

# Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce Alderperson Candidate Questionnaire

Please tell us about yourself.

Your Name: \*

Grant Foster

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Aldermanic District: \*

15

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Current Home Address: \*

3930 Anchor Drive

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Email: \*

[REDACTED]

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Phone: \*

[REDACTED]

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Campaign website, if any:

[www.Grant4Madison.com](http://www.Grant4Madison.com)

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Social media (Twitter, Instagram, etc.) handles, if any:

Grant4Madison (Instagram & Facebook)

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Past education and work history (question optional; alternately you may send résumé to [brett@madisonbiz.com](mailto:brett@madisonbiz.com))

Will send resume

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## Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce Alderperson 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 2017 answers.

### \*\*1. Why are you seeking this office?

I have been involved in city governance for the last three years as a member of the Pedestrian, Bicycle, Motor Vehicle Commission and Long Range Transportation Planning Committee and am very familiar with city processes and the issues facing our communities. I'm a committed public servant and would like to work collaboratively with city staff, other elected officials, and Madison residents and business owners to make Madison even better.

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

My father has been an entrepreneur most of my life including starting a computer software business in the early 80's and currently running a small food processing business. I've worked for many small businesses in Madison including as a owner-operator at Union Cab. I also started and grew my own business providing medical interpretation.

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

The biggest issue is keeping up with rising rents that outpace rising sales. District 15 is experiencing significant redevelopment and as older buildings are replaced with newer buildings, more affordable spaces are being replaced with less affordable spaces. The pressure to achieve positive cash flow is made more difficult with the trends in online shopping.

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**\*\*4. What is your perception of Madison's business brand? How do you think business in Madison is perceived locally, statewide, and nationally?**

Madison is known as a great place for business. Our reputation in the food and beverage industry and specialty shops is particularly strong.

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

The best way to attract and retain a diverse and talented workforce is by continuing to support Madison neighborhoods as quality places to live. Madison has tremendous access to amenities whether that's our first-class park system and natural resources or our abundance of family-focused events and activities or our numerous opportunities to enjoy live music, art, and local food. We need to retain access to these amenities while focusing on improving access to housing and improving our transportation system.

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## 6. How can the City of Madison build an inclusive economy and ensure the advanced industries accelerating here provide opportunity for all?

One of the best ways to ensure equitable access to opportunity is by improving our public transportation system. Too many of our residents that are interested in the employment opportunities available are limited by transportation access. Moving forward with Bus Rapid Transit and broader transit investments is critical to improving mobility and connecting our residents with jobs and with access to shopping and leisure.

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## 7. With Madison's economic momentum, a continued focus must be placed on infrastructure improvements. What strategies would you recommend for the city to meet the diverse needs of worker mobility and housing?

We need to invest heavily and aggressively to develop a robust public transit system. Increasing traffic congestion will cut-off access to workers and consumers and stunt the growth of Madison business, particularly in our downtown and isthmus. The transition to increasing our mobility via mass transit will come with challenges and short-term pain and we need to be thoughtful about implementation.

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## 8. How do you define economic development? Please elaborate.

Economic development really needs to be considered in a local context. Development can't be understood as simply more economic activity, but rather about activity that supports and strengthens our community. Local businesses are a key driver to that work, because the economic activity supports local people. We have enormous talent and creativity in our community and by promoting and supporting local business our entire community benefits.

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9. The 115th Fighter Wing of the Air National Guard is an important driver of the Madison economy, providing an annual economic impact of over \$100 million, emergency and fire services for the Dane County Regional Airport, and over \$1 million in tuition assistance to area student guardsmen. Do you support the Wing as it seeks to continue its mission by acquiring next-generation F-35A jets? Please explain your answer.

I support the the 115th Fighter Wing and those that serve there. In terms of specifically supporting the acquisition of F-35A jets, I would need a better understanding of the support and concerns that has been articulated by city residents including my constituents in District 15 as well as reviewing the Environmental Impact Statement and the Air National Guard's response to the above.

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10. 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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