

Nathan Coulter

Candidate for: Bloomington City Council - At-Large

How long have you lived in your community?

My entire life - 35 years

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

Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation, Minneapolis Building and Construction Trades, Mayor Tim Busse, all Bloomington legislators

What are the most important housing challenges facing your community?

Housing affordability continues to be a challenge. Home prices, but especially rents, have continued to far outpace income increases and residents are feeling the pinch. Bloomington is especially challenged by virtue of being a built-up city, meaning that new housing almost certainly requires redevelopment, rather than open land.

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?

I have been a consistent and strong advocate for thoughtful redevelopment, and for greater housing - particularly at affordable levels. In Bloomington, this almost certainly means greater density. Our Opportunity Housing Ordinance has been an impressive success story, and I think can serve as a model for how to address housing in a way that isn't just blanket inclusionary zoning or simply cutting checks to developers.

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.

It is critically important. I think many of the challenges that have reasserted themselves in recent years stem from either an inability, or a lack of desire, to have difficult but needed conversations about racial equity specifically. In Bloomington, we have taken these conversations head-on by hiring a Racial Equity Coordinator, adopting a Racial Equity Business Plan for internal City operations, and empowering a Racial Equity Strategic Planning Committee for broader community work.

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?

Our Community Development Department is already working on this very issue. I think there are a number of ways that we can approach it from direct down payment assistance to other programs that encourage more easy building of equity and alternatives to traditional cash down payments.

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

I think that often we've seen proposals come forward that are well-intentioned but needlessly punitive. I believe in having serious conversations and understanding where the balance of power lies, but also understanding that the existence of bad actors is not a reason to punish good ones. I think we can think differently about incentives and why certain choices are made and how the way we do things now need not be the way we do them moving forward. Again, our Opportunity Housing Ordinance is an excellent example of addressing a real issue without simply going back to old solutions.

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?

I always take a balanced approach to property taxes - understanding both that we need to pay for the things we do and that property taxes are inherently regressive. Bloomington is fortunate to have a strong and relatively

balanced property tax base, and our residential property tax rates continue to be among the lowest in the Metro area. I'm certainly concerned about the cost of living in Bloomington, but I think it's easy to think of that as a specific number, rather than what the standards and values of the community are. We had a 2.75% levy increase for this year, and at our Truth In Taxation hearing, the only participants stated that they'd have supported an even higher increase. Oftentimes concerns can be addressed by information and conversation, and I have consistently supported more of both.

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

www.facebook.com/NeighborsForNathan www.twitter.com/NathanCoulter