

*Troy Barksdale, Patty Hartmann and Isaac Russel failed to fill out our questionnaire. To inform voters as best we can, MNYC brought in relevant information from candidates' websites when possible.*

- 1. If elected, will you work to remove the affordable housing exemption in our city's Rent Stabilization Ordinance? If NO, why? If YES, how?**
  - **Troy Barksdale:** does not have this answer on website.
  - **Patty Hartmann:** does not have this answer on website.
  - **Saura Jost:** I want to work to make sure we get any exemptions right. At the end of the day, I know renters are getting priced out of their neighborhoods now, and they need help. I think it's best to see how the exemptions we have now normalize a little bit, and that way we can look at the full picture to see what exemptions, if any, are working, and making changes from there.
  - **Isaac Russel:** does not have this answer on website.
- 2. If elected, would you work to reduce the length of the new construction exemption; remove its retroactive application; and ensure it no longer applies to subsidized affordable housing? If NO, why? If YES, how?**
  - **TB:** does not have this answer on website.
  - **PH:** does not have this answer on website.
  - **SJ:** All of us deserve safe, affordable, and stable housing, and I think to that end, the more we can have our policy geared to helping those who need it most is my goal. I want some time to look at the data from the latest round of exemptions. Generally, we should exempt for as little time as possible and prioritize keeping deeply affordable housing rates low. At the end of the day, changes need community input and data from all stakeholders, and with my background in construction and community organizing, I'm ideally situated to help make sure we get as close to the goal of keeping rent affordable in Saint Paul as possible so that no one is priced out of our neighborhoods.
  - **IR:** does not have this answer on website.
- 3. What is your perspective on the enforcement of our city's Rent Stabilization Ordinance? What are your ideas for how it could be improved?**
  - **TB (from website):** The city council must admit its mistakes in the implementation of the ordinance to take pressure off the rental market. Included in the exemptions to the rent increase limit are properties designated as affordable housing. The current version of the ordinance is a half measure that has compromised the integrity of the legislation's purpose. To me there seems to be two major threads along which we could act. The first is the complete abolition of the rent stabilization ordinance. This would once again move all the rental units back into a singular unrestricted tier. Now this move in and of itself does not solve any of the issues surrounding the rental market that led to the rent stabilization referendum in the first place. However it allows for better flexibility from a policy standpoint when addressing the issues causing

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the rental market strain. As it stands right now, any legislation moving forward has to be designed with precise calculations involving the limits set by the rent stabilization ordinance. The other way forward is once again amending the rent stabilization ordinance to allow for a higher percentage that landlords can raise rent on an annual basis. Our current 3% increase limit is the most stringent in the country. This is also not a very popular measure but it would ease pressure in the restricted tier of the rental market. My proposal would be tying allowed increases in rent to the inflation rate plus a fixed percentage instead of having a hard 3% limit. This would allow for the landlord incomes to steadily increase with inflation, increasing the margins they have for improvements and maintenance. Along with increasing the allowed rate that rent can be raised, there is a need to have incentives attached to capital improvements. This is what the ordinance has been sorely lacking: other policies and programs that work in tandem with it. Not only should the city council aim to improve affordability, it needs to do its part to induce the best quality possible in rental units. Helping to minimize the burden associated with the cost of improvements will naturally minimize the need to raise rents. In the end, addressing the issue of rental stabilization and the rental crisis at large requires enacting a series of policies, instead of trying to put together one large policy or program that is designed to adjust the entire market. I am running on a platform of sensible reforms that aren't afraid to eliminate policies that were proposed with good intentions but resulted in negative consequences. As a council member, it would be my job to challenge the governing establishment and make sure that policy is crafted in ways that limit unintended side effects.

- **PH:** does not have this answer on website.
- **SJ:** I have heard from many renters that they do not feel the Rent Stabilization Ordinance is being properly enforced. I think that we will need more staff to help make sure the ordinance is being enforced and need to make sure that we are connecting renters with the resources and people needed if their landlords may not be following the ordinance. I also think that we need clear expectations on the exemptions between our renters and landlords. In addition, I want to revisit tenant protections which the city council originally approved in 2019 to help provide renters with access to housing and stability.
- **IR (from website):** When I was living in that homeless shelter, I felt embarrassed to stand at the street-level door waiting to be buzzed in. That 13-year-old me needed that next unit of affordable housing to be available. That home I needed is not being built because of rent control, and that is why rent control isn't a solution for our housing crisis. Permits for multi-family housing (affordable housing) are down 48% compared to last year while Minneapolis' permits are up. This lack of new construction and lower property values because of rent control puts increasing pressure on property tax payers (which renters also pay), and this especially hurts families with low or fixed incomes. This threatens the fiscal

health of our city. Also, housing shortages lead to higher rents for rent-burdened families. Essentially, many of the neediest people aren't helped, and that is not the housing policy we need. Rent control is failing St. Paul because we need to build more homes for people. We need pragmatic solutions to build affordable housing and homes for first-time home buyers instead of ideological battles over policy. This includes private capital, public funds, and smart policy. The need for housing in our Ward and across the city is immense, and the city has limited resources. We can't do this alone. Protect existing rent control exemptions. Pass a 30-year new construction exemption.

- i. Connect residents with state resources to assist in paying their rents.
  - ii. Find innovative ways to incentivize affordable housing development.
  - iii. Work to keep construction and development moving forward at the Highland Bridge site.
  - iv. Review ways to construct new types of housing.
  - v. Convene a working group to propose recommendations on how to increase construction and renovating by simplifying our permitting and construction code
4. **The City of St. Paul has long discussed the need for administrative citations as a tool to ensure compliance with city ordinances such as Minimum Wage; Earned Sick and Safe Time; and now, our Rent Stabilization Ordinance. Do you support the implementation of administrative citations in our city? Why or why not?**
- o **TB**: does not have this answer on website.
  - o **PH**: does not have this answer on website.
  - o **SJ**: Yes, absolutely. The ordinances that are enforced through our administrative citations help protect our workers and our families. If companies are not willing to play by the rules of the road, we should not allow them to continue with their predatory behavior without consequence. I know that this is an issue that would take a 7-0 vote on the Council, and I want to make sure we create some well-crafted policy to make sure those citations are a real deterrent to violations of our labor laws or any ordinance in our city.
  - o **IR**: does not have this answer on website.
5. **This election, St. Paul voters get to decide if we will increase our city's sales tax by 1% over the next 20 years in order to make an unprecedented investment in our roads and parks. Will you be voting in favor of or against this proposal in November? Why? If you will not vote in favor, what are your ideas for how we can improve the city's roads and parks?**
- o **TB**: does not have this answer on website.
  - o **PH (from website)**: Our city is proposing to levy the highest sales tax found anywhere in Minnesota. We should not burden our businesses or our residents with more city sales taxes. On October 1, a metro-wide 1% increase in sales tax goes into effect. This raises our local city sales tax to 8.875%. If the proposed 1% city sales tax is also enacted, it would push St. Paul's rate to 9.875%--the highest

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in Minnesota. Nearby Wisconsin's sales tax is 5%. If St. Paul enacts this additional 1% sales tax, it would impose one of the highest sales taxes anywhere in the nation. This would create a disincentive for people to patronize St. Paul businesses. We need to support our small, local businesses and restaurants. They create financial opportunity and empower our residents. In Minnesota, the sales tax rate for online sales and delivered items, is based on where the purchaser lives. Our residents would pay almost 10% in sales tax for any online purchases. This will include any big ticket appliance or other item requiring delivery. Sales tax is a regressive tax; its greatest financial burden falls on our poorest residents who can least afford it. This proposed sales tax not only hurts St. Paul businesses, it burdens all who live in St. Paul.

- **SJ:** I'll be voting yes on the 1% sales tax. Our roads and infrastructure are at a tipping point, where if we don't make a significant investment now, we'll be looking at even greater expenses later. After years of kicking the can down the road, it's time we take significant steps to ensure our infrastructure works for all of us. I'm excited to bring my background in engineering to this historic investment - it will allow us to improve our maintenance, upkeep, and replacement processes and help make our infrastructure accessible, equitable, and sustainable.
- **IR:** does not have this answer on website.

**6. More than ever before, people are grappling with isolation and loneliness. How will you use your role to foster connection and a sense of place in St. Paul? How do you plan to protect and invest in public spaces?**

- **TB:** does not have this answer on website.
- **PH:** does not have this answer on website.
- **SJ:** In terms of space, I think it means continuing to make investments in our institutions like our community centers, libraries, and parks. I know that this goes beyond our physical spaces, too. Civic engagement is a central part of my campaign. It requires significantly more organizing than just talking about a single issue, but really making it feel like people are being heard. I know that to deal with the isolation that many in our community face, it's also going to take more than a conversation at the doors. It's also going to take community programming, educational opportunity, early and affordable mental health screenings and services, especially for our young people. I'm looking forward to helping to shape how we address the mental health of our students and getting them the support that they and their families need, with our school board, county, and state leaders, too.
- **IR (from website):** Ward 3 Internship Program. Our neighborhood is very fortunate to have many young people brimming with enthusiasm for public service. We need to invest in these young people. That is why I will create a program that offers internships through the Ward 3 council member's office. This opportunity will teach young people how to do public policy, listen to the

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diverse concerns of constituents, and professional mentorship. To make this opportunity equitable for all, we will work to make sure these opportunities will be paid. Ward 3 Scholarship. Investments don't stop at an internship program. What better way can we invest in our youth than to provide students scholarships to go to school? As council member, I want to use this position to raise funds and provide scholarships to our high school students as they head to college. I believe together we can provide our young people the help they need in a value-based way that shows we as a community is invested in our shared future!

### **7. If elected, what would your approach to public safety look like?**

- **TB (from website):** The city budget needs appropriate reallocation of its expenditures if it wants to be serious about combating inequalities in public safety. This begins with addressing our police expenditures. Policing is a very visible safety measure, yet it comes with its inherent limits. Policing is largely a reactionary measure. Having good response times to emergencies is very important, no debate about that. For me, however, being proactive, in eliminating criminal activity & mitigating public safety risks, is paramount. Investing in our communities is the best way to ensure the best public safety. I am partially referring to alternative methods of supporting neighborhood security measures, as community members have to be at the forefront of resolving community issues. On a broader scale, the investment in education, mental health & addiction services, job security, domestic stability, housing availability, and community fellowship, are our best policies for inducing long term public security.
- **PH (from website):** Our most essential basic services concern public safety. The safety of residents should be the city's highest priority. One of the most common concerns I hear about is the danger posed by the increase in car-jackings and break-ins. One of my first acts on the council will be to propose a resolution to convene a blue-ribbon panel to analyze our public safety issues, including an analysis of data regarding uncharged felony offenses and our use of prosecutorial discretion. The purpose will be to identify strategies proven to reduce crime. I support a fully staffed police force, positive police-community engagement, including social services to help residents in need to develop productive social connections and increase employment skills. A community that feels safe is vibrant and more engaged. We need to provide for adequate police officers and firefighters. Our first responders are a resource that protects all of us, and remains a critical public need.
- **SJ:** All our neighbors, regardless of their background deserve to feel safe in our communities. That's why I'm for an "all of the above" approach to public safety – police, emergency first responders, and our non-police responders are asked to do so much, and we need a clear delineation of responsibilities and funding that reflects those specific programs, roles, and responsibilities. We are also safer

when we make investments in our community's basic needs and in community programming, especially for our youth. Improving public safety starts with focusing on proactive resources and tools that can help prevent safety challenges before they occur. I'm particularly excited to collaborate with the County Attorney Choi's office in getting crisis services to our young people and their families.

- **IR (from website):** I believe safety is a fundamental right for all. I have lived in places where my life was threatened by gang members, and I have seen how school fights can escalate out of control. That is why public safety is so important to me. Investing in public safety allows children to learn in safe schools, families to enjoy parks, vehicle owners feeling safe parking their cars on streets, and people to be safe as they frequent their favorite businesses. People in our Ward continue to deal with catalytic converter theft, car jackings, property crimes, and are concerned for their safety on transit and downtown. My experience as the Chair of the Neighborhood Safety Community Council shows that we need smart investments to keep the public safe while addressing the root causes of crime. We must accomplish both of these without defunding or redistributing the police budget. We must be proactive.
  - i. Invest in programs that reduce gun violence.
  - ii. DO NOT defund law enforcement.
  - iii. Recruit and train law enforcement officers that form strong relationships with the community and are accountable in ways other departments are not.
  - iv. Make sure our schools, law enforcement, and families are sharing information to help prevent crime before it happens.
  - v. Continue to invest in strategies that eliminate catalytic converter and vehicle theft.
  - vi. Invest in safety by design such as increased lighting, better lines of sight vegetation, and cleaning and maintenance of public spaces.
  - vii. Deploy mental health, social workers, and housing specialists to calls when appropriate.

**8. This summer, the Twin Cities has experienced record levels of poor air quality. We know that St. Paul has the opportunity — and the responsibility — to be a leader on climate change solutions across our state. How will you show up to make St. Paul a carbon-neutral city by 2050, per our Climate Action & Resilience Plan?**

- **TB (from website):** I believe in the lofty goals set forth by Saint Paul's adoption of the Climate Action & Resilience Plan [CARP]. To this end, however, it is my view that the City Council has to continue pushing innovative solutions to our climate issue. This is inherently tied to solving social inequities. A good many of the suggested methods in CARP are simply not feasible for many Saint Paul citizens. For example, buying locally grown produce from farmer's markets is a highlighted method of stimulating the economy, living healthily, and reducing

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carbon footprint: truly a paragon of sustainability, yes. However, many Saint Paul residents either can't afford these goods or don't have great access to them. If we want to fully realize the stated goals in CARP, combating issues of food deserts and wage gaps is imperative. Comprehensive solution making entails seeing the intersections between connected issues.

- PH: does not have this answer on website.
- SJ: As a civil engineer, I am looking forward to bringing my technical expertise in building design and transportation systems to the city government to help make sure our infrastructure will be climate resilient. As an engineer, I understand how critical this challenge is as I face it every day professionally. I want to see the City take full advantage of federal dollars from the Inflation Reduction Act to connect our people, businesses, and city with much needed climate resilient options. We must design new buildings with more sustainable materials, clean energy, and utilize urban planning with modernized transit options and housing. I envision a St. Paul where people can be more local – where you can easily walk, bike, or take public transportation to do your shopping, get to work, and enjoy your neighborhood. I envision that we spread that out to all parts of St. Paul, especially areas that have been underserved in the past, which have been traditionally low-income and areas with people from our BIPOC communities. We know from community forums in the past that these communities are asking for additional transit investment and tree cover, and we should work to do that as well.
- IR (from website): We continue to see the effects of climate change. We are experiencing more extreme weather phenomenon as the planet continues to warm closer to the 1.5 degrees celsius. These effects are not just on TV, but they are affecting our Ward. The freeze-thaw cycle is contributing to potholes, heating our public buildings is becoming more expensive, and the increasing intensity of storms challenges our city infrastructure. We need to look at what the city can do to combat the climate crisis.
  - i. Connect residents with resources in the Carbon Free by 2040 and the Inflation Reduction Act to help weatherize homes, install solar, and invest in energy efficient appliances.
  - ii. Leverage state and federal resources to help begin electrification of heating for public buildings and expand electric vehicle infrastructure.
  - iii. Install solar on appropriate public buildings.
  - iv. Continue to bolster St. Paul's natural tree canopy.
  - v. Continue implementation of St. Paul's Climate Action and Resilience Plan.

**9. Creating opportunities for St. Paulites to choose between different modes of transportation is critical for a more sustainable future. How will you invest in our public transportation system?**

- TB: does not have this answer on website.

- PH: does not have this answer on website.
- SJ: I believe that our city should be easy to travel, whether you walk, drive, bike, or take public transit. Providing public transportation is essential to making sure everyone in our city has access to transportation which thus provides access to economic prosperity. In addition, there are many people that use cars for trips but would use public transportation if it were available. Transportation is also a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, and it is critical that we move towards more public transportation and active transportation options to combat climate change. The more attractive we can make non-single passenger vehicle travel as an option, the better we are positioning ourselves to meet the transit needs of people that need the most assistance and do our part in addressing climate change. I believe we do that by making affordable and reliable public transportation options for folks without vehicles and mobility difficulties, and infrastructure that allows pedestrians and cyclists to safely get to where they are going. To me that absolutely includes dedicated bus lanes, expanded rail options, and stops that allow people to wait comfortably. Exploring either zero fare or nominal fare rides for public transit are worthy of consideration.
- IR: does not have this answer on website.

**10. We know that local governments — including the City of St. Paul — need increased revenue to meet the needs of residents. What ways will you explore generating revenue so that we have the resources we need to build a city that works for all of us?**

- TB: does not have this answer on website.
- PH: does not have this answer on website.
- SJ: We live in a society of so much abundance, and I believe the challenge of our revenue system is making sure that those who have the most are asked to pay their fair share. Budgets are moral documents and must reflect our priorities. To generate more revenue for our city, I plan to partner with the state for more local government aid to be directed to our capital city. As mentioned in the question above, I want to enforce administrative fees and fines on when there are violations by developers/contractors on prevailing wages and project labor agreements for our workers, or corporations not abiding by our safe and sick time or minimum wage, or landlords or property managers for our rent stabilization policies. We need to make sure we are expanding our property tax base through building more housing, making changes to zoning, and developing vacant lots with taxable properties. I also think that we should re-visit Payment in Lieu of Taxes so that our educational institutions, non-profits, hospitals, and churches, can also contribute to our city.
- IR (from website): No city can live up to its aspirations without vibrant economic and business development, even a city like St. Paul that is rooted in a rich history. We face many challenges. Our downtown needs revitalization, we must expand our tax base, and we need to answer the question “what will be the next



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economic chapter of our city.” Robust economic development is equitable and benefits all. I envision a city with a vibrant downtown, thriving neighborhood businesses that are staples of our community, innovative new local-driven development, and opportunities for new fortune 500 companies. We must write that new chapter of St. Paul’s economic story, and I commit to doing just that.

- i. Build a new economic strategy to meet the realities of a post-COVID Ward 3 and St. Paul.
- ii. Regularly meet with business, union, and community leaders to draft recommendations on how to expand our tax base.
- iii. Revitalize downtown by attracting investment in housing and retail, keeping mid-sized companies in place, and finding innovative attractions that bring businesses downtown.
- iv. Work with our district councils to connect local businesses with STAR Grants.
- v. Strengthen housing options by neighborhood nodes that increase foot traffic to local businesses.

**11. Local government is often the place where people can feel the impact of policy decisions, as well as their own power. How will you use your platform and power to build a more participatory, multiracial democracy in our majority BIPOC city?**

- o **TB:** does not have this answer on website.
- o **PH:** does not have this answer on website.
- o **SJ:** My campaign has been all about building up our collective power as a community. That’s been rooted in my leadership since I joined the Mac-Groveland community Council to expand inclusion and engagement, especially to families that look like mine. Ultimately, we need to be able to elevate and center the voices of those who are traditionally excluded in our politics and examine the many intersections of power where we need to challenge entrenched voices. For this campaign, it has meant intentionally building a broad coalition representing many different identities and interests to create a community movement that is equitable, effective, and durable in building the kind of Saint Paul we all want. Our campaign has spent a significant amount of time organizing students, renters, immigrant communities, and parts of the Ward that have been underserved to make sure that we all have a seat at the table. I’m proud of my endorsements from a broad coalition that includes labor, LGBTQIA2S+ groups, environmental advocates, progressives, and faith leaders. I believe that we lift up and sustain each other, and I’m looking forward to continuing to organize with them.
- o **IR (from website):** Residents deserve to see their property taxes reflected in strong city services, parks and rec centers, and infrastructure. We know any community that aspires for great dreams must be built on a foundation of the basics: filling potholes, plowing our roads, building city infrastructure, funding our rec centers, and responding to residents who want to speak to their council

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member. These basics of city government are the important foundation for a strong, equitable, and resilient Ward 3 and St. Paul. I will prioritize fixing our roads, making sure streets are plowed, and building the parks residents rely on. My experience in the Minnesota Senate working on important policy challenges with limited resources prepares me for the short-and long-term budget priorities the city must decide.

- i. Prioritize fast road repair and pothole filling.
- ii. Advocate for investments in belly plows and route software that helps remove snow effectively and efficiently.
- iii. Provide safe working conditions for city staff in parks, recreational centers, libraries, and city departments.
- iv. Continue to remove lead pipes from our city.
- v. Represent residents' interests when contracting city services such as trash.

**12. We believe in working in strong partnership with allied councilmembers. How will you relate to the Minnesota Youth Collective so that we can govern and strategize together, to make progress toward a shared agenda?**

- **TB:** does not have this answer on website.
- **PH:** does not have this answer on website.
- **SJ:** I believe in a philosophy of co-governance. I want to make sure that any group I'm working with, including the Minnesota Youth Collective, is there not just in setting the agenda that is before the council, but that we are actively working to advance that agenda in public. This means meeting long before any Council hearing ever takes place so we can be focused on moving forward in creating meaningful change. I'm hoping we are meeting regularly, that we are communicating clearly, frequently, and honestly, and that if I am ever falling short of your expectations, that you'll let me know so we can continue to move our shared agenda forward.
- **IR:** does not have this answer on website.

**13. Young people need ferocious, risk-taking champions to build the futures they deserve. Tell us about a time in your public leadership when you took a risk. What was the risk? How did it go?**

- **TB:** does not have this answer on website.
- **PH:** does not have this answer on website.
- **SJ:** This election cycle, I let people know that I worked in favor of the rent stabilization ordinance when it originally was passed in 2021. I didn't just vote for it, I organized my neighbors to talk about the issue, why it was important to me, and why it was so important to many of our families. We also worked on the ordinance and listened to our community members at the Macalester Groveland Community Council. I knew that this would likely be a liability for me in Ward 3 because the ordinance didn't receive a majority of votes. At the end of the day, I know it is right that we are helping our working families, low-income people,

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young people, and families of color who make up many of our renters instead of the corporate interests that have stood in the way of any progress toward helping renters. I'm going to continue to stand up for it and do the work, even though it is going to be an uphill climb.

- IR: does not have this answer on website.