

# Mpls Mayoral Questionnaire

## Introduction:

Our population is aging, both in Minneapolis and nationwide. People over 60 now comprise more than 25% of the Minneapolis population, and people over 65 comprise nearly 11%. As part of this significant demographic, the Minneapolis DFL Senior Caucus is concerned about issues that affect the general community as well as issues that pertain specifically to them.

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**1. Priorities:** What are your top three priorities for our city?

My Priorities for Minneapolis: 1. Permanent Solutions for Our Unhoused Neighbors

Having experienced homelessness in Minneapolis, I know that not everyone is struggling with addiction—many just need help. We must create lasting solutions that provide stability and support. 2. Affordable Housing for All: Minneapolis should be affordable for both homeowners and renters. The only difference between them is the length of their lease. With 27 years in finance, I understand the need for a balanced city budget to keep housing costs manageable for everyone.

3. Building Trust Between Community and Peace Officers: Our city needs peace officers who bring real peace. With my background in criminal justice, I know that officers need the community's support, just as the community needs them. When we work together, we create a safer city for everyone.

**2. Housing:** What will you do to provide quality, affordable housing for all, including seniors? Since aging in place is often the best and most cost-effective way to house seniors, we are especially interested in your plan for how Minneapolis will achieve this.

As a woman who is caring for her own aging parents, seniors, and veterans here in the city, I understand how important it is for people to remain in their homes for as long as they live. That's why one of my priorities is to slow down the pace of aggressive development in our neighborhoods. With the rising costs tied to tariffs from the White House and overall inflation, I know things will only get more expensive. My plan is to focus on restoration preserving and improving what we already have and using recycled and sustainable materials to do so. A few years ago, I spent time in Cuba, where I saw firsthand how they restored entire communities using the resources available to them. That experience showed me that rebuilding doesn't have to be expensive it just takes vision and care. Restoring what we have will help keep the cost of living down. I also understand that downtown Minneapolis has lost significant revenue, which affects our property taxes. To help bring life and dollars back into the heart of the city, I want to introduce weekly rotating pop-up shops. These would feature different food vendors, fashion designers, tech startups, artists, and entertainers. People could sign up online, fill out a form with their preferences like the kind of food, clothing, or entertainment they enjoy and be matched to upcoming events. When they choose to attend and pay, they would receive a full VIP experience. This kind of personalized, interactive downtown can help reinvigorate our local economy. I would also work to bring back beloved events like Holidazzle and parades on Nicollet Mall, which brought joy and energy to the city. In addition, I plan to repurpose some underused downtown workspaces into content creator suites — rentable by the hour — so that local creatives and influencers can produce videos, podcasts, and digital content right here in Minneapolis. Social media is a huge economy, and young people are already traveling to other cities to rent these spaces. Why not bring that business here?

Lastly, and most importantly, I want to ensure our seniors can remain in their homes. As someone who is aging myself, I've learned about the Senior Citizen Property Tax Deferral Program, which allows homeowners to defer up to 50% of their property taxes. That deferred amount is not erased — it becomes due when the home is sold or transferred. But this program can offer seniors some financial relief while they remain in their homes. My vision is to bring in more revenue to Minneapolis, not through raising taxes, but through creative, community-driven solutions that lower the cost of living, support local businesses, and make our city a place people are excited to visit and proud to call home. Minneapolis is a beautiful city.

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**3. Crime and public safety:** How will you deter and fight crime, including juvenile crime, to keep us all — including seniors — safe? Please address how you will work to bring the Minneapolis Police Department up to the level required in the city charter.

I want to start by apologizing for the length of my response, but these two questions truly hurt my soul. On juvenile crime first and foremost, these are our children. Behavior is taught early, and as someone who grew up in a small town, I believe deeply that it takes a village to raise a child. Minneapolis needs to return to that foundation. In the late '90s, as a single parent working two jobs just to keep a roof over our heads, I faced one of the hardest lessons of my life. For the 2nd time, Hennepin County tried to take custody of my children. They were hanging out with other neighborhood kids whose parents were paying them to move “packages.” I didn’t know what those kids were involved in I was just trying to survive. But because I didn’t know who my children were with or what they were doing, I was charged with neglect. I still remember what the judge told me: “It is your responsibility to know where and who your children are with.” Thankfully, I had my own lawyer, and my children stayed with me. That moment changed everything. I began looking for safe programs after-school activities at Pillsbury House, flag football at the park anything to give them structure and guidance. We need to reinvest in real, safe programs for our youth especially in North and South Minneapolis. I want to bring back “Safety Week” in local schools, where kids meet firefighters, EMTs, police officers, doctors, and nurses. When I was in school, a peace officer who looked like me visited and inspired me to study criminal justice. In middle school, we had the chance to work in nursing homes, hospitals, and even a 911 call center.

There are amazing programs already out there: a T-shirt business in South Minneapolis teaching kids' entrepreneurship, a cookie shop in North Minneapolis teaching baking skills, a free coding class in Edina, and Best Buy's robotics summer camp. But too many of these programs aren't reaching the kids who need them most. We need to change that. Children need safe spaces while their parents are working, and they need positive role models from an early age. When we teach kids how to be good community members young, they carry those lessons for life and pass them on. One thing I will do as mayor is ban balaclava masks unless the temperature is below 20 degrees. I've seen far too many youths walking around in 90-degree weather wearing them. It creates fear and sends the wrong message they look like they're going to rob a bank. We can't allow that kind of intimidation to become normalized. As for the Minneapolis Police Department I don't believe in reforming it. I believe in rebuilding it. Right now, our police officers are among the highest paid in the state. That may attract more applicants, but is it attracting the right kind of peace officers for Minneapolis? I understand the role: our job is to bring peace to the community. When people see an officer, they should feel safe not afraid.

Unfortunately, many in our community still live in fear of law enforcement. I began my political journey after meeting Justine Damond, just weeks before her tragic death. Since then, I've heard countless stories especially from white women about being assaulted or arrested by police without cause. These women still carry that fear. I'm running for mayor because I want to rebuild that trust. If you're looking for a mayor who will hire anyone just to meet charter numbers that won't be me. But if you're looking for a mayor who will do the work to carefully vet every officer and every staff member who serves this city then I'm your mayor. My goal is to ensure that everyone who lives, works, or visits Minneapolis feels safe no matter your age, race, or sexuality. Minneapolis needs a leader who will protect the entire city. Every ward should have a community

liaison someone who hosts local events, builds relationships, and acts as a bridge between officers and residents. That's how we rebuild trust. That's how we create real safety. Minneapolis is a beautiful city. It deserves leadership that sees its people, hears their stories, and fights every day to protect them.

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**4. Local economic development:** Many of our community commercial corridors and hubs are struggling to recover from recent challenges and changes to our city. How will you approach economic development to provide needed jobs, products and services, and bring community commercial corridors and hubs back to life?

I'm seeing more and more small businesses close their doors in Minneapolis and it truly breaks my heart. These businesses are the backbone of our city, and they deserve our full support. Minneapolis needs to do more to uplift and promote its small businesses not just in one area, but in every corner of the city. Throughout my campaign journey, I've been invited into small businesses across different neighborhoods places that have been part of our community for years, yet I never even knew they existed until now. That shouldn't be the case. As your mayor, one of my jobs will be to create more foot traffic in every neighborhood north, south, east, and west by supporting family friendly events that draw people out into their communities and into our small businesses. Imagine a city-wide Pizza Contest, where residents vote on the best pizza in Minneapolis or a fun event called "Thrifty Day," where we highlight and promote all the amazing local thrift stores. During a recent meet and greet in Northeast Minneapolis, I stumbled upon a store called "A Bag Lady" on Johnson Street. I found so many great gifts there it reminded me that when we step outside our routines, we discover hidden gems right in our own city. We can create events that make people excited to explore their own neighborhoods and in doing so, they support the small businesses that keep our local economy strong. That includes supporting our food trucks, too they're part of this ecosystem and deserve space to grow. I want to be the kind of mayor who champions small businesses, because I believe when we support our local shops, artists, cooks, and creators, we're not just spending money we're circulating wealth back into our own communities.

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**5. Financing the City:** Because the city's commercial tax base is decreasing, and funding from the federal government is in decline, an increasing amount of the property tax levy is falling on residential properties. How will you craft a budget that meets the City's needs and also protects renters and homeowners, especially seniors, from property taxes that threaten to make their homes unaffordable?

I believe I answered this question in the above question: here my answers" I also understand that downtown Minneapolis has lost significant revenue, which affects our property taxes. To help bring life and dollars back into the heart of the city, I want to introduce weekly rotating pop-up shops. These would feature different food vendors, fashion designers, tech startups, artists, and entertainers. People could sign up online, fill out a form with their preferences like the kind of food, clothing, or entertainment they enjoy and be matched to upcoming events. When they choose to attend and pay, they would receive a full VIP experience. This kind of personalized, interactive downtown can help reinvigorate our local economy. I would also work to bring back beloved events like Holidazzle and parades on Nicollet Mall, which brought joy and energy to the city. In addition, I plan to repurpose some underused downtown workspaces into content creator suites rentable by the hour so that local creatives and influencers can produce videos, podcasts, and digital content right here in Minneapolis. Social media is a huge economy, and young people are already traveling to other cities to rent these spaces. Why not bring that business here? Lastly, and most importantly, I want to ensure our seniors can remain in their homes. As someone who is aging myself, I've learned about the Senior Citizen Property Tax Deferral Program, which allows homeowners to defer up to 50% of their property taxes. That deferred amount is not erased — it becomes due when the home is sold or transferred.

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**6. Planning for the future:** As the city's population grows and infrastructure ages, the city is facing increasing pressures on both built and natural environments, jeopardizing our health and quality of life. What is your plan, including financing, for addressing the pressure points from growth on aging infrastructure (water system, sanitation, waste disposal, streets) as well as our natural environment (tree canopy, air and water quality).

I had the great opportunity to sit down with two environmental groups here in Minneapolis. As a candidate, that experience opened my eyes to concerns I might not have known about otherwise. I listened, I learned, and I walked away with a deeper understanding of the challenges our city faces and the opportunities we have to do better. One of my top environmental priorities is addressing our aging infrastructure, especially our old water lines and pipes. These outdated systems pose a serious risk of contamination, and it's something we can't afford to ignore. I also plan to explore Smart Water Metering using smart sensors to detect leaks early, helping us avoid the kind of major water main break we saw in South Minneapolis this past February. We also need to raise awareness about the importance of organic waste collection in our city. Composting and reducing food waste aren't just good environmental practices, they're essential to creating a sustainable future. I would work to build stronger partnerships with Hennepin County and tap into green innovation grants to support these efforts. When it comes to our streets from potholes to aging grids and increasing traffic my plan is to look into higher quality, environmentally friendly materials. I also believe we should align street repaving projects with utility upgrades, so we're not tearing up the same streets twice and wasting resources. In our homes, I want to promote incentives for green retrofits like heat pumps and energy-efficient appliances that reduce our environmental footprint. To fund this, I would actively pursue federal support, including EPA grants and other funding opportunities designed to help cities transition to cleaner, greener infrastructure. This isn't just about fixing problems it's about building a smarter, healthier, more resilient Minneapolis for the future

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**7. Good government:** Minneapolis's good-government reputation has been damaged by headlines alleging fraud and abuse. What will you do to ensure integrity in how the City awards contracts and to prevent even the appearance of cronyism or conflicts of interest?

I was raised with the understanding that every time I step outside my front door, I carry the reputation of my family name with me. I was taught that whatever I do in the world reflects not just on me, but on the people who raised me and it's my responsibility to honor that name with respect. As your mayor, I will carry that same sense of duty but this time, it's the name of our city I will represent. Just like I was taught to respect my family name, I will serve Minneapolis with honor, integrity, and pride. I will treat this city with the respect it deserves, and I will lead in a way that makes the people who put their trust in me proud of what I've done while in office. At the end of the day, leadership is about more than policies and plans it's about character, and how you show up for the people who believed in you.

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**8. Equity for seniors/ Increasing mobility:** Recent urban designs limit some people's ability to get around the city to the services they need. How will you ensure that seniors and other mobility-impacted people are centered in the design of city streets and services?

As a child who grew up with both of my parents eventually needing wheelchairs, I learned at a very young age just how important it is to have sidewalks and streets that work for everyone. Accessibility isn't just a feature, it's a necessity. It shapes how people move, how they connect with their community, and how they live their lives with dignity. That's why, as mayor, every plan or design that comes across my desk will be looked at through a simple but powerful lens: Is this wheelchair accessible? If the answer is no, then we are not doing enough. I was disappointed earlier this year when I attended a local caucus at a school. While the building had a ramp at the entrance, once inside, people using wheelchairs couldn't access the room where their group was meeting because it was up a flight of stairs with no elevator. They ended up placing one individual in a separate room on the main floor. That moment hit me hard. Because all I could think was, what if that was one of my parents? I know how that would have made them feel left out, dismissed, unseen. And it would've broken my heart. As mayor, I will fight to make Minneapolis a city where no one is left out where accessibility is built into everything we do from the start, not treated as an afterthought. Everyone deserves the right to show up fully in their community and I will work every day to make sure that happens.

**9. Your relationship with seniors:** Where do you get your understanding about issues of concern to seniors in Minneapolis? How will you consult with senior and disability groups such as the Minneapolis Chapter of the DFL Senior Caucus, Age Friendly and other senior advisory groups?

I've built deep and meaningful relationships with my elders I spend most of my days talking with them, learning from them, and just being present. During the pandemic, I opened a respite care service because I saw how much our seniors needed support and connection, especially in such an isolating time. It became more than just work – it became something I truly love. I'm also the personal caregiver for my mother, who uses a wheelchair. And now that I'm part of the 50-plus club myself, I feel lucky to be surrounded by some of the coolest people in Minneapolis. I'm proud to be a member of the DFL Seniors it's a space where experience, wisdom, and care for our community all come together.

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