

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?

Minneapolis is my home. It's where I've chosen to raise my family, and it's the honor of my life to fight for this city as mayor. We've faced unprecedented challenges—a global pandemic, the murder of George Floyd, and the resulting national reckoning on policing. Through it all, we've delivered real results by focusing on thoughtful, data-driven governance, not ideological extremes.

Now, as the city rebounds, I'm running for a final term to finish the job: delivering affordable housing, public safety, and economic opportunity that benefits everyone.

Minneapolis is broadly recognized as achieving the best housing results in the entire country. Over the last seven years, I led the effort to build record levels of affordable housing throughout Minneapolis, strengthened renters' rights, and boosted homeownership opportunities for residents of color. We're producing 8.5 times the amount of deeply affordable housing since before I took office, we have managed to keep rents down more than virtually every city in the country, and homelessness in Minneapolis is dropping, with zero significant encampments at this time.

In the area of safety and police accountability, we are making strides. Crime is dramatically down in virtually every category, in virtually every neighborhood. We are seeing near-record-low numbers of homicides, and the difference is palpable. We are adding to and diversifying our police ranks with a 133% increase in applications. And, we are providing a mental health response 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, recognizing that not every call requires a response from a police officer with a gun. Others have talked about offloading calls from police - we are actually doing it.

Police reform is now more than a slogan. With a settlement agreement and consent decree being carried out, and with positive interactions with police on the rise, we are doing the hard work to build trust between police and the communities they are charged with protecting and serving. It has been long overdue, but the good news is that this positive change is actually happening!

In the area of economic inclusion, we proudly work with both business and labor to bring our city back. Whether it's the Ownership and Opportunity Fund, which provides black business owners the opportunity to own their own property, or it's our work to transform our Downtown for future generations, we are taking on the hardest fights and getting real results.

We have come a long way as a community, and together we can continue to build a safe, affordable, and prosperous city for everyone. But above all, I'm not afraid to stand up to the national chaos and be a voice of reason for Minneapolis. The opposite of Donald Trump's extremism is not the opposite extreme. The opposite of extremism is good, thoughtful governance where we follow the data, listen to expertise, and love our city more than our ideology. I've led under a Trump administration before, and especially right now, that kind of experience matters.

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.

Housing is a right, and no matter who you are, where you come from, or your income bracket, Minneapolis should be a place you can afford to call home. Minneapolis is leading the nation in housing affordability and innovative housing policy. Over the last seven years, I led the effort to build record levels of affordable housing throughout Minneapolis, strengthened renters' rights, and boosted homeownership opportunities for residents of color. We're producing 8.5 times the amount of deeply affordable housing since before I took office. We have managed to keep rents down more than virtually every city in the country. And last May, Minneapolis became the first city in the country to get inflation below the two percent annual rate – a direct result of producing more affordable housing. Additionally, homelessness in Minneapolis is dropping, with zero significant encampments at this time. And our Stable Home Stable Schools program supported over 4,200 Minneapolis kids in finding a home close to their school. Increasing the affordable housing supply, enacting zoning reforms, highlighting public-private partnerships, and strategic investments allow us to ensure Minneapolis is a place where everyone can call home, through every stage of life.

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.

Crime is declining in virtually every category and neighborhood in Minneapolis, and we need to keep it this way. Creating safer streets requires a comprehensive approach, and that's exactly what I've done. Bringing community input and our experts together to create innovative and data-driven policies to every aspect of public safety is key. As Mayor, I have had the tough conversations, made meaningful change, and delivered real results.

In 2024, I increased police applications by 133%, hired 76 new officers, and launched a Behavioral Crisis Response and Southside Safety Center. Now – and because of these efforts – Northside is seeing record-low violent crimes, with double-digit reductions since 2024. Dinkytown Crime is on a downward spiral: reports of thefts, auto thefts, burglaries, assaults, and drugs have decreased from 2022 to 2024. And we are witnessing a very promising decline in gun violence in 2025, with shootings falling from 70 (Jan. 1 to March 31, 2024) to 49 (Jan. 1 to March 31, 2025). This is just the beginning, but we know what works and what communities need and want to see.

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?

Revitalizing our commercial corridors starts with support for safety and small and local business. Given that I discussed safety above, let me now touch on the specific work of revitalization. First, we must work directly with small and local business owners to run with great ideas. We have provided a one-stop shop to ease the burden of permitting and expedite licenses. And our small business technical support team offers small businesses with the assistance they need to get a great idea off the ground. Second, we must break up the retail space, allowing for small and local businesses to pay rent and recognizing that the days of the mass square footage corporate conglomerate or department store are no longer working. We've done this in the North Loop and on East Hennepin, allowing for a diversity of use (from entertainment to residential) and a street vibrancy that encourages additional foot traffic. Third, we forged partnerships from private business to labor to the public sector – as we are presently doing on our Downtown Action Plan, Upper Harbor Terminal, and the reopening of Nicollet where the Kmart used to be. I am proud to be the only labor-endorsed candidate and supported by countless business owners. And it is that partnership that we need for success.

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?

Residents should not have to pick up the tab because fewer taxes are generated from downtown buildings. Some buildings can generate as much property tax revenue as other wards in their entirety. That burden of a regressive tax shifts to residents – both homeowners and renters, and disproportionately impacts our low-income residents and seniors. We pride ourselves on being an inclusive and accessible city. We will neither be inclusive nor accessible by taxing our working-class residents out of their homes.

But I disagree when I hear downtown being pitted against other neighborhoods. An investment in one area is an investment in the entire city's tax base. Downtown is a leader nationally in economic recovery; more people are back to work, and more than 450 restaurants and retail stores are open downtown. In addition, my administration is actively identifying space to build more affordable housing and up-to-date office space for small businesses to strengthen our tax base

I pushed back on the City Council's 2025 budget proposal because it simply did not make sense for what our city needs most right now. I have always approached the budgeting process by listening to the experts and the data – which both indicated a different path forward. The truth is that some council members prioritized short-sighted and even politically-motivated spending over what is necessary and sustainable for our city.

And I will continue to stand up to Trump amid his threats to pull federal funding from core city services—money that supports our emergency services, housing, and even our bomb squad. Minneapolis has shown its true resiliency during tough times. Together, we will continue to defend our values, our city's future, and our vulnerable communities, especially our seniors.

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).

Preserving and protecting our built and natural environments are crucial to the short- and long-term health and success of Minneapolis.

My plan addresses the pressure points of a growing population and aging infrastructure by combining targeted investments with climate-focused innovation. At the heart of the strategy is a commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions in line with the City's 2050 climate goals—an effort that directly supports healthier communities and a more resilient future.

My administration is piloting a block-by-block home weatherization initiative through the Green Cost Share program, which will lower energy bills for residents while improving energy efficiency. Minneapolis has dedicated \$4.7 million toward weatherizing homes, making this a major investment in both our built environment and our climate resilience.

To strengthen the local economy and workforce, the City is also investing \$1.4 million in green job training through partnerships with community organizations. The Green Careers Exploration initiative will equip residents with skills in solar energy, electric vehicles, and other high-growth sectors that are essential to a clean energy future.

On the natural environment side, the City is continuing to expand its urban tree canopy, investing \$850,000 in tree-planting efforts, and further developing the nation's first municipal biochar site. These efforts will improve air and water quality, reduce the urban heat island effect, and enhance overall public health. In addition, the City is working to increase its electric vehicle charging infrastructure, making cleaner transportation more accessible.

Through these investments, Minneapolis is meeting the moment—modernizing its infrastructure, protecting natural resources, and preparing its residents for a healthier, more sustainable future.

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?

Fraud and abuse have no place in my administration and we have taken the steps – with great pushback – to have contract decisions made on an objective, blind evaluation without political influence. Importantly, a fair contracting process should be competitive, not awarded based on political connections. This problem is exactly why I vetoed the budget approved by the Council. When money is taken away from core city services and dolled out to nonprofits without a fair, transparent, and competitive process, the likelihood of waste, fraud, or abuse goes up dramatically. We will continue to move the city in a direction that is not based on political favoritism, that values the taxpayers' dollars, and pushes back on the lack of process that heightens the risk of waste, fraud, and abuse.

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?

Last November, we completed phase one of our Hennepin Avenue South construction project, which has improved accessibility to the area for individuals no matter their transportation methods. We have made the area more pedestrian-friendly, transit-friendly, bike-friendly – all while improving safety. But our commitment to progress and helping people access the businesses and services that they need doesn't stop there. Phase two, between W 26th Street North and Douglas Avenue, is in progress. We also recently unveiled the plan for our New Nicollet corridor, which will improve accessibility between Lake Street and downtown. With more green space, transit, affordable housing, and retail, the area will be revitalized and built to be accessible.

In addition, I joined with senior citizens and disability advocate groups to work towards keeping Uber and Lyft in operation in the city when the companies threatened to pull service. My proposed state minimum pay floor was eventually the number passed at the State Capitol making rideshare services profitable for drivers and accessible for riders.

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?

By engaging with seniors, I benefit the whole city. How? I listen to them. More often than not, they have encountered many of the issues we see today in the past. And oftentimes, their guidance based on experience provides both a realistic and aspirational direction for our city. When the proposal to defund the police came forward, seniors were clear: bad idea. When creating affordable housing policy, seniors were clear: senior housing must be part of it. Now it is. When setting climate policy for future generations, seniors have been some of the biggest advocates. I'm proud of my broad support for seniors in this city, and they will continue to be an important voice that guides our work.

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