

# 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?

1. One of my top priorities will be protecting our communities from a hostile federal government. With Donald Trump back in the Oval Office, the progress towards equity and justice that our communities have worked so hard to create is in jeopardy. Mayor Frey has said that our approach to fighting Trump is extreme — he's wrong. The only way to stand up to Trump and his posse of unelected billionaires is to create a city that is radically inclusive and stands up for those who are the most at risk. I am running for mayor so we can do that work together.

2. Secondly, I will prioritize investing in housing. Housing is a human right, but our City isn't doing nearly enough to provide safe and affordable housing for all its residents. Every family deserves to have a stable place to call home. Implementing the Minneapolis 2040 Plan, one of the boldest Comprehensive Plans in the country, is essential to creating a more accessible, prosperous, and livable Minneapolis. But we also need to explore new and creative ways of securing adequate housing for all. As Mayor, I will explore every avenue to ensure Minneapolis can be home for everyone who wishes to build their life here.

I will also prioritize approaching unsheltered homelessness with compassion. I will embrace an approach to homelessness that increases funding for shelters and adopts a compassionate approach to encampments, centering public health and human dignity rather than Mayor Frey's expensive practice of criminalization. Our City is more than capable of accommodating everyone who wants to call it home; combining strong housing policy with dignity for unsheltered residents is the way we do that. We must embrace a Housing First approach — housing ends homelessness; whenever possible, people should be connected directly to housing.

3. Finally, reforming public safety is a top priority for me. Minneapolis residents want a Mayor whose bold and transformative approaches to public safety will end the cycle of the Minneapolis Police Department's (MPD) violence and brutality that has held our city captive for so many years — I am that Mayor. Once elected, I will implement the numerous existing reforms that our current Mayor has refused to attempt, including the actions outlined in both consent decrees as well as funding for public safety solutions that supplement traditional policing.

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**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 human right, but our City isn't doing nearly enough to provide safe and affordable housing for all its residents. Every family deserves to have a stable place to call home. Implementing the Minneapolis 2040 Plan, one of the boldest Comprehensive Plans in the country, is essential to creating a more accessible, prosperous, and livable Minneapolis. But we also need to explore new and creative ways of securing adequate housing for all. As Mayor, I will explore every avenue to ensure Minneapolis can be home for everyone who wishes to build their life here.

As mayor, I will:

- Work to ensure that seniors and people on fixed incomes have access to robust, affordable housing options.
- Build and maintain public housing at the federally allowed maximum level, and support a dedicated levy to maintain this commitment.
- Establish a Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act to ensure that renters have an additional tool to access homeownership.
- Support the Affordable Housing Right of First Refusal ordinance to preserve affordable housing and keep it locally owned, rather than letting it be hoarded by venture capitalists and wealthy developers.
- Increase the supply of affordable housing through direct investment and incentives for new affordable development, by growing investments in programs like the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and the 4D program.
- Explore publicly-owned social housing for residents at a variety of income levels.
- Support new housing development to ensure a regularly increasing supply.
- Enact a rent stabilization policy to ensure that renters can call Minneapolis home for generations to come.

**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.

From the reforms outlined in both consent decrees to funding for public safety solutions that transcend and supplement traditional policing, I will implement the numerous existing reforms our current Mayor has failed to attempt. As a state senator, I am proud to have supported and voted for the bill that secured \$300 million in public safety funding for Minnesota, including \$19 million for Minneapolis, intended to fund innovative public safety solutions beyond policing, such as mental health resources for people in crisis. I also worked alongside community advocates to increase overdose prevention by authoring a bill that legalized fentanyl testing strips. In the first year of this law change, Hennepin County gave out 100,000 testing strips for free to residents in need.

As mayor, I will continue the work of expanding public safety alternatives to police by:

- Implementing the Safe and Thriving Communities Plan, an existing, actionable city policy that Mayor Frey has yet to implement.
- Investing in programs that ensure the appropriate responders come when we call 911. A City report shows that 47% of 911 calls can be diverted to non-police solutions.
- Working with every level of government to reduce recidivism rates, particularly among young people by investing in youth programming.
- Expanding the Behavioral Crisis Response (BCR) program which has successfully responded to instances of mental health crises and medical emergencies without any police involvement.
- Increase investment in the Fire Department.
- Invest in upstream solutions to lessen the amount of crime. Crime is caused by factors like poverty, lack of access to mental healthcare, lack of access to housing, and lack of access to public spaces.

Minneapolis residents want a Mayor that will work to ensure everyone feels safe, and whose bold and transformative approaches to public safety will end the cycle of the Minneapolis Police Department's (MPD) violence and brutality that has held our city captive for so many years — I am that Mayor.

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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?

In my position as State Senator, I hear time and time again that small businesses, especially immigrant small businesses, are struggling to stay afloat and struggle with competing with big chains and businesses in Minneapolis. Having a fair and competitive environment where diverse, local, small businesses can thrive is essential to the wellbeing of our city's economy and to our communities.

As Mayor, I will establish a city Office of Small Business Success, which will act as a clearinghouse for small business service, feedback, and issue resolution — a place where business owners can turn when they are confused by their permit applications, or if they are seeking help in hard times. I will also pursue charging fees to landlords that are keeping commercial space vacant rather than working with business owners to put it to good use. I will support and expand on initiatives like the Vibrant Storefronts initiative, and will expand the city's role as a facilitator of new business formation by partnering with owners of neglected or under-utilized commercial spaces in key districts such as Uptown and Downtown. Above all, I would lead in accordance with the reality that the best business climate is the one in which all city residents have their basic needs met.

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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 that it is imperative that we grow Minneapolis' tax base to reduce the burden the property tax levy has on working families. Our residents deserve excellent City services and we have to ensure the City has the revenue needed to deliver on our shared vision. We need to look at creative solutions that prioritize the sustainable growth of our city.

As mayor, I will:

- Lobby the State of Minnesota to allow the City of Minneapolis to institute a local option income tax to ensure the wealthy pay their fair share.
  - Work with the Minnesota Department of Revenue and Hennepin County to ensure residents are educated on existing property tax relief programs.
  - Explore opportunities for public development and ownership that could increase the tax base while ensuring a broadly beneficial use of space.
  - Explore creative solutions like a commercial vacancy tax to address vacant storefronts and a land value tax to incentivize development of underutilized parcels.
  - Incentivize converting vacant commercial buildings into residential housing with City support for development that prioritizes affordable housing and public benefit.
  - Take a direct hand in stewarding the revitalization of downtown by leveraging public spaces, including considering the purchase of distressed properties.
  - Protect taxpayer dollars by avoiding unaffordable subsidies for private, for-profit facilities, like stadiums, arenas, and convention centers.
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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).

We need to invest in a city that includes everyone and connects us to each other. As Mayor, I will invest in physical and social infrastructure to heal harmed communities, meet our ambitious climate goals, and foster a sense of security.

As mayor, I will:

- Implement the carbon fees passed by the City Council.
  - Increase investment in the City's Climate Legacy Initiative to make desperately needed investments in building a climate resilient city.
  - Invest in zero-waste initiatives to reduce the city's waste stream and support the responsible closure of the Hennepin Energy Recovery Center (HERC) incinerator.
  - Invest in the weatherization of all homes in Minneapolis, prioritizing aging rental housing first.
  - Work in partnership with the County and State to create permanent indoor space for public use during extreme weather events, like extreme heat, extreme cold, and poor air quality.
  - Invest in programs that prioritize the transition of the City's vehicle fleet to electric vehicles.
  - Work to implement nation-leading, visionary policies like the City's Transportation Action Plan, and Complete Streets and Vision Zero policies across the entire city.
  - Address the backlog of neighborhood traffic calming requests, and improve safety by implementing calming measures along transit stops, schools, parks, and shopping centers.
  - Support the community's vision for George Floyd Square, ensuring the option of a pedestrian mall, while supporting the needs of surrounding residents and businesses.
  - Work in partnership with Metro Transit to build more and better bus shelters that are maintained for all seasons.
  - Utilize the City's authority on signal prioritization to benefit public transportation options like bus and light rail.
  - Invest in public spaces including public seating, public bathrooms, and indoor spaces.
  - Explore expanding public ownership of housing and commercial space.
  - Study options for reducing freeway and roadway mileage within city limits.
  - Improve street lighting in commercial corridors and on neighborhood streets, while prioritizing reducing light pollution.
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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?

As Mayor, I would fight for a city that works for everyone, and that means making sure that there is no space for fraud, abuse or any practices that do not reflect our values or even harm members of our community. I am vehemently opposed to the Frey administration's current practice of awarding city contracts to personal friends, without an adequate or just process. This practice is not good governance, and as we are witnessing, leads to racism, discrimination and overall mismanagement of city services. As mayor, I will prioritize ensuring that thorough processes are in place to award contracts to groups and individuals that reflect the values of the diverse Minneapolis community and will meet the needs of everyone in our city. It is unacceptable to pick city contractors to line the pockets of friends, and as Mayor, I will commit to transparency and accountability to end this practice.

As we have witnessed recently, mayor Frey and his administration have pursued, encouraged and defended City contracts with groups and individuals that do not reflect the values of our communities, and often had track records of abuse. This is unacceptable. From pursuing a contract with the QAnon affiliated organization Our Rescue, and defending a City contractor that hurled homophobic remarks at City Council Member Jason Chavez, Jacob Frey's failures in leadership are a threat to everyone in our community.

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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-impaired people are centered in the design of city streets and services?

I believe that it is essential that we make all public spaces and transportation in our city as accessible and welcoming as possible. We should all be able to move through the city safely and affordably whether walking, biking, rolling, using transit, or by car. Currently, especially during the winter, many spaces and transportation in Minneapolis are severely inaccessible. This is unacceptable, and if elected I will prioritize addressing it by:

- Work to implement nation-leading, visionary policies like the City's Transportation Action Plan, and Complete Streets and Vision Zero policies across the entire city.
  - Address the backlog of neighborhood traffic calming requests, and improve safety by implementing calming measures along transit stops, schools, parks, and shopping centers.
  - Implement 24-hour bus lanes on Hennepin Avenue South — a major step forward for sustainable transportation passed by the City Council but vetoed by the Mayor.
  - Work in partnership with Metro Transit to build more and better bus shelters that are maintained for all seasons.
  - Utilize the City's authority on signal prioritization to benefit public transportation options like bus and light rail.
  - Support the municipal sidewalk shoveling efforts being led by the City Council, starting with the pedestrian priority network.
  - Remove unnecessary fencing blocking residents from public spaces and walkways.
  - Improve street lighting in commercial corridors and on neighborhood streets, while prioritizing reducing light pollution.
  - Establish a Transit Safety Coordinator that will work with my Administration, the City Council, and Metro Transit to increase the safety of our transit network.
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**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?

From my first senate race in 2020, representing and being accountable to our diverse communities has been a priority of mine. As a current elected official, I work closely with community leaders and have leveraged my position as state senator to fight for real, tangible changes that meet the needs of seniors in our state. In the last biennium I led on historic increases in Elderly Waiver (EW) services for home and community-based services for seniors , which is essential programming for those who choose to remain in their home rather than move to a nursing home.

I believe that for Minneapolis to be the vibrant, thriving city that we know it can be, it is essential to center seniors and disability justice. We must ensure that Minneapolis is a place where everyone can afford to live, move about the city freely and comfortably, and a place where our seniors can age in place. That is why, if elected mayor, I am committed to partnering closely and working together with the Minneapolis Chapter of the DFL Senior Caucus, Age Friendly and other senior advisory groups. As mayor, I will ensure that community leaders are not just consulted, but have a seat at the table and are a part of critical decision-making at the City. I know that by listening and being accountable to senior and disability groups our City can be stronger, more effective and inclusive. Minneapolis deserves a mayor that will work alongside the community and center the needs of everyone in our city - I am that mayor.

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