

Dane Dems Questionnaire

What are the three most important issues in your race?

1. Housing Justice. Housing is a human right and stable and affordable housing for those on fixed and low incomes is critical for individual, family, and community health. Housing security is vital for Madison to address our glaring racial disparities in health, education, and generational wealth. I have been advocating for increased investment in the City's land banking program to "commonize" land and get it off the speculative market. We should also develop public housing using our own city resources (developer fees are exorbitant and superfluous), or turn the land over to a community land trust to develop permanently affordable housing.

In the past 10 years Wisconsin laws overwhelmingly favor the interests of landlords and prohibit local units of government from enacting local tenant protection ordinances. Even so, I have been working with the Equal Opportunities Commission and Community Development staff to defend tenants against discrimination. I have also authored budget amendments to fund Legal Action Wisconsin to represent tenants in eviction court.

2. Police Accountability and Community Safety. Police accountability is critical because the current model of policing exacerbates the racial disparities in our community, leading to lifelong trauma and loss of life, especially for those most marginalized.

I view community safety holistically, understanding that when everyone's basic needs for food, clothing, shelter, healthcare and community are met we are all safer. I helped develop the Northside Safe and Thriving initiative that built a collaborative of Northside neighbors, organizations and service providers to address root causes of violence with trauma-informed practices. I've taken a leading role in pushing for oversight over implementation over the 177 Ad Hoc Committee recommendations for MPD and was part of the Alder Work Group that instituted the Independent Monitor and Civilian Oversight Board. I authored a budget amendment to expand the mental health Crisis Response Team being piloted this year, and I have championed the expansion of Warner Park Community Recreation Center to add more space for youth activities and mentoring.

3. Open and Accessible Government. As the author of the resolution that created the Task Force on Government Structure (TFOGS), a member of TFOGS and now the TFOGS Implementation Committee, I have been committed to this work for many years. We

have a responsibility to meet residents where they are and understand their needs as we make and implement policy.

Advocating for open and accessible government is a top priority because it affects everything we do and how we do it. City government is our collective resource, funded mostly by our property taxes. It exists to take care of our collective needs and build on our collective aspirations. We need to ensure that residents have ready access to local proposals and have a meaningful voice in shaping policy.

What are the largest environmental concerns you aim to deal with in office?

PFAS pollution and increasing motor vehicle emissions are the largest concerns. I will continue to lead efforts to hold polluters accountable and ensure the remediation of contaminated land and water. The soil and groundwater contamination at the former Oscar Mayer and Hartmeyer sites, the former Burke Wastewater Treatment Plant, and the Dane County Regional Airport are serious threats to the health of Northsiders. As District 18 Alder, I have worked with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, County Supervisors, Midwest Environmental Justice Organization, and the Safe Skies Clean Water coalition to demand that a full site investigation of PFAS contamination at the airport be completed before the Wisconsin Air National Guard commences any soil disturbance for the construction projects they have planned.

We need to make our on and off road bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure safer for all ages and abilities so that people can move around the city safely without cars if they choose. Improved access to transit and safe transportation alternatives must be more equitable across our City. I elevate sustainability and equity concerns as an Alder and as a member of the City's Transportation Policy and Planning Board, Madison Food Policy Council, and Economic Development and Finance Committees.

How will you use your position to create more equitable opportunities and help those living in poverty?

I will continue to prioritize housing stability and access to healthy food. The ongoing pandemic has increased the economic insecurity of many who already live on the margins. Despite sweeping changes to state laws that overwhelmingly favor landlords while tying the hands of local governments to protect their residents, I am working with the Equal Opportunities Commission and Community Development staff to defend tenants against discrimination. I have also authored budget amendments to fund Legal Action Wisconsin to represent tenants in eviction court.

I championed Madison's worker cooperative development initiative that supports workers of color - particularly those who face barriers to formal employment - to create cooperative businesses. I've sponsored several COVID relief measures that funnel assistance to families and individuals who are struggling with job loss and rent arrears.

How do we address racial inequality?

Racial inequality is a feature, not a bug, of our economic system. Our social, political and governmental systems are based on a history of white supremacy whose negative effects are felt most keenly by Black and Indigenous folks. To address this we need to place the needs of those who have borne the brunt of this oppression and marginalization at the center of our policies and initiatives. Diversity training isn't enough - we need to re-orient our systems towards meeting these needs.

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

Community safety and police accountability are vital. The current model of policing exacerbates racial disparities, leading to unacceptable levels of trauma and loss of life. The Madison Common Council's role is to ensure that the Madison Police Department (MPD) is operating in a way that aligns with the community's values and priorities. Last year we created the Police Civilian Oversight Board (COB) and the Independent Monitor (IM). It is very important that they are trusted by the community, especially by those most impacted by the negative impacts of policing activity. The COB and IM are charged with informing the Council of progress on implementing reforms, providing an annual review of the Chief, and making policy recommendations based on their outreach and monitoring activities. The Council also has oversight authority over MPD and can make broad policy and give lawful orders to the Chief. I look forward to working with Chief Barnes as a policy maker to give him the support he needs to implement the 177 MPD Policy & Procedure Ad Hoc Committee recommendations, which the Council has adopted as policy. Many of these recommendations deal with racist and abusive practices.

I have promoted restorative justice through the creation of the Northside Safe and Thriving initiative where community organizations, residents and service providers come together to create violence prevention, peacebuilding and community building activities.

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?

Our City must support residents who need assistance and ensure that public health orders are in place to protect frontline workers, older adults, and disabled residents. As Alder, I urged Public Health to issue a mask mandate and to increase investment in testing and contact tracing. As a member of the Food Policy Council, I worked to convert our annual SEED Grants to be awarded to organizations who provide pandemic relief services.

I authored a budget amendment to increase funding for the mental health Crisis Response Team so that community paramedics and mental health crisis workers can respond to 911 calls that don't require an armed response.

I championed the City's worker cooperative development initiative to give people more power in local economic development. I have voted for living wage ordinances and public investments targeted to marginalized communities, including the recent \$2.5 million Small Business Economic Recovery program directed at small businesses owned by people of color.

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

As an Alder, I prioritize working with community groups and have worked with the Northside Planning Council, multiple neighborhood organizations in my Aldermanic District, Eken Park Resistance, Safe Skies Clean Water Coalition, Raices para el Cambio, Urban Triage, Freedom, Inc., Worker Justice Wisconsin, Just Dane, Community Response Team, Tenant Resource Center, Madison Mutual Aid Network, MadWorC, Dane County TimeBank, Mendota Community School, FEED Kitchens, Healthy Food for All, Cook It Forward, MACH OneHealth, Occupy Madison, Madison Community Land Trust, and the Madison Area Cooperative Housing Alliance.

What are the largest transportation issues you wish to work on and how will you address them?

As District 18 Alder, I have served on multiple transportation boards, commissions, and committees over the past six years. As a member of the committee that overhauled the City's transportation ordinances, I supported the re-establishment of the Transportation

Department to provide system-wide planning capacity, as well as an office to organize partnerships with surrounding communities in anticipation of the happy day when we will be able to establish a Regional Transportation Authority. I successfully advocated for a comprehensive route study at Metro to improve service to outlying areas that will not see immediate improvements with a Bus Rapid Transit system. I fully support transitioning the Metro fleet to all electric busses as soon as possible, as well as public investment in solar facilities to power them.