

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 *

friendsofwillochowicz@gmail.com

Candidate name *

Will Ochowicz

Position you are running for (include municipality) *

City of Madison Alder, District 2

Campaign website

<https://www.willochowiczfordistrict2.com/>

Professional Experience *

Software Developer at Findhelp, TS at Epic Systems, B.S. in Chemical Engineering from UW Madison, M.S. in Computer Science from UT-Austin

Political/Service Experience *

Lead for Madison is for People, member of City of Madison Housing Strategy Committee, Vice President of the Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood Association

Why are you running for this seat? *

I'm running for election because I care deeply about this city and my district, and I consider it a duty and a privilege to represent the constituents of District 2. The primary topic that has motivated me to run are housing related issues. Primarily, I am concerned with the lack of affordable housing and high cost of housing, as well as the many related problems such as rising homelessness, unsafe housing conditions, insecurity caused by high individual housing burden, and people being forced to live further from friends, family, jobs, and their support systems just to afford housing. Another major concern is climate change and the impact that fossil fuel infrastructure has on climate change. At the local level, it is especially important that we fight climate change and related extreme weather events by changing how we build and plan our city, focusing on resilient infrastructure and green space.

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

Housing: The issue that is most frequently brought up by constituents is issues related to housing, primarily high rent and lack of desired housing options. Addressing housing insecurity and increasing affordable, safe housing options is currently the largest priority.

The Environment: Madison's topography makes the city particularly vulnerable to climate change-related extreme weather events. It is important that we address needs within the local environment and reduce the city's net carbon contributions.

Transportation: Reliable, safe, and environmental-friendly transportation is at the center of many housing, economic, and environmental issues. Maintaining and improving public transit and bike options is a priority to support the needs of constituents and the previous two policy priorities.

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

Resilience: The city of Madison is finishing up their watershed studies, which will identify areas that are at risk of flooding and the stormwater infrastructure that supports them. It is critical that we update and modernize our stormwater infrastructure. I would also work with the county on solutions to actively manage our lake levels as we experience more extreme rain-drought cycles. We have a flat lake chain system and as evidenced by last summer's high water we may not be able to rely on drainage alone to prevent flooding.

Mitigation: it is critical that we reduce carbon emissions city wide. From a city infrastructure level, I would support continuing the transition from fossil fuels to clean energy. However, the city is indirectly responsible for carbon emissions through their maintenance of the transportation system. I would prioritize funding public transportation and lobbying the state government to allow a sales tax for Regional Transit Authorities. I would also focus on reducing overall Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT), both by funding public transit services and by reducing the distance between homes, jobs, and amenities through city planning. I also support energy benchmarking standards that the city has introduced, which require new commercial buildings to track their energy usage, providing valuable data on how much building systems play in our city's carbon emissions.

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

The rising cost of housing is increasing both visible and invisible homelessness. I would pursue a policy of Housing First, including a priority on building and funding interim housing solutions like the Tiny Home Camps, as well as more permanent solutions including affordable housing.

I would advocate for the City of Madison to expand their landbank and use it to build mixed income affordable housing. Cross subsidies from market rate units could help achieve the deeply affordable units that LIHTC alone is not achieving.

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

I think the most important method to address racially based policing is to limit police interactions for non-violent complaints. This can primarily be achieved by utilizing and expanding the CARES team, which has been so popular and effective in Madison that it is expanding into Sun Prairie. I would also support PHMDC's by prioritizing funding for their violence prevention programs. Additionally, I would support the implementation of the 2019 Ad Hoc Committee's recommendations on policy changes that MPD should introduce to combat racial biases and improve police practices.

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

Environmental health is directly related to the health of a community. I believe that increasing outdoor recreation opportunities and growing the parks program, especially in areas that have been historically left out, are public health initiatives as they can reduce asthma rates, environmental temperature, and other health issues. Additionally, I would continue to support Public Health Madison Dane County (PDMDC) in their continued efforts to provide health services in response to COVID-19 and public health threats.

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

The largest transportation issue I wish to work on is increasing bus frequency and reliability in Madison, as well as continuing to improve and expand Madison's bike networks. In order to make public transit a viable and competitive option for many people, it needs to be dependable. That means properly funding and maintaining our buses, and also paying our bus drivers living wages and making sure that the bus system is well staffed.

Other transportation issues in Madison that I want to work on are expanding the safe bicycle network and building infrastructure to increase pedestrian safety, such as high visibility cross walks, leading pedestrian intervals, and RRFBs (flashing blinkers). Successful examples include quick build pilots of one-way filtering on Mifflin Street, and the expansion of protected bike lanes on Segoe.

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

District 2 is one of the most diverse populations in Madison. It consists of students, longtime homeowners, young adults, and large LGBTQ+ and BIPOC populations. I will represent these voices at city meetings by meeting people where they are, and actively reaching out to these communities. During my time as a lead for Madison is for People, I have learned how important it is to listen to not just those who have the time and resources who can show up to city meetings, but also those who care but are unable to attend.

Any other issues/topics you wish to discuss?

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