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Running for Ward 11 City Council

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2025 City Candidate Questionnaire

Thank you for filling out our 2025 City 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.

Climate change is not a distant threat—it's here, shaping our daily lives. From rainy summers to wildfire smoke to extreme heat and little snowfall in the winter, our communities are already feeling the impact—especially low-income neighborhoods, who are hit first and worst. Minneapolis must act boldly: cut building emissions, electrify transit, and transition quickly to clean, renewable energy. And we need resilience—which means stronger green infrastructure, a healthier urban tree canopy, and charging stations throughout our city to help us withstand future storms, droughts, and heatwaves.

Those least responsible for this crisis have borne the greatest burden, and we owe it to them—and to future generations—to lead with urgency, equity, and innovation. Together, we can build a cleaner, stronger, and more resilient Minneapolis.

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.

Minneapolis is falling short of its energy efficiency goals, and the burden is hitting low- and moderate-income households the hardest—families that already spend the highest share of their

income on energy. That inequity is unacceptable. I will break down barriers so that every household can access affordable, energy-saving upgrades. I will support proven programs like the Green Cost Share, which lowers the cost of energy-efficient improvements, and the Tree Canopy program, which helps residents save energy via tree canopies. I will also strengthen partnerships with neighborhood organizations to ensure historically excluded households benefit fully. I support the Minneapolis Climate Legacy Initiative, which takes action to cut greenhouse gas emissions while reducing racial and economic disparities in clean energy access. To combat the loss of federal incentives, I will push Minneapolis to double down on innovation and collaboration—working with nonprofits and the state legislature to secure additional funding. We must educate residents about the benefits of retrofits and ensure property owners understand the long-term financial and community value. I will also hold Xcel and CenterPoint accountable to their clean energy commitments so Minneapolis can meet its climate goals. Finally, I will expand retrofit incentives, streamline access for residents, and create pathways that lower energy bills for families.

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. 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?

Meeting our clean energy goals requires stronger collaboration between the City, our communities, and Xcel. Solar must be accessible to everyone—not just homeowners—which means expanding community and rooftop solar for low-income households and communities of color.

I will use the City's role in the Clean Energy Partnership to cut red tape, lower costs, and open pathways for local solar projects. I will champion community-driven solutions like solar gardens, partner with state and county leaders to stop utility roadblocks, and hold Xcel and CenterPoint accountable to their clean energy commitments.

Minneapolis should not just participate in the clean energy transition—it should lead it.

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. 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?

I'm glad that the HERC incinerator will be shut down because of its harmful public health impacts—but that's only the first step. To truly combat the climate crisis, we must reduce waste at the source: cut unnecessary packaging, improve sustainable materials, and keep recyclables and reusables out of landfills.

Minneapolis has set ambitious goals: 75% recycling or composting by 2030 and zero landfill waste. To get there, the City must expand access to composting, repair, reuse, and recycling. I will:

- Require composting for households and businesses.
- Strengthen education so residents know what can be recycled or composted—and why it matters.
- Expand the Green-to-Go ordinance to phase out single-use packaging and plastics.
- Create neighborhood reuse and repair hubs and grow a circular economy with local businesses.

At the regional level, I will work with Hennepin County and the State to align waste goals, modernize infrastructure, and ensure workers are protected during the transition. Together, we can move on from reliance on the HERC to a cleaner, sustainable, zero-waste economy that creates jobs and reduces harm.

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.
- o 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!).

Realistically, we will need \$25–50 million annually to achieve our goals on time. We must secure the resources our experts and city staff identify as necessary—whether through scaling up current investments or reallocating existing funds.

We also need to be honest about the challenges ahead. Labor and training shortages remain a major barrier to meeting our weatherization and renewable energy targets. Addressing this problem will require new strategies and expanded partnerships. We cannot simply raise property taxes to fill this gap. Those most responsible for climate change—utilities and energy

companies—must contribute their fair share. To make this possible, we will need strong collaboration with the State, the County, federal partners, nonprofits, and private foundations. This is ambitious, but it's achievable if we commit to the funding and partnerships required.

- o Should these funds be placed in a dedicated fund or in the general fund? Why or why not?

I believe these dollars should be placed in a dedicated fund to guarantee that they are used for their intended purpose. Just as importantly, there must be strong oversight and transparency in how these funds are managed. I look forward to engaging in open dialogue with community members about how future allocations should be prioritized.

- o 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 the priorities and concerns of Minneapolis residents must guide how these funds are governed. When it comes to governance, Minneapolis residents must have a direct role—through public hearings, active engagement with their council members, and clear channels for input. Councilmembers are elected to represent and involve their constituents, and that partnership is essential to making sure these funds are distributed in ways that truly reflect community priorities.

- 6. **Funding to 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. 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?

Minneapolis should actively pursue district heating as part of a broader clean-energy strategy, especially in dense neighborhoods and commercial corridors—where it can have the greatest impact. District heating should work alongside building electrification and energy efficiency upgrades to create a resilient, affordable, and sustainable energy system. I support expanding and modernizing district networks, transitioning them away from fossil fuels toward electrification, hydrogen, or biomass, and integrating advanced tools like battery storage and microgrids. The challenge is building reliable infrastructure at a fair cost—and that's where strong City leadership is essential. Minneapolis can lead by committing municipal buildings as early subscribers, helping to anchor new systems.

- 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, offering a pivotal moment for reflection on the effectiveness of this first-in-the-nation Partnership:

- o 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?

These agreements must be judged not only by their environmental impact, but also by the benefits they deliver to our residents. That means tracking reductions in carbon emissions, the share of electricity generated from wind and solar, and whether utility companies are actively repairing past harms—or continuing to stand in the way of community-led renewable energy efforts.

- o 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).

Progress should be tracked quarterly and reported to the public through a transparent dashboard.

- o 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?

If utilities continue to miss the mark, the City must be ready to take stronger steps—including exploring alternative models for how we deliver energy. First, we need to understand the root cause of failure. Was it a lack of will, a lack of resources, or something else entirely? When it's a lack of will, there must be real consequences. That means holding utilities accountable through stronger disincentives, re-negotiating agreements with tougher accountability measures, or even exploring municipalization if they continue to fall short.

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?

My priorities include:

- Full home weatherization and electrification resources, with a goal of reducing energy burden to no more than 6% for all low-income residents by 2030.
- Electrifying heating sources and identifying carbon-free alternatives to heat homes and businesses.
- Partnering with constituents and organizations to push for legislation phasing out methane gas as a heating source, with costs borne by polluters—not consumers.
- Ensuring equity during the transition by providing support to low-income residents so the shift is affordable and accessible for all.

Beyond energy, we must invest in a holistic vision for sustainability: creating green jobs and workforce training, expanding renewable and efficient energy in homes and businesses, growing our tree canopy, advancing carbon capture strategies like biochar, strengthening our local food supply while reducing waste, and building out electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

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).

- Coal
- Wind
- Nuclear
- Fracked gas
- Solar
- Green hydrogen
- Carbon capture & sequestration
- Nuclear
- Other forms of hydrogen (grey, blue, yellow, etc).
- Trash burning

I will lean on experts to guide energy decisions, always prioritizing impact and fiscal responsibility. Wind and solar with storage are the proven, cost-effective solutions we need right now—and acting quickly will save us even more. We must phase out carbon-based energy as swiftly as possible and stay focused on real solutions that work today.

- Coal - Phase out ASAP
- Wind – Increase
- Nuclear – Increase
- Fracked gas - Ban
- Solar - Increase

- o Green hydrogen – Increase ASAP
- o Carbon capture & sequestration – Increase—but not a long-term solution
- o Other forms of hydrogen (grey, blue, yellow, etc). – I would need more information to make an informed decision
- o Trash burning – If it's done right, we can recapture energy

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?

Clean drinking water is a necessity and a precious resource. To avoid public health risks, we must do everything we can to protect it. That means working closely with the Mississippi River Watershed District and upstream partners to prevent contamination, while also ensuring that Xcel Energy is held accountable for cleaning up past damage and preventing future leaks.

Through the Climate and Infrastructure Committee and the Intergovernmental Relations Committee, we have an opportunity to strengthen our memoranda of understanding with the Watershed District so these concerns are addressed more effectively. I am also committed to working with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), the federal EPA, and the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to determine the best long-term strategies to safeguard Minneapolis's drinking water.