

Responses cannot be edited

Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce Candidate Questionnaire

Please tell us about yourself.

Your Name: *

Shiva Bidar-Sielaff

Aldermanic District: *

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Current Address: *

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Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce Candidate Questionnaire

Instructions: Please state your position on the following issues. Please limit answers to 100 words. Any answers exceeding the word count limitations will be cut after 100 words.

If you have filled out this questionnaire before, you may skip starred** questions or modify previous answers to those questions. If you skip starred answers on this questionnaire, we will re-publish your 2015 answers.

**1. Why are you seeking this office?

I have been fortunate to work with the full spectrum of our community – from the most vulnerable to CEOs and top elected officials. My commitment to District 5 and decision to run come from my experience in seeing what can be accomplished through bringing diverse voices and perspectives to the table and working together. As an alder for the past 7 years, I have been able to work on many challenging issues and play a role in moving our city forward. I am passionate about the change that can be accomplished by bringing diverse interests and voices together.

**2. What in your background or experiences qualifies you to understand the unique needs facing small businesses?

**3. What are the most important issues the businesses in your district face?

4. What is the City of Madison's role in growing the economy? How can the City of Madison best support the growth and retention of jobs?

At the basic level, providing the infrastructure that supports development. Madison Metro is a prime example. We must continue to work on bus mass transit, bus rapid transit, and intergovernmental cooperation. At a strategic level, the City needs to provide leadership by diligently ensuring the implementation of our new Connect Madison Economic Development Strategy. Given the stark racial disparities in our City, we need to do so with a clear and focused equity lens. For instance, we must continue to work with MMSD, Madison College, and many others on pathways to employment.

5. How can the City of Madison best attract and retain a diverse and talented workforce?

We need to invest in what we know is important to our workforce:

- Multi-modal transportation
 - Accessible arts and recreation, especially entertainment for a racially and ethnically diverse audience
 - A community known for equity
 - A thriving and successful school district
 - Focus on the needs of young families such as affordable day care and early childhood education
 - Clean environment
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**6. Do you support the use of TIF, and how do you believe it should be utilized moving forward? How would you rate the City of Madison's past use of TIF? (Would you describe the use of TIF as underutilized, over-utilized, or appropriate?)

I support the use of TIF for the reasons it's intended: adding an incentive to make projects economically feasible that otherwise would not be, in particular projects that revitalize areas. Overall, the City's use of TIF has been reasonable and we have seen increased property values creating long-term benefit after districts expire.

7. What specific initiatives in the Connect Madison economic development strategy

(<http://www.cityofmadison.com/dpced/economicdevelopment/economic-strategy-symposium/554/>) do you support, and which, if any, would you like to see modified? Why?

I support the five strategies and the equity lens approach for each. The fifth strategy, "Strengthen the long term workforce by supporting efforts to create career pathways," does not go far enough. We need to work not only with youth but also with potential employees of all ages to assess work-readiness and invest in not only education but transportation, childcare, and mentoring services needed for work success. Programs like the HIRE initiative should be continued and expanded to get adults into family-supporting jobs.

8. What is your perception of Madison's business brand? How do you think business in Madison is perceived locally, statewide, and nationally?

Positive but complicated. We have many assets but great disparities. We have a tremendous quality of life. We are not always the easiest place to do business – sometimes due to valid reasons of planning and culture. We don't always value the employers we have and the benefits they bring to our economy. There is no doubt that UW-Madison faces challenges that are recognized nationally, while at the same time Edgewood, Madison College and many of our secondary schools do well. The benefits of our brand need to reach everyone in our community, which they do not now.

9. How do you define economic development? Please elaborate.

Economic development has as its goal the growth and retention of jobs and businesses with the overall encompassing goal of enhancing the quality of life of the community. The key to economic development is its sustainability and its equity, which are in my opinion intertwined. We need to create the type of businesses and jobs that are forward looking and that specifically create pathways to opportunity for people of color.

10. The Chamber believes that equity and social mobility are achieved through wealth creation and that the surest way is through an entrepreneurial class of color. The Chamber is launching initiatives to support this goal. What do you believe is the City of Madison's role in creating an entrepreneurial class of color?

I wholeheartedly support the premise of this question: we need a thriving entrepreneurial class of color. The City needs to play an active leadership role in creating public-private partnerships. We need to use our funding sources (i.e. CDBG, Entrepreneurship & Small Business Development Resource Fund) to fully support the work of organizations such as the Latino Chamber of Commerce's new Emerging Business Development Center, 100 State and StartingBlock. We need to partner with the GMCC. I am impressed with the work the Doyenne Group is doing in this area and hope the City can continue to partner with them.

11. How can the City of Madison provide better customer service to new or existing businesses that seek approval through the permitting and planning processes? How do you define customer service in this case?

During my time as alder, I have personally assisted businesses opening in my district. They don't always anticipate neighborhood or city issues, thus one role of the City is for alders to help businesses understand processes and guide them to helpful city staff and resources. Connect Madison proposes the creation Business Assistance Team (BAT) to assist businesses through the myriad of permitting and regulatory requirements. This has been discussed for many years: we need to stop talking and open the BAT. Customer service is a process that a typical business owner can navigate without lots of expensive outside consulting.

12. If offered an endorsement from the Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce, would you accept it? *

Yes

No

By submitting this candidate questionnaire, you agree that the Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce may publish it with the intent of sharing it with its membership and the general public. *

I acknowledge that the Chamber will publish my answers to this questionnaire

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