

# Dane Dems Endorsement Questionnaire

Thank you for seeking an endorsement from the Dane County Democratic Party. **This questionnaire is due by no later than Friday, January 24, at 11:59 PM.**

**You do not need to answer all of the questions below, but please answer all of the ones you feel are pertinent to your campaign and mark the questions you do not feel are pertinent N/A.** We will ask more detailed questions and followups during our interview, if we choose to have one, so feel free to answer these questions as briefly or thoroughly as you desire.

These answers will be shared in full with our membership before they vote on your endorsement.

Email \*

duncanformadison@gmail.com

Candidate name \*

John W. Duncan

Position you are running for (include municipality) \*

Madison Common Council, District 1

Campaign website

<https://www.duncanformadison.com>

## Professional Experience \*

Throughout my career in the healthcare sector, I have dedicated myself to advocating for individuals who lack representation. My professional background encompasses working with Medicaid recipients, expanding healthcare benefits for low-income communities, and ensuring equitable access to patient care. I firmly believe that my unique combination of professional and personal experiences equips me to effectively serve and represent my community. In an era when rights are increasingly threatened at both the state and federal levels, I am firmly committed to advocating for the protection of these rights and securing necessary safeguards at the municipal level.

## Political/Service Experience \*

In addition to my professional work advocating for vulnerable populations, I have been deeply involved in the fight for LGBTQ+ equality and civil rights. I am committed to continuing this advocacy for all my neighbors here in Madison. During my past two years as an alder, I have drawn on this experience to guide my work on various committees and in discussions on the Council floor. I believe that my professional and political experiences make me well-suited to continue representing my community as we strive for a more equitable and inclusive city. Together, we can address some of our biggest challenges: expanding affordable housing, combating climate change, and investing in a modern transportation system.

## Why are you running for this seat? \*

I am seeking reelection to the Common Council because I believe in the strength of our community and the need for continued progress. In my current term, my colleagues and I have made significant strides, investing in affordable housing, sustainable infrastructure, and comprehensive public safety.

While our accomplishments have improved the lives of many Madisonians, there is still work to be done. In my next term, I will continue to dedicate my efforts to addressing key issues such as affordable housing, environmental sustainability, and inclusive economic development. Every resident's voice matters, and our policies should reflect our community's diverse needs.

I will also continue prioritizing strong community engagement. By listening and collaborating with residents, we can create innovative solutions that align with our shared vision. And I aim to ensure our council improves transparency, accountability, and responsiveness.

## What are the three most important issues in your race? \*

I believe the most pressing issues facing our city are affordable housing, transportation, and clean energy. We need to invest in affordable housing units across the city to ensure diverse, mixed housing opportunities for all; a 21st-century transportation system that connects our entire city; and innovative solutions to curb emissions, expand clean energy sources, preserve our natural resources, and protect air and water quality.

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

The City of Madison must continue to invest in sustainable and environmentally-friendly solutions to our biggest challenges. As alder, I will prioritize:

1. **Climate Change and Emissions:** Reducing our carbon footprint is critical. I will advocate for clean energy solutions, energy-efficient building standards, and improved public transportation connectivity to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

2. **Sustainable Transportation:** Expanding public transit, enhancing bike and pedestrian infrastructure, and supporting electric vehicle use will help reduce traffic congestion and dependence on fossil fuels, making transportation more sustainable and accessible.

**Water Quality:** Protecting Madison's lakes, rivers, and groundwater is essential. I will focus on reducing runoff pollution, preserving wetlands, and investing in green infrastructure like rain gardens to manage stormwater and safeguard water quality.

3. **Green Space Preservation:** As Madison grows, it's vital to protect our parks, urban forests, and natural habitats. I will work to expand green spaces and enhance urban tree canopies to promote biodiversity and improve residents' quality of life.

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

As an elected official, I will focus on creating more equitable opportunities by addressing systemic barriers and ensuring that everyone in Madison, especially those living in poverty, has access to the resources they need to thrive.

First, I will advocate for affordable housing policies that ensure low-income residents can find safe, stable housing without being pushed out by rising rents. This includes increasing funding for affordable housing development and supporting housing-first initiatives that prioritize stability.

Second, I will push for stronger workforce development programs that connect people in poverty to meaningful employment. This means expanding job training, apprenticeships, and access to high-quality education, particularly in sectors with growth potential like healthcare, technology, and green industries.

Third, I will work to improve access to healthcare, food, and childcare, which are essential for families to break the cycle of poverty. Ensuring that social safety nets are robust and accessible is crucial.

Finally, I will promote policies that prioritize economic inclusion—ensuring that marginalized communities have access to capital, resources, and opportunities to succeed. By listening to residents and collaborating with community organizations, I will advocate for policies that reduce disparities and uplift all Madisonians.

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What will you do to address racial inequality, promote restorative justice, and/or address racially biased policing?

I will advocate for policies that foster fairness, accountability, and healing within our community.

First, I will work to dismantle structural barriers that perpetuate racial inequality by supporting initiatives in housing and economic development that target historically marginalized communities. This includes working with our community partners to increase access to affordable housing and well-paying jobs for communities of color.

Second, I will support policies that aim to reform policing, including increased transparency, community oversight, and training to combat bias in policing. This includes advocating for racial bias training, de-escalation techniques, and stronger civilian review boards to ensure that all officers are held accountable for their actions.

Lastly, I will actively engage with communities of color to understand their concerns and ensure that their voices are central in policymaking. Addressing racial inequality requires a commitment to listening, learning, and actively working to create a more just and equitable city for everyone.

How will you improve the public health of our community in your position?

Improving public health in Madison should be a top priority. By expanding access to healthcare, including behavioral health services and investing in true violence prevention measures, we can improve the lives of residents.

I will work to expand access to affordable healthcare by advocating for increased funding for community health clinics, ensuring that everyone, regardless of income or insurance status, can receive essential care. I will also support efforts to reduce health disparities by addressing the unique needs of marginalized communities.

Second, I will prioritize behavioral health by increasing resources for services, particularly for youth and low-income individuals. This includes expanding access to counseling, crisis intervention, and support for those affected by substance use disorders. I will advocate for integrating behavioral health services into primary care settings to reduce stigma and improve access.

Lastly, I will push for the expansion of violence prevention programs. Violence cannot be prevented by policing. True violence prevention, including domestic violence prevention and gun violence prevention, must be treated as public health concerns.

By investing in these areas, I will work to build a healthier, more resilient community where every resident has the opportunity to thrive.

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

Madison's transportation system has made significant strides in recent years, but it still faces challenges that need to be addressed to support the mobility needs of a growing workforce. While the city has a solid foundation with its bus system, bike lanes, and walkability in some areas, we need to prioritize improvements to make transportation more efficient, equitable, and sustainable as the city continues to grow.

Madison's public transit system, including Bus Rapid Transit, provides essential service to many residents, and the city is relatively bike-friendly with dedicated bike lanes and paths. The downtown area is walkable, and recent improvements to pedestrian infrastructure are a step in the right direction.

However, we must continue to build upon this work by expanding access to the Metro transit system, protected bike and pedestrian pathways, and improving accessibility. Additionally, the city could focus on rezoning with the goal of creating walkable neighborhoods throughout the city, reducing the need for long commutes and easy access to places of employment, retail, and entertainment.

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

I pride myself on being responsive to constituents, promoting dialogue and transparency, and bringing together diverse voices in my first term as alder. First, I have built relationships throughout my district by holding public listening sessions and regularly attending community and neighborhood association meetings. Second, I have been personally involved in bringing together residents, community leaders, business interests, and government representatives to meet some of the challenges faced in the district. Lastly, I collaborated with colleagues on the Council to engage in area-wide community conversations on a monthly basis.

My goal has always been, and will continue to be, bringing what I learn from public engagement to bear on my role as alder, so that the diverse voices of my district and wider community are represented in our public discourse and decision-making process.

Any other issues/topics you wish to discuss?

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