

Candidates were asked to respond to the following questions in 200 words or less.

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?

- *GU: Gary Unger did not fill out MNYC's questionnaire and has no website to view stances or policies.*
- Nelsie Yang: Yes. Our city's current rent stabilization ordinance is written so broadly, that no specific protections of tenants are outlined within the spectrum of exemptions for new constructions, further destabilizing opportunities for already disadvantaged, low-income communities to secure safe and stable housing, like an elderly renter whose social security income may not be enough to afford their new rent should a landlord apply for a rental increase above 3% and be approved. This is especially important in Ward 6, where many of my residents are renters residing in apartments and would face the double issue of not being able to afford rent and being able to afford moving.

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?

- *GU: Gary Unger did not fill out MNYC's questionnaire and has no website to view stances or policies.*
- NY: Yes. It's unacceptable that the current new construction exemption went beyond recommendations produced by the Saint Paul Rent Stabilization Work Group. The exemption was also staff led, developer led, and excluded the voices of renters and people who were at the frontlines of pushing for rent stabilization.

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?

- *GU: Gary Unger did not fill out MNYC's questionnaire and has no website to view stances or policies.*
- NY: Saint Paul could have enacted the strongest rent stabilization ordinance in the country, and an ordinance which truly valued the opinion of voters and community organizers who consisted of the most marginalized communities in our city. Rather, what happened were moderate gut amendments to a progressive rent control policy that no longer reflected the interests of majority voters or the city's most poor. With a new progressive and women-led council in the majority, my hope is to strike the existing rent stabilization ordinance, specifically eliminating the prioritization of landlords and rental corporations that allow them to self-certify justifications for rent increases, and restore the original rent stabilization ordinance with variance that takes neighborhood median income into consideration.

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?**
 - *GU: Gary Unger did not fill out MNYC's questionnaire and has no website to view stances or policies.*
 - *NY: Yes, administrative citations can be used as an educational tool to create more transparency about the city's rules and regulations, while preventing the city from acting as another predator against poor communities of color and other marginalized backgrounds who are already criminalized. Criminal charges like a petty misdemeanor that are associated with hefty fines create a fight or flight mindset in marginalized communities, of which they have to choose between not paying a fine or not paying rent, not feeding their family, etc.*
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?**
 - *GU: Gary Unger did not fill out MNYC's questionnaire and has no website to view stances or policies.*
 - *NY: Yes, I will be voting in favor of this proposal because the quality of our roads and parks is a direct investment into the working class community and young people of our city. We are living in times where unexpected damages to our modes of transportation can directly and negatively impact our ability to show up in public - that includes showing up to work, showing up to community events and functions to increase our social and civic awareness, and more. Meanwhile, parks and other city owned recreational spaces have traditionally and historically been reserved for white communities and communities who can afford the cost of youth programming. This investment will help the city reimagine how youth programs are funded, as well as how youth spaces are designed.*

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?

- *GU: Gary Unger did not fill out MNYC's questionnaire and has no website to view stances or policies.*
- *NY: I envision a city where all young people feel safe in their community and home. This is why it's been a priority of mine to be a strong partner of our public schools. Strong schools and strong communities contribute to building stronger families. I also know it to be true that safety is about having enough and not having to live without. Our East Side community has been divested in for way too long. This is why I am a proud advocate for the renovation of our Hayden Heights Library and rebuilding the Duluth & Case Rec Center and Hayden Heights Rec Center. This would ensure that our youth continue to have more safe spaces abundant in programming, digital and interpersonal connectivity, and resources.*

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

- *GU: Gary Unger did not fill out MNYC's questionnaire and has no website to view stances or policies.*
- *NY: As an aspiring abolitionist, I believe in defunding the police and other carceral, punitive institutions, while building systems and conditions in which each and every community can truly thrive without fear. As the political will and imagination to abolish the police grows, reducing funding and police interactions especially with our most vulnerable community members (elders, unsheltered folks, queer people, and people of color), reducing their ability to harm community members, and increasing accountability is imperative. I am committed to:

 - i. Increasing accessibility and funding for youth/adult diversion programs
 - ii. Advocating for removing police from traffic enforcement
 - iii. Ban tear gas and ensure that police utilize less lethal weapons
 - iv. Advocating for restorative justice practices and processes
 - v. Retooling our dispatch system to ensure appropriate response, for example, mental health professionals arriving when someone is in the middle of a mental health crisis or social workers for wellness checks
 - vi. Advocating for reducing the overall budget of the Saint Paul Police Department and allocating resources to affordable housing, wage theft enforcement, creating more opportunities for families and young people to work, play, and learn
 - vii. Improve financial access and security for people and small businesses*

- 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?**
- *GU: Gary Unger did not fill out MNYC's questionnaire and has no website to view stances or policies.*
 - *NY: I have been involved with the development of The Heights alongside the St. Paul Port Authority from beginning to end, ensuring that there was a commitment to truly affordable housing and eliminating institutional barriers to homeownership. Additionally, I have also been organizing alongside the community to commit The Heights as the city's first carbon neutral site, bringing along organizations like MN350 and others to ensure that there will be a locally owned geothermal energy system at The Heights. In shepherding future developments across the St. Paul, I will continue to create pathways for local energy ownership, as opposed to corporate owned energy.*
- 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?**
- *GU: Gary Unger did not fill out MNYC's questionnaire and has no website to view stances or policies.*
 - *NY: The East Side has a homogeneous landscape characteristic where it isn't very walkable to amenities that are too far spaced. We also lack a robust public transit system for those who need it. Throughout the last year, I have served as an active member of the Metro Transit Purple Line work group, focused on connecting transit leaders with all constituents - riders, business owners, and community organizations - the people who would be most severely impacted by ineffective bus routes and a lack of willingness to accommodate legitimate safety and accessibility concerns. Along the way, I also advocated and worked directly to implement Evie Carshare, the nation's first 100% renewable energy powered car share program. These are two examples of how I will continue to prioritize community voice in the city's decisions around public transportation, while also creating sustainable decisions that are carbon-neutral.*

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?

- *GU: Gary Unger did not fill out MNYC's questionnaire and has no website to view stances or policies.*
- *NY: I'd like to partner with legislators to propose a progressive tax system funding public services and redistributing wealth. For example, tribal communities are among the most unhoused with the least homeownership. A policy proposing a tax on homebuyers to create a reparations fund for tribal communities could help build wealth in a unique, meaningful way that also addresses the historical wrongs of government institutions. Our city can only work for all of us, if all of our neighbors and communities are equitably housed.*

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?

- *GU: Gary Unger did not fill out MNYC's questionnaire and has no website to view stances or policies.*
- *NY: I have always practiced co-governing to ensure community voices direct my policy decisions and aspirations. I regularly check in with neighborhood groups, people led organizations, and labor unions who are at the frontlines of fighting for working class families and marginalized groups. I'm proud of the ways in which our office creates community spaces for people to gather and discuss important policies that are impacting their lives and what change they'd like to see in our ward/city. We will continue being creative in community engagement and take initiative to ensure our community has what it needs.*

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?

- *GU: Gary Unger did not fill out MNYC's questionnaire and has no website to view stances or policies.*
- *NY: Young people are among the most radical and progressive minds today, and they are living the consequences of the policy actions made by the generations before them. Using their unique perspectives on culture, society, and politics, I believe co-governing and strategizing with the Minnesota Youth Collective and young people can dismantle institutions, social beliefs, and the status quo. I would like to continue having conversations with staff members and members of the Minnesota Youth Collective to learn about their policy priorities and figure out what a strong partnership between the organization and my office would like.*

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?

- *GU: Gary Unger did not fill out MNYC's questionnaire and has no website to view stances or policies.*

- **NY:** I am strongly opposed to charter school expansions due to the business and profit driven concept that this type of schooling system operates on. It is detrimental to our public school system. I have opposed all loan requests for charter schools in my first term, even when the vote was simply to determine whether the Council would be a conduit for charter schools enabling them to accept loans from other entities. I am proud to have Councilmember Mitra Jalali as a strong ally voting against these requests with me. Prior to my transition on the Council, these requests have easily been approved by the City Council. Staff members always recommend approval of it too. It felt risky speaking out about a highly contentious issue, but I did so because this was about fighting back corporate greed and protecting public education. While we still don't have enough votes to defeat these requests, I am proud that my actions have had a ripple effect. I am eager to see whether more Councilmembers will be joining in solidarity with me and Councilmember Jalali.