

Dane County Democratic Party Candidate Questionnaire

Grant Foster
Alder - Madison District 15
<https://grant4madison.com/>

Professional Experience:

I've worked primarily in the fields of education and health care.

Political/Service Experience:

I've served as alder since 2019.

Why Are You Running In This Election?

I'd like to continue the work I started in 2019 and help effect positive change in our community.

What Are The Three Most Important Issues In Your Race?

I'm running uncontested, so there isn't much of a race. Three primary issues that I will focus on in the next term will be:
1)transportation policy 2)resident engagement and representation
3)improving local government processes/structure.

What Are The Largest Environmental Concerns You Aim To Deal With In Office?

Reducing emissions and energy use in the transportation sector is #1. Stormwater management and improving green infrastructure is #2. Sustainable building and energy use is #3. Continued work around identifying and addressing PFAS contamination is #4.

How Will You Use Your Position To Create More Equitable Opportunities And Help Those Living In Poverty?

Equitable access to housing is a critical issue in our community and needs urgent attention. I am working with others to move forward on a strategy that uses public funds to purchase property to be held in community land trusts in order to allow for permanent and deep affordable housing to be created and sustained. Transportation access is another big issue for those living in poverty and I am working on a transit system redesign to improve access to low-cost, high-quality transit service.

How Do We Address Racial Inequality?

We address it by confronting it in all of our work. Everything I mentioned above needs to be evaluated through a racial equity lens. We also need to understand that racism is about more than identity and is fundamentally tied to class, capitalism, and economic power.

How will you promote restorative justice and address abusive and racist practices by the police force?

Creation of the Civilian Oversight Board and Independent Monitor was a cornerstone recommendation of the Ad Hoc report and we will need to continue to put in a lot of work to get both up and running as intended. I'm also hopeful for the opportunity that comes with a new chief of police and hope that we can collectively work on a reset to police/community relations. We need to move past blame and defensiveness and towards an honest reconciliation of how racism and white supremacy are expressed through policing. This includes our entire community owning that legacy and those impacts and not blaming the department and officers as a way to distance ourselves from the system. We as a

community have created the laws and punishments that we've asked the police to enforce. True 'criminal justice' reform is much bigger than simply reforming policing and we need to honestly confront that. If there are laws that we don't want enforced or if we want to change our practice of using fines and incarceration to address antisocial behavior, we need to deal with that and it won't happen through police reform.

Due to the ongoing economic impact of Coronavirus, many local governments are expecting unprecedented budget shortfalls. What would you prioritize in the budget? Where would you make cuts?

This is a really tough question to answer in the abstract and our 2022 budget deliberations will be very dependent on our situation as of this summer. In general, we need to prioritize safety-net services that are relied on by our most vulnerable.

How have you elevated diverse voices in government and public discourse? How would you continue to do so if elected to this office?

One of the barriers in hearing from diverse voices is in opening up our work so that more people know what issues are before us and have an opportunity to form opinions. I've worked hard to improve that through my own weekly update blogs, through the Council Communications Workgroup and as part of the TFOGS Implementation Workgroup, including with our focus on Resident Engagement. I am also currently supporting a number of exciting new candidates for council that will bring fresh perspectives and lived experience to the table.

What Are The Largest Transportation Issues You Wish To Work On And How Will You Address Them?

I serve on all of the transportation bodies for the city and have been a leader in establishing our priorities especially through the Transportation Policy & Planning Board. There has been a lot of foundational work over the last two years and much of that will be highlighted more publicly this next year. We have a major initiative underway in Green and Complete Streets where we will be setting a modal hierarchy and creating standards to better use our public right of way. I was an early champion of Vision Zero and authored a budget amendment in 2020 to get moving on this critical initiative. The Metro Network Redesign effort is the other large scale initiative that will hit the public this year. This has the potential to drastically reimagine our transit system and increase its effectiveness for more Madison residents.

Any Other Issues/Topics You Wish To Discuss?

The TFOGS recommendations around council size and the nature of the alder role is another important topic. Would be happy to talk more about that in the interview :)