

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 *

meverveer@gmail.com

Candidate name *

Mike Verveer

Position you are running for (include municipality) *

Madison Common Council, District 4

Campaign website

mikeverveer.com

Professional Experience *

Attorney; former Chief of Staff to Tammy Baldwin (1993-1999)

Political/Service Experience *

My experience includes serving on the Madison Common Council for three decades and being voted council president by my peers on three occasions. Additionally, I'm a member on the boards of Capitol Neighborhoods, Inc., Downtown Madison, Inc., Madison's Central Business Improvement District, Madison Elks Lodge, and the Overture Center Foundation.

Why are you running for this seat? *

As a longtime representative of the District, I have effectively fought for the residents who call downtown home in City Hall for 30 years. Though, we are at a crossroads. Either take a leap forward and champion ambitious policies to combat the housing crisis, or risk not having enough rental units to accommodate new residents moving to our city. That's why I'm running for reelection; because Madisonians deserve a tried and trusted leader to ensure equitable and affordable future development and that the Madison LakeWay project is successful in improving environmental sustainability as well as improved public access to Lake Monona.

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

Creating more affordable housing downtown is the most important issue facing my constituents. I want to modernize arbitrary zoning barriers so that housing can catch up to the rate our city is growing. Additionally, continuing to combat the existential threat of climate change and expanding sustainable transit options for residents that would, in part, reduce greenhouse gas emissions are significant issues that will improve the lives of folks in the Fourth District and people across Madison.

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

Championing the Madison LakeWay project and ensuring it is implemented in a way that is not just neutral on our environment, but whose outcome will improve the conditions of the nature and wildlife that surround it, is the largest environmental concern I would continue to undertake while in office. Additionally, as Alder, I support every possible effort to reduce CO2 pollution, to increase renewable energy, and to achieve net-zero carbon goals. By implementing Madison's Sustainability Plan that I was an early advocate for, we have a clear path forward towards continuing to combat the threat of climate change.

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

Improving opportunities for those living in poverty starts with building new sustainable, safe, and affordable housing. A major contributing factor to poverty is the inability for families to access stable shelter. I have long championed incentives for developers to dedicate significant portions of new developments for working families through density and height bonuses and believe this is the most effective way to reduce opportunity gaps for Madisonians downtown and across our city. Further, we must redouble our efforts using a 'Housing First' model to ensure the unhoused members of our community have access to secure shelter. I strongly support efforts to eliminate barriers unhoused members of our community face when seeking shelter, will always advocate for long-term solutions to this crisis, and oppose efforts to criminalize homelessness.

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

Too many in our community face systematic racism and we are experiencing long overdue policy discussions. The legacy and continuing impact of injustice for BIPOC members of our community is visible in areas with which the City of Madison government concerns itself daily – access to housing, transportation, health care, protection of civil rights and countless additional services. We must ensure that all of our decisions in City Hall are made through a meaningful equity lens. If I return to office, I will continue to strongly advocate for expanding the Community Alternatives Response Emergency Services (CARES) program which supports unarmed crisis intervention for behavioral health emergencies and diverts people away from emergency rooms and jails. These initiatives, which center around de-escalation, are essential to creating a law enforcement culture rooted in keeping individuals safe and promoting a restorative justice approach. I will also continue to fully support, both financially and otherwise, the Civilian Oversight Board and Independent Police Monitor.

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

The work of Public Health Madison & Dane County, our local health department, is critical in protecting the health of the community. COVID brought the normally hidden work of public health into the limelight. I will continue to strongly support their funding, infrastructure, programming and staffing. That framework is essential for making data-driven decisions and engaging in evidence-based services to prevent and combat disease and health inequities. Everyone deserves a fair and just opportunity for health and well-being. Besides the delivery of basic public health services, we should further expand the use of a public health approach to curb violent crimes. Additionally, I am a champion for reproductive rights and will continue to fight for access to care in City Hall.

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

Ensuring that my downtown neighbors are able to commute safely -whether that be to work, play, the doctor's office or grocery shopping- in the Isthmus area and across the city is deeply important to me. While on the Common Council I worked closely with our partners in Metro Transit to develop Route 75 from downtown to Verona. Moreover, I support expanding Metro Transit route frequency and longer service hours. I will also fight to expand the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system to include the north-south line (Rapid Route B) and work to attract an Amtrak line to Madison that will help connect us to the rest of the region. The voices of transit-dependent members of our community must be prioritized. Additionally, I've advocated to add bike lanes, paths, and pedestrian improvements to improve the public health and safety of the community.

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

I have worked to facilitate and amplify the diverse voices in our community, especially downtown stakeholders. It has been extremely exciting and rewarding to work with so many Common Council colleagues that bring the much needed perspectives of BIPOC and other marginalized communities to City Hall. I have worked closely with first-term alders, especially those from these backgrounds. Their experiences, values and voices enriched the Council decision-making process in unprecedented ways, and ensured that our decisions are made through a meaningful equity lens.

Any other issues/topics you wish to discuss?

Balancing the tremendous growth and development downtown without negatively affecting folks' quality of life remains a major issue facing the community. Growth and quality development is critical for a healthy downtown. I will continue to foster responsible infill development while maintaining neighborhood character. We must continue to successfully balance competing interests in our land use planning and development review process. We must prioritize pedestrian-friendly and sustainable development, preserve green space and respect historic preservation. I will continue to facilitate meaningful neighborhood input on all development proposals.

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