

Denise Lamere-Anderson

How long have you lived in your community?

10 years, going on 11!

Please list any notable supporters or groups of supporters for your campaign

SD 45 and SD 46 DFL have both passed resolutions to support Gillian Rosenquist (incumbent) and myself for election to the two open, at-large city council seats that Golden Valley voters will fill with their votes in November. I am early in the process for seeking support from other interest groups that I feel align with my values. I have successfully sought support from one city council member and the mayor of our city, though no public endorsements have been issued yet, as I am saving those asks for a point later in the campaign timeline where they would be most impactful.

What are the most important housing challenges facing your community?

In Golden Valley, we face similar housing issues that many other cities face. We have homelessness, rising rents, and are making the case for further residential development as to address both of these problems as one part of a multi-faceted response. It stands to reason that increasing the housing supply in Golden Valley would serve to drive down the cost of living, which is in the interest of all residents. I have also been following New Hope's Scattered Site Housing Program with a keen interest. In this program, New Hope uses their Economic Development Authority (EDA) to acquire old, vacant single-family homes which have decayed or otherwise not been maintained, tear them down, and erect new homes on the plot. This increases property value, provides step-up housing options for residents of the city, and increases the supply of housing in New Hope. I would have interest in implementing this program, or something similar, in Golden Valley if consultation with housing experts proves encouraging to the endeavor.

The Twin Cities Metro is facing a housing shortage unlike any we have experienced in recent history. What will you do to increase the number of homes available to residents of your community?

Looking into the Scattered Site Housing program to increase the supply of homes available to residents of Golden Valley is of interest to me. I have to admit that housing isn't one of the focuses of my background, so I would make it a priority to hold conversations with experts in housing to find ways in which we can increase the supply of housing in Golden Valley. While housing isn't my policy area of greatest knowledge, I do know that finding innovative ways to increase the supply of housing in Golden Valley will be the crux of the solution to this problem.

REALTORS® hold Diversity, Equity and Inclusion as core values. Please describe how you view the importance of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in your role as an elected official.

First of all, I would advocate for greater diversification of the backgrounds present on our city's commissions. It is common sense that, by pooling together a large set of experiences, identities, and opinions, that broadly-appealing solutions will result from doing so. The inclusion piece is just as important as diversity in this regard; it's one thing to bring more people to the table, but making sure that they're given fair space to weigh in at commission meetings is vital. Second, I would like to start a community-based campaign to take racial covenants out of every land deed in Golden Valley. These are antiquated clauses that have no place in the world of today, and promote ideas of a bygone, xenophobic past in this country's history. Finally, I'd like to work with housing experts to identify more problems with racism and homophobia in housing practices within Golden Valley, and to appropriately tackle these challenges with the support of an organized community against discriminatory practices in the housing market.

Minnesota has one of the largest homeownership gaps between Whites and Blacks, Indigenous, and People of Color. This is one of MAR's primary concerns. What would you propose at the local level to close this homeownership gap?

It is completely unacceptable that the homeownership gap between BIPOC and whites is wider today than it was in 1960, during the Jim Crow era. This means we need to be doing more than we have been when it comes to closing this racial gap in homeownership. The first step in addressing this problem would be simple data transparency. Golden Valley must assemble a publicly-accessible storage of contemporary and historical data that provide the community with the means to analyze and identify factors that have either undermined or aided home ownership by people of color, black folks, and indigenous folks. Second, the city council should employ the regular use of Racial Equity Impact Assessments (REIAs) to evaluate the potential impact of any new housing ordinances/policies on those hailing from historically marginalized communities in Golden Valley. This may also involve developing new, novel metrics for quantifying the racial homeownership gap so that we have more tools to understand and address this issue. Finally, we should aim to create and maintain a peer network dedicated to learning and teaching about the racial gap in homeownership. This will allow for our community to have very difficult, but necessary conversations around this issue so that we can better understand it, and be unified in our solidarity to address it.

How do you think the city can best balance the rights of tenants and property owners to effectively manage rental housing?

As there are property owners that engage in unethical practices, so too are there renters that do the same. However, I am given to understand that renters, more often than not, are more vulnerable in the landlord-tenant relationship. I'd like to find ways to help mitigate this vulnerability while not imposing unreasonable burden on property owners. As the property owner and manager of the home I rent out across the street from me, I know that renters and property owners/managers can have a good relationship. Put most broadly, I believe in taking action to prevent property owners from taking advantage of potentially vulnerable tenants for financial gain. I also believe in holding tenants to reasonable standards outlined in leases that are read and mutually agreed upon between tenants and property owners. One major barrier to achieving a common understanding in a lease is the complex language that is sometimes employed in these documents. One way I would like to see the city help out with this, and put the tenant-property owner relationship on more even footing in Golden Valley, is to offer public resources from the city to help tenants understand their leases before they are signed. No one should need a law degree to understand an important agreement like a lease that will govern the conditions of where they choose to live.

What are your views on property tax rates in your community? Do you have concerns related to the city's property tax rate? If so, how would you address those concerns once elected?

Property taxes are fundamentally regressive given that two neighbors living in homes of widely differing value will pay the same property tax rate as the other, regardless of income. This makes the property tax rate something that should be reviewed with the utmost caution when it is altered. There are two potential extremes to the property tax rate in a city. If this rate is too low, then the city will not generate enough revenue to fund essential public services, resulting in levies on other taxes. If this rate is too high, it acts as a barrier to entry for new homeowners, and incentivizes current homeowners to look elsewhere. Between these extremes is a happy medium that generates a sufficient (and morally reasonable) amount of revenue for funding city services, while not driving current and potential homeowners away from our community. I believe in a property tax rate that is not overbearing on homeowners while generating a reasonable amount of revenue for the city. While I feel that the property tax rate in Golden Valley is acceptable as it is, I'm open to hearing those of the opposite mind. What this really boils down to is the overall tax burden of each individual in our community, and, at the end of the day, the property tax rate is one of many moving cogs in that grand apparatus. Our overarching goal in this respect must be to help codify a tax system that does not overburden our residents. If changing the property tax rate is not the appropriate tool of the day to help in this endeavor, I would commit to looking at the adjustment of other tax rates within municipal purview to help our residents feel supported and within their means to pay taxes.

Please provide links to all social media accounts connected to you or your campaign if any.

<https://www.facebook.com/DeniseforGV/>