've reached out to them. I believe Syed did an excellent job of communicating and bringing people together, and want to maintain a high level of service in district 12. I have heard many complaints from Madisonians in other districts that their alders are often unresponsive.

I already consider myself a resource for coworkers, friends, and the community at large, and have increased my civic engagement over my years in Madison. I am very familiar with city ordinances and regulations, the city website(s), and a variety of departments that I have interacted with. I have read every proposed city budget since 2015 and followed the amendment and approval processes in most years.

I wish to serve district 12 specifically because I see the most exciting changes in Madison happening here. I am excited about the public market project moving forward, the incoming BRT routes, the possibility of an intercity Amtrak station, larger, higher density developments, and continuing to work at state and federal levels to reduce the impact of airport noise and PFAS on our citizens.

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

I operate two small businesses myself. One is family owned and includes a dozen residential housing units in Madison, all managed by me. The other was the brainchild of a friend of mine but we are equal business partners: an ice cream vending service using a tricycle we custom built. I am familiar with the challenges associated with these two very different industries.

I have also worked in the service industry for over a decade and know many restaurateurs personally. A number of friends I've met in the service industry also operate their own small businesses in other industries.

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

Housing and transportation affect everything. Businesses can't hire employees if they can't afford to live nearby or reliably get to work.

The public market will be a boon to small startups. I hope to minimize project delays and cost overruns in order to maximize success at that site.

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

"The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little"

I believe this quote from FDR speaks for itself. There is no economic development if you are leaving people behind, or worse, doing it at their expense.

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

Madison is perceived as young, up-and-coming, technology savvy, and creative. I think we already punch well above our weight class as a business city and public perception predicts a strong future. Madison does a very good job of drawing the best and brightest young minds, even away from much larger and well established cities.

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

Madison needs to provide people a place to live. We need housing of all types and lots of it. The draw of Madison is clear, the demand is clear, we just need to better respond to it as a city. Madison also needs to provide better public transportation options. I believe the redesigns to the metro network and BRT routes will make commutes easier for workers.

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

The Mayor has a housing forward plan that needs to be followed. We need more housing and we needed it yesterday. The transit overlay district is a big step in the right direction. I am inclined to see what effects it has before making any more big changes citywide.

However we can make changes in the way we view individual development projects. There was a necessary shift towards approving more development after it steadily declined between 2016 and 2020. We still need to make up for lost time. I do not believe it's possible to "overbuild" given the criminally low vacancy rates and skyrocketing demand we have.

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

The city needs to make a real push to finish the public market in a timely and cost effective fashion. Delays and indecision cost time and money that we cannot afford.

The department of planning, community, and economic development has a grant program in place that should be fully utilized. The city should continue to support organizations like the Ujamaa Business Network and Common Wealth Development to advance their goals.

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

The bus system was bad in the past. It's been recently redone with a long public input process, plus we are adding BRT. These are two steps in the right direction.

The bus system will need to change again in the near future to fit with the incoming intercity Amtrak station. We need to add BRT service to this station wherever it is built.

****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 view every single Madison neighborhood as a very safe community. We have lower crime rates (and much lower violent crime rates) compared to other cities our size. I think that fact is best demonstrated in the huge percent changes in crime statistic from year to year that you see in news reports. When a handful of incidents makes the percentage numbers look bad, we're actually doing pretty good. Shots fired incidents were down 21% in Madison as of December 2022 (the Q4 report is not out yet). I believe MPD when they say there is no danger to the public, and Madisonians should, too. Most violent crimes are committed by criminals and victims known to each other.

The common council perhaps needs to work with other levels of government, or at least promote collaboration between other levels of law enforcement. I believe we can increase our services without huge city spending by continuing to work with other departments that are active in our communities.

****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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