

*Alexander Bourne and Pa Der Vang 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?**

- **Alexander Bourne:** does not have this answer on website.
- **Cheniqua Johnson:** I have to be honest with you, I don't think picking away at exemptions will be my approach because my personal approach to rent stabilization is the whole ordinance and its enforcement measures need to be revisited. I don't believe it's working overall. With 60% of our renter base exempt from the ordinance, the question remains "is it working for developers and renters?" Yes, we need more affordable housing AND is the current exemption actually providing that? With the current 20-year exemption, how are the rental properties that are exempt? I am committed to looking at the full landscape once elected and working on addressing it as a whole.
- **Pa Der Vang:** 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?**

- **AB:** does not have this answer on website.
- **CJ:** As mentioned above, I believe the whole ordinance needs to be reworked. I would like to see a full study conducted solely on the current, prospective, and future affordable housing stock. I would like to work with our labor partners, community and hopefully local developers, construction companies, and community members to truly dive into the overall concerns facing affordable housing. While federally regulated, I simply want to make sure we are building affordable housing units and long term sustainable options, rather than options that just serve the sole purpose of a tax exemption investment in the short term. If the exemption is due to the overall percent of the rent control, then maybe we need to work on the 3% rent increase. If landlords, property owners, and new construction projects are becoming exempt to the 3% solely by providing their investment through a couple updates, a unit vacancy, property taxes, or inflation costs alone - is the 3% actually plausible? If not now, what do our partners need in order to make it plausible? As a Council member, I will be spending quite a bit of time answering that question.
- **PDV:** 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?**

- **AB:** does not have this answer on website.
- **CJ:** As mentioned above, overall I support rent stabilization. Improvements should include ensuring stabilization ordinances benefit people of all incomes

and demographics, and do not harm low-income renters. In addition, if we find that the current affordable housing stock has clear instances of abuse of their exemption, poor maintenance, and intentional displacement, I will support a more permanent solution that can actually be enforced along with fully funding the Department of Safety and Inspections to ensure our property owners are actually holding up their end of the bargain. I was a renter in Saint Paul for a while. I know what it feels like for there to be uncertainty around whether I'll be able to afford where I currently live next year, or if I will be displaced. Housing affordability is what I'm focused on. I am also a huge supporter of our labor and union partners and would still like to see multipurpose development thrive here in Saint Paul. To be clear, half of the enforcement issues we are running into now should have been addressed BEFORE our Saint Paul residents and community voted on it. As a voter who supported the ordinance when it was on the ballot, I am disappointed that the exemptions came after it passed. When it comes to enforcement, I would like to rework the self-recertification process, I would like to continue to work with City staff on truly making the formula used to determine the City's approval or disapproval of rent stabilization exemptions more transparent and also create a community engagement arm for tenants who are having problems with their landlords and whose property rent is increased.

- **PDV:** does not have this answer on website.
- 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?**
  - **AB:** does not have this answer on website.
  - **CJ:** Yes, accountability is important to me. Our families need time off, our workers deserve a living wage, or renters should feel secure. It should be required of all leaders, and we should be expected to follow through on commitments we make to residents we serve. I support effective measures for ensuring resources continue to be provided and accessible to Saint Paulites.
  - **PDV:** 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?**
  - **AB:** does not have this answer on website.
  - **CJ:** I will vote in favor because the Sales Tax is an opportunity to ensure all residents who use Saint Paul services can benefit from our services. There are 24 projects identified in the sales tax map, and some would be included in Ward 7.

- PDV: 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?**
- AB: does not have this answer on website.
  - CJ: I would advocate for investments into our community parks, recreation centers, libraries, and schools. These community investments are public safety investments. This includes improving relationships between city council, school district and school board.
  - PDV: does not have this answer on website.
- 7. If elected, what would your approach to public safety look like?**
- AB (from website): All 12 city departments will be fully-funded so that the city of St. Paul can truly add value to all residents and visitors.
  - CJ: Following the tragedy at Harding High School, I will be a strong advocate of public safety in our schools and ensure we have no weapons in schools. As a City Council Member, I will advocate for investing in care infrastructure and alternatives to police brutality, violence, and institutionalized racism. I have been an active voice in support of police accountability throughout the state of Minnesota and intend on continuing to do so. But we also need to bring in better officers who come from the community to address the crime we're seeing. As a City Council member, I will be intentional about working with Eastsiders and our office of Neighborhood Safety to invest in community first initiatives. I will also advocate for public safety programs to address rising crime, our overall workforce shortage in local safety departments, and ensuring our community is protected from brutality, unnecessary use of force, and advocated for in the midst of any injustice.
  - PDV (from website): Families and their children need safe communities to walk, bike, and play. I am committed to an inclusive public safety plan that includes social workers, peace officers, youth workers, community organizations, and neighbors who take ownership of their communities, work together in collaboration, and harness their collective voices to ensure safety in their communities.
- 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?**
- AB (from website): When I was a little boy, we knew of places like Bruce Vento Regional Trail, Swede Hollow, and Indian Mounds Regional Park as safe places to meditate or even host events, so we used them. It is imperative that we do all that we can to preserve the fabric of these safe and sacred places as we develop the East Side. It is also important that all development directly benefits low income, youth, elderly, and people with disabilities. New development should

intentionally provide safe access to jobs, recreation opportunities, schools and retail stores for every East Sider. We believe that all of this can be accomplished without environmental harms. The water we drink and the air we breathe needs to be the cleanest of all.

- CJ: My part of Saint Paul is poised to be among the most impacted by changes to our global climate. We must accelerate implementation of the City's Climate Action Plan, focusing on ways to reduce carbon emissions that will also help families reduce utility bills and transportation costs. My commitment is to:
    - i. Work to make it easier to walk, use transit, and bike within the Eastside and to connect to other parts of the city, as well as work with the state and Met Council to increase bus transit funding, better bus service, and increased service.
    - ii. Grow green jobs in our city and create better career pathways into household-sustaining wages in careers in clean energy and clean transportation.
    - iii. Fight for state and federal funding to ensure we can successfully implement the city's Climate Action Plan to weatherize more homes, improve the quality of our buildings, and dramatically reduce emissions overall.
    - iv. Advocate for a study on potential lead exposure to Eastside water lines and the overall addressing of water quality specifically on the Eastside including Hillcrest, Pigs Eye Lake, and the 3M plant.
    - v. Ensure that our urban forestry diversification replacement efforts are strategic, funded, and learning from our past so that we don't lose more of our beautiful tree canopy.
  - **PDV (from website):** I am passionate about environmental health for all communities and just practices to ensure Eastside residents do not bear the brunt of industry practices that are harmful. I will secure resources to improve and make more accessible the environmental spaces that exist in Ward 7. I will leverage city resources to promote healthy air and water quality, green environments, and rebuilding of open land spaces.
- 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?**
- **AB (from website):** Everyone has different preferences when it comes to how they choose commute, but at one time or another everyone is a pedestrian. When drivers maintain safe speeds and practice other safe driving behaviors, safer walking environments are created for you, your loved ones and others in our community. As a city we can do more to protect pedestrians by better enforcing existing laws, installing stop signs, roundabouts and stop lights where neighbors think are best.

- CJ: Transportation is a crucial element to any metro city. Transportation is essential for access to education, healthcare, employment, shopping, etc. I support free bus fares, as the fares contribute a very insignificant amount to general transportation budgets. I will advocate for spaces that are safe for walkability and bikers as well. While we do have motorized shared scooters, we have yet to secure shared bicycles. This too is something I would support. I will be intentional about working to also address the transportation needs and mobility issues for anyone who has physical limitations. My brother is a vulnerable adult. He would not be able to maneuver the public transit system alone. Our elders, our community members with disabilities or physical limitations struggle to get around. It is far overdue to address the limited mobility of public transportation and provide more infrastructure, funding in metro mobility, and overall intentionality around the ADA accessibility of our transit options for everyone.
- PDV: 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?**

- AB: does not have this answer on website.
- CJ: Expanding the Saint Paul tax base will simply take more multipurpose development and frugal spending decisions that decrease displacement, incentivise building, and allow room for more taxpayers. The sales tax could be another attempt to expand the Saint Paul tax base. We should also be intentional about supporting development that will cater to the tax base. Over the years, property taxes will and can only get us so far before our community feels all taxed out.
- PDV: does not have this answer on website.

**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?**

- AB: does not have this answer on website.
- CJ: My platform and power is solely built off the shoulders and backs of my Black ancestors. Our lived experiences in Saint Paul truly is what makes our City special. I will be intentional about ensuring that every single decision I make is always with our community in mind. We have an opportunity to elect a majority BIPOC council for the first time in history. We have the opportunity to elect an all women council for the first time in history as well. If elected, I will be intentional about continuing to show up in my community, engaging voters and residents all throughout the Ward. I will be in spaces government may not always be. Most importantly, my office will be like my campaign team, reflective of our BIPOC majority City and ward. Who we elect, who works as their staff, which neighborhoods they live, which community spaces they're in and



listening to all matter. I'm committed to centering BIPOC voices - all BIPOC voices in that.

- **PDV (from website):** Immigrants of all backgrounds have settled and built communities in Ward 7 for generations. These communities provide support for families and their children to grow and thrive. To ensure future success of our diverse communities, I will advocate for equal rights for all, for the resources that families need to thrive and these include jobs, accessible childcare, quality education, affordable housing, safe neighborhoods, environmental health, and equitable transportation infrastructure.

**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?**

- **AB:** does not have this answer on website.
- **CJ:** Accountability is important and something I never shy away from. I want to be the kind of leader who makes residents and partners feel comfortable when they need to call me up and share concerns or ask questions about something happening at City Hall. I want you to know that you can ask me the tough questions. I also want to be sure to be most accountable to my constituents. I am the candidate who is organizing directly with the community. I am seeking your support and endorsement because I would like to continue our partnership and ongoing relationship. You can expect a response when you reach out about our shared goals and visions, proactive communication, and a continued supporter. That won't change in any election, AND through this work, you will be at my governing table if elected.
- **PDV:** 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?**

- **AB:** does not have this answer on website.
- **CJ:** Personally, I have had to take risks several times in politics because I don't fit into just one box. I pride myself as a leader in standing up for things I feel or my community feels is right, even when others may disagree. One of the issues I am personally passionate about, no matter how unpopular, is standing up against police brutality. In the middle of rural Minnesota in 2020, in a town of mostly all republican leaders, we marched against police brutality - together. We organized community members, law enforcement, republican elected officials, youth, and even parents to join us for a march and rally in Worthington - the first of its kind. We had over 200 people show up for a march directly against police brutality and against the murder of George Floyd. Sometimes, it starts with that leader who can pull those folks in the same room or in this instance, on the same street. At the same time, I also opted to run for DFL Outreach & Inclusion State Party Officer. In a space where there was civil unrest, issues of

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racism and controversy, and then to be within the party structure - we truly needed to make sure our families were indeed centered and heard. I held that march as a Saint Paul leader because greater Minnesota and the Twin Cities should have more opportunities to be in solidarity with one another. I look forward to bringing the same coalition, stepping up to do things that are not just expected and overall leading in a way that places us in positions that are necessary to spark change. I am proud to say that if elected, I will be the youngest Councilmember on the Council. As Nelsie and I are the same age - I am but just a few months older than her :). Ultimately, young people have a place in politics and it is also in office.

- PDV: does not have this answer on website.