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Running for Minneapolis Mayor,
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2025 City Candidate Questionnaire

Thank you for filling out our 2025 Candidate Questionnaire. As a 501(C)3 organization, Community Power will not be making endorsements. The purpose of this questionnaire is to educate Minneapolis residents on the positions of candidates seeking the City offices that will shape the future of energy related to access, equity, resilience, decision-making/ownership and affordability.

Connecting to On-the-Ground Realities of Climate Change and City-level Action

1. Briefly share your understanding of climate change and how that guides what you believe Minneapolis must do to mitigate and adapt to it.[1]

1A. To me, climate change signifies the mistreatment of our planet. Growing up in a farming community, I was taught the importance of protecting our land, water, and soil. It wasn't until I moved to Minnesota that I fully understood the harmful impacts of fossil fuels. In my hometown, we relied primarily on electricity, even incorporating windmill power in the late '90s. The community was designed for sustainability, with kids biking and stores within walking distance. The shift to Minnesota made me realize the changes needed in cities like Minneapolis for a sustainable future. Minneapolis should prioritize reducing carbon emissions, transitioning to renewable energy, and adapting infrastructure to withstand extreme weather. It's crucial to act now for a more sustainable and resilient city.

2.Energy Efficiency: The city has fallen far short from reaching its goal of 75% of households participation in energy efficiency retrofits. What would you do once in office to advance access to energy efficiency, particularly for those who bear a higher energy cost burden or face access barriers to existing programs (e.g. renters, low & moderate income, and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color residents)? Please describe the particular policies/initiatives you would expand, continue, and/or create.

2a. My first step would be to engage directly with the city council members involved in the Minneapolis Clean Energy initiative to propose an alternative plan that includes increasing fees in order to generate more revenue for the necessary changes we need to implement in the city. The goal is to address the needs of residents, especially owners who are interested in upgrading their heating systems. This outreach would allow us to identify those who would benefit most from immediate assistance. We would then place these individuals into a pilot program, prioritizing those in greatest need. As I mentioned during the meeting, I would like to challenge major companies like

[1] See City's 100% renewables resolution which calls for achieving 100% renewable electricity for all Minneapolis energy users by 2030, and 100% renewable energy for all sectors (electricity, heating, transportation, industry) by 2050.

Honeywell and 3M to innovate a new type of window heat pump system, similar to the products offered by Gradient and Midea. This system would need to function both as a heating and cooling unit, with air purification capabilities. Additionally, it should operate on a 120V plug, perform efficiently in temperatures as low as -22°F, and handle heat up to 110°F. The key is to make this unit affordable—ideally no more than $4,000—and DIY-friendly to facilitate easier installation. To ensure the long-term sustainability of this project, I'd prioritize working with local manufacturers. By doing so, we can eliminate delays related to parts or repair services, while simultaneously boosting the local economy by creating jobs. We would begin by testing the program with products from Gradient and Midea until we can ramp up local production to meet demand. This would create a more resilient supply chain and ensure the project's success in the long run.those facing a higher energy cost burden or who have limited access to existing programs.

3.Local Clean Energy: The city of Minneapolis has a goal for 30% of its electricity to be sourced from local distributed solar by 2030.[2] However, our electric utility, Xcel Energy, has been in the news multiple times over the years for delaying local clean energy projects or outright blocking them by excessive interconnection fees. What changes, if any, would you like to see to enable better access to the electric grid for communities, and how would you wield the City's authority to bring those changes about?

3a. I would implement a strategy to hold these two companies accountable by introducing a contractual penalty for failing to meet their commitments with the City of Minneapolis. This penalty would be structured as a fee, which would be directly allocated to fund solar energy installations for homes throughout the city. Given the geopolitical climate, particularly with the recent developments regarding energy supply from Canada under pressure from political figures such as Trump, it is crucial that we proactively secure alternative energy sources for our residents. This solar initiative would not only provide a backup in case of disruptions but also support long-term energy independence. In the face of these challenges, the need for clean energy has never been more pressing. By investing in renewable solutions like solar power, we can reduce our reliance on external sources, mitigate the risks of potential energy shortages, and help transition Minneapolis toward a more sustainable and resilient energy future. This approach aligns with our broader vision for a cleaner, greener city that prioritizes energy security and environmental stewardship.

4. **Trash Incineration/ Zero Waste:** In 2024, the city passed an ambitious landmark resolution calling upon the county to shut down the HERC incinerator downtown by 2028.[3] How would you expand repair, reuse, recycling, composting rates and other zero waste economy efforts in Minneapolis or at the intergovernmental level so we can be on track to meet that goal?

   4a. My partner is from Asia, and visiting there opened my eyes to how Minneapolis could benefit from looking at successful models around the world, like Japan's advanced recycling system and South Korea's effective waste separation programs. By adopting similar strategies, we could dramatically reduce the amount of waste that needs to be incinerated, decrease pollution, and promote a circular economy where resources are continuously reused.

[2] See the Clean Energy Partnership's 2023 annual report as this is theme 2 for the Minneapolis Clean Energy Partnership

[3] Hennepin County , who owns the HERC, has set a closure date for the HERC that ranges from 2028-2040.

Tools for a Just Transition

5. **Funding to Meet the Scale of the Challenge:** At the urging of community advisory bodies, the City of Minneapolis in 2017 increased the utility franchise fees by 0.5%, which amounts to approximately $2.5 million per year, to create resources for the specific purpose of funding local energy solutions that would *equitably lower* utility bills. In 2023, the Minneapolis City Council voted to raise an additional $10 million for 2024, and annually going forward, explicitly to meet the updated Climate Equity Plan goals. Currently, these funds are not structurally ear-marked, and there is no scale-up plan for funds beyond this. An inaugural 2-year advisory committee called the Climate Legacy Roundtable (CLR) made up of EVAC, CEAC, and Green Zones committee members along with additional community members launched in early 2025. It is not yet clear what specific level of input and co-governance this community advisory body will have.

    a. In your opinion, what amount of annual funding does the City need to implement its goals in time? Please use *specific numbers* (we understand they are estimates/ballparks!). 15 Millions

    b. Should these funds be placed in a dedicated fund or in the general fund? Why or why not? I believe these should be fees that come from the utility company, not the community.

    c. How should Minneapolis residents be involved in governance of the money raised (either through CLR and/or beyond) and how much procedural weight should that input carry? I believe more of the Minneapolis community should get involved, so they can help their own health and well-being of the future.

6. **Heating & Cooling Systems:** There are growing local and national examples of “district heating” systems that use existing water pipe systems or ground-source heating to heat and cool buildings.[4-5] Some city governments have launched city-owned district energy systems to enable a community-wide transition from fossil fuels to renewables. What role would you like to see district heating playing, if any, in a strategy towards ending reliance on fossil fuels for heating and cooling? I would like to see more heat pump system in Minneapolis

7. **Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Minneapolis Clean Energy Partnership:** In 2013, the City discussed a potential municipalization of the gas and electric utilities as a way to reach the City’s ambitious Climate Action Plan goals more quickly, equitably and affordably. Instead, in 2014, the city created the "Minneapolis Clean Energy Partnership" to allow the utilities time to demonstrate good faith on their promise to be good partners with the City. This whole process coincided with the expiration of the City's 20-year franchise agreements with both Centerpoint & Xcel, which got renegotiated in 2014 and shortened from 20 years to 10 years. These agreements expired and were renegotiated again in 2024,[6] offering a pivotal moment for reflection on the effectiveness of this first-in-the-nation Partnership:

    a. For this new flexible agreement (2025-2034), what criteria do you believe the City should use to measure whether the Minneapolis Clean Energy Partnership has been effective in achieving the City’s goals? I believe the city should set a more ambitious goal for 2025-2034 to make up for falling short of the 2024 target.

[4] Examples nationally: Framingham, Massachusetts is piloted networked geothermal heating systems.
[5] Examples locally: Towerside Development on the East Bank; District Heating in Minneapolis downtown; EcoDistrict in St. Paul.
[6] City website with comprehensive information on the new agreements.

b. How frequently would you like the city to evaluate the progress towards its goals under the new flexible-duration agreement? (e.g. once at the end, annually, at the midpoint, etc). This should be reviewed every quarterly

c. If the utilities were to fail again in their obligations to the City, what actions would you see the City take to protect the interests of its constituents? I would offer a solar system, as I currently use a mini EcoFlow setup, which I purchased during the COVID-19 pandemic. I plan to upgrade to a full home solar system later this year.

Our City in Context

8. **Minneapolis Priorities for State Level Rules, Regulations -** The city has authority to advocate on behalf of residents' interests to influence not only state level policy, but also specific regulation and rules governing the monopoly utilities that operate in Minneapolis communities. What top priorities on energy would you work to include in your intergovernmental affairs agenda to the Public Utilities Commission and/or the state Legislature? To answer this question, I would need to first understand the rules and regulations that would apply to me as mayor. I believe in being transparent and never making promises I can't keep, especially before I even take office. Therefore, I'll need to skip this question for now until I've had the chance to review the relevant regulations.

9. **Sources of Where Our Electricity Comes From -** While the City can govern its own local energy goals, energy from the larger electric power grid will continue to be produced to supplement the energy produced locally in the city limits. Minneapolis residents have paid and will pay for the cost of the infrastructure and the risks/benefits of it all for decades. Every energy technology comes with a unique set of features, hazards, and vested interests. How would you, if given the opportunity, engage with the following energy technologies in order to meet the city's demand for electricity? (*E.g.* increased/advocated for, banned, phased out, continued at current levels, etc).

    a. Coal- phase out
    b. Wind - advocated
    c. Nuclear – phased out
    d. Fracked gas - banned
    e. Solar – increase - advocate
    f. Green hydrogen - advocate
    g. Carbon capture & sequestration- phased out
    h. Nuclear- phased out
    i. Other forms of hydrogen (grey, blue, yellow, etc).
    j. Trash burning -phased out

10. **Nuclear & Minneapolis Drinking Water** - Xcel Energy's nuclear power plant at Monticello is about 30 miles up the Mississippi river from the city of Minneapolis's main drinking water intake. In recent years, spent fuel storage casks at Monticello have been leaking tritium which has moved through the water table to the river. What line of action would you pursue to protect the City's interests in this regard? To be honest , I would prioritize exploring a more modern and efficient water treatment system for Minneapolis. The current system is over a century old, and I'm certain there are more advanced technologies available today. As someone who stopped drinking and using Minneapolis tap water due to concerns about arsenic contamination, which caused me to feel ill, improving the water quality would be one of my top priorities. This is a critical issue that needs immediate attention.