

# Madison Council Candidate Questionnaire

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

Candidate Full Name \*

Yannette Figueroa Cole

Aldermanic District \*

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Home Address \*

[REDACTED]

Email Address \*

[REDACTED]

Phone \*

[REDACTED]

Campaign website (if applicable)

[yannette4madison.com](http://yannette4madison.com)

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

<https://www.facebook.com/YannetteDistrict10>

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## 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?

Over 30 years ago, I found a home and community in Madison. Before being elected as Alder for District 10 in 2021, my involvement in a community leadership role included six years of serving as the Treasurer and later President of the Dunn's Marsh Neighborhood Association. I have also dedicated my efforts towards supporting the unsheltered population as a volunteer Street Outreach and Treasurer of Friends of the State Street Families for nearly eight years.

I'm running for re-election in District 10 to continue to keep my campaign promise to center issues impacting community members' health and safety. Everyone rises when we lift from the bottom up by providing community services to those most vulnerable.

I have made notable progress towards a more centered vision of inclusion and equity in public safety, housing, transportation, and community engagement. I have gone above and beyond my role by answering constituent emails, attending community meetings, uplifting my resident voices, and forming partnerships to facilitate understanding of the city and county budgets, ordinances, and city processes and services.

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

I am a Business Analyst with extensive experience in system implementations, end-user training, and support of multiple CRM and ERP systems. I am adept at learning and applying new skills and technologies. I quickly adapt to changing environments with flexibility and agility, have excellent analytic reporting skills, and have pride in being customer service oriented. I understand the challenges small-business face financially and the lingering uncertainty and health impacts brought by the pandemic. Hiring shortages are a big concern around the nation, and Madison is not exempt from it. We need to increase job training opportunities that are more diverse and creative to strengthen and stabilize our workforce.

We must foster partnerships to facilitate educating entrepreneurs on the building blocks of running a business, such as developing a realistic business plan, managing financials, understanding a balance sheet, and navigating the city's and county's process to obtain permits and licenses. As a Business Analyst, I know how complicated and burdensome it is to access city resources and navigate the existing tools. My professional experience helps me identify process failures and provide solutions that result in streamlined steps. I can also break down complex issues to make them easier for others to understand.

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

Transportation could be more optimal to contribute to adding businesses and resources. Main arteries like the Verona Road interchange divide and isolate communities, making it difficult for small businesses to thrive. Some areas of District 10 are saturated with liquor licenses and limited business prospects. There is a need for services and room for expansion in some areas. We can work together to provide the opportunity for growth.

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

In terms of the job of Alder, I believe Economic Development is setting a policy to help businesses thrive in Madison. The City's tools are limited, but intelligent regulations and efficient City services help encourage development. Other tools include grants and TIFs. The City is also uniquely positioned to help promote and support collaboration among business and business associations.

Economic development for Madison must be a place where people can afford to live and have easy access to work, school, and entertainment. Hence, it will continue to be my priority to improve affordable housing, transportation, and public safety and advocate for a strong arts and recreational environment. These indirect impacts are essential components of solid and efficient economic development.

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

We've all seen Madison's inclusion on national "Best of" lists for livability. Madison is one of the premier locations in the Midwest, if not the Country, for business. Home to or closed to major companies like American Family, CUNA, Promega, and Epic, and a strong and growing start-up scene for UW spinoffs that has a broad spectrum of job opportunities in the area of health, engineering, research and development, and manufacturing.

Continuing to support Madison as an attractive and livable community with a tremendously diverse and cultural food and art scene, improving transportation, and extending recreational activities inclusively and equitably will ensure the continued growth of Madison's strong business brand.

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

Madison can best attract and retain a diverse workforce by being a place where people who want to live here can afford to live in a safe and healthy environment. That means ensuring Madison has safe living conditions at all levels of affordability, from low-income to market-rate living. And making Madison a city where public safety also means access to mental health services, healthy food, job training, care for the unsheltered, and practical and intentional transportation services.

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

The City needs to continue to update its zoning, invest in land banking and provide financial incentives to encourage affordable housing. We must continue to be creative to promote a wide-use range of redevelopment throughout the City. The recent adoption of the Transit Oriented Development Overlay is an example of a policy that helps promote density in different forms.

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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?**

I'm proud of the City's work and my support of its efforts in this area. I've supported the City's Commercial Ownership Assistance Program, Pop-up Shops, Kiva Madison, Business Ready Program, the Public Market, and a diverse group of new and established community service organizations that are focused on job training. I believe in centering these programs and grant opportunities on equity and inclusion, where new and fresh ideas are embraced and welcomed. Silos must be eliminated to birth strong partnerships among for-profit and nonprofit organizations and between the Chamber and other Chambers (i.e., Madison Black Chamber of Commerce and Latino Chamber of Commerce) to find creative ways to lift and strengthen these communities.

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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?**

Both the upcoming addition of Bus Rapid Transit and Metro Network redesign will significantly help improve our transportation system. As Madison continues to grow, we must do our best to continue our investment in improved public transportation and the railroad study.

My top priority for transportation is to make our road infrastructure safe for all usage methods (pedestrians, bikers, etc.) and welcome streets for all residents by supporting programs like Safe Streets and Vision Zero.

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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?**

We must balance growth for housing opportunities while reducing displacement that further harms those most marginalized in our communities. It is imperative to prioritize the work of the Public Health Madison & Dane County Violence Prevention Plan by looking at violence from a health lens. CARES has proven to be an effective tool for addressing situations related to a mental health crisis and continuing to expand the program is imperative. We reduced service for calls significantly by providing those who camped in Reindahl Park with safe places to stay by creating the First Urban Campground in the City and supporting the temporary shelter operations and the permanent shelter. A healthy community is a safe community, and together we can make Madison the best City to live in for all, not just for some.

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**\*\*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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