

VOTER GUIDE Naperville City Council

Find out what key issues that impact Naperville the candidates support or oppose in the Naperville City Council Election 2025.

KEY QUESTIONS

✓ **SUPPORT** ✓ **OPPOSE** ✓ **ABSTAIN**

Do you support or oppose the Grocery Tax Proposal?

Do you support or oppose the creation of new tax incentives?

Do you support or oppose plans to build the Nichols Library Parking Garage?

Do you support or oppose the redevelopment of the 5th avenue area?

Do you support using city resources to help small businesses recover and stay competitive in Naperville?

	Meghna Bansal	Jennifer Bruzan Taylor*	Mary Gibson	Ian Holzhauser*	Nag Jaiswal	Derek McDaniel	Ashfaq Syed	Dr. Benjamin (Benny) White*
Do you support or oppose the Grocery Tax Proposal?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Do you support or oppose the creation of new tax incentives?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Do you support or oppose plans to build the Nichols Library Parking Garage?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Do you support or oppose the redevelopment of the 5th avenue area?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Do you support using city resources to help small businesses recover and stay competitive in Naperville?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

*Indicates incumbent candidate.

VOTER GUIDE

Find out what key issues that impact Naperville this candidate supports or opposes in the Naperville City Council Election 2025.



Meghna Bansal

Naperville City Council Candidate

Candidate Status: Returning Candidate

Campaign Website: meghnaforcouncil.com

Email: meghna@bansalfamily.net

KEY QUESTIONS

Do you support or oppose the Grocery Tax Proposal?

Do you support or oppose the creation of new tax incentives?

Do you support or oppose plans to build the Nichols Library Parking Garage?

Do you support or oppose the redevelopment of the 5th avenue area?

Do you support using city resources to help small businesses recover and stay competitive in Naperville?

	SUPPORT	OPPOSE	ABSTAIN
Do you support or oppose the Grocery Tax Proposal?		✓	
Do you support or oppose the creation of new tax incentives?	✓		
Do you support or oppose plans to build the Nichols Library Parking Garage?		✓	
Do you support or oppose the redevelopment of the 5th avenue area?	✓		
Do you support using city resources to help small businesses recover and stay competitive in Naperville?	✓		



Candidate Biography and Priorities

Meghna Bansal

Naperville City Council Candidate



CURRENT OCCUPATION

Vice President Finance at Q1 Technologies, Inc. overseeing global accounting and finances.

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

BS and MBA in Business and Finance

RELEVANT BUSINESS EXPERIENCE

As a Finance Executive at a global company and elected Township Trustee, I have expertise in fiscal discipline and responsible budgeting. As a member of the Naperville Planning & Zoning Commission, I have first-hand experience securing investments to secure jobs and economic opportunities for Naperville. As a member of the Downtown Advisory Commission, I have been involved in working with businesses and downtown. As an elected member of White Eagle Homeowners board for 8 years, I have been involved with infrastructure, safety and governance. As a member of several non profits including KidsMatter, Indian Community Outreach, etc. I am connected with the causes of our community.



Meghna Bansal

Naperville City Council Candidate



ELABORATE ON YOUR POSITION FOR THE ABOVE KEY QUESTIONS.

With the changing buying trend, local businesses are more in pressure and do need help. I support creating programs and incentives that specifically help small businesses recover from economic challenges and remain competitive. City can help advertise and promote Shop Local initiative, organize and facilitate local hubs, keep taxes under control and promote entrepreneurship. This will not only help build more employment but will also help build stronger economy.

WHAT ARE THE TOP CHALLENGES FACING NAPERVILLE'S BUSINESS COMMUNITY?

Following are the key issues and challenges being faced by Naperville's business community:

1. Youth and Talent Retention
2. Shift to online shopping and retention of businesses
3. Traffic and Infrastructure Concerns
4. Growing unreported retail theft

All the above have a vital impact on cities economic success and will need to be addressed for maintaining viability in coming years.



Meghna Bansal

Naperville City Council Candidate



WHAT IS YOUR ACTION PLAN FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH?

Create an environment and opportunities for the youth to stay in Naperville. Fifth Avenue is one of the ideal places to develop for youths. Building incubation centers will help.

Shop local must be promoted and encouraged, businesses need to be incentivized to stay competitive.

Infrastructure projects have to be better timed and managed as these can have significant impact on the businesses. Washington Bridge is a classic example.

Safety and security has to be enhanced for the businesses. We need our businesses to report such incidents. Addressing this issue through proactive security measures, employee training, and clear reporting systems can help minimize losses and improve overall store safety. Public safety and security including cyber crimes will be the most serious issues that the community will face in the coming years.

HOW WILL YOU COLLABORATE WITH THE NAPERVILLE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

My background is in business and finance, and I have been instrumental in building my business here from Naperville. I am a PZC commissioner and have served as an Elected Trustee for Wheatland Township and understand the importance of enacting good public policies. One of my core platforms is to bring meaningful economic development to Naperville as that is the gateway for making any city a better place. I intend to work very closely with NACC and will be a big advocate in the council as NACC's goal of 'cultivate commerce for building a better future' is aligned with my goals for the city. I intend to work closely with NACC's Businesses Works Committee and attend / participate in each meeting. This would be an opportunity for me to strengthen my relationship with NACC. This would also help me give insight into current events and relevant policy issues.

Being a Businesswomen and a former elected official, I can play an active role with NACCs Women in Business committees on agenda items that may be important to them.

Lastly, I will work to be a trusted partner & counterpart for NACC through open dialogue with the CEO, Chairman, and current board members on any new policy implementation.



Meghna Bansal

Naperville City Council Candidate



WHAT ARE YOUR BUDGET PRIORITIES FOR BUSINESSES?

Naperville has been growing and has become the second largest economy of our state with a proposed budget of over \$641.14 mn. Though the city has managed to keep its budget balanced, I am concerned about numerous short terms and long-term expenses on the horizon pertaining to infrastructure, safety, health & wellness, and federal/state mandated projects. On top of these, growing inflation and unknown natural calamities must be accounted for.

We will continue to find funding for these without increasing the property or sales taxes for our residents/businesses. We will have to make sure that we continue to maintain the AAA bond rating so are at lowest risk of default. Economic development is key, but without compromising residents' safety and City's fabric. We will have to work hard to attract new businesses so we can increase our revenue base while generating more employment. We also have to work extensively on forensic audit of our expenses to save any unnecessary spending. With my extensive finance background, I will be working very closely on this matter.

Supporting smart, affordable housing options that continue to diversify our tax base, while preserving our sense of community.

We also have to continue to work on finding feasible businesses to fill in voids left due to retail businesses moving to ecommerce. Also, more of residents begin to drive electric vehicles, city will see a decline in gas-tax revenue. We must work to find a solution that will mitigate this loss.

WHAT ARE YOUR REVENUE AND TAX STRATEGIES?

We are on the cusp of significant changes for a community of our size. The decisions we make today are going to significantly impact the livability of Naperville for generations to come. While the city needs funds for development, we cannot afford to increase taxes and burden our businesses and consumers. While this is a very broad subject, at the onset I believe we can work on adjustments such as providing property tax relief for businesses, tax credits for hiring and workforce development, real estate and economic development tax incentives, etc.



Meghna Bansal

Naperville City Council Candidate



HOW WILL YOU HELP BUILD A STRONG WORKFORCE PIPELINE FOR NAPERVILLE'S EMPLOYERS?

A good and trained workforce is indeed one of the most critical factors for the success of businesses. Given my background where my business extensively relies on a well trained workforce, I will work with educational institutes to promote more vocational training as well as encourage businesses to build internship and training programs to prepare our workforce pipeline for the years to come.

HOW WOULD YOU HELP BUSINESSES ADAPT TO ECONOMIC CHANGES, NEW TECHNOLOGIES, AND WORKFORCE CHALLENGES?

It is imperative that Naperville remains the top choice for new businesses to open and existing businesses to operate. A strong economy is one of the pillars of our city. Our community has benefited from development projects that occurred 20-30 years ago. Within that time, shopping trends have drastically changed.

A good example of Naperville's "pro-business" mindset and our evolving community is the recent approval of the Block 59 project along with the new Heinen's grocery store. Working with Indian Community Outreach, city was able to bring large businesses like Patel Brothers to occupy old Menards space and Mall of India to occupy old Walmart. In both scenarios city officials created a Business District that would be put towards the redevelopment of properties. We need to encourage such policies and encourage such organizations to build such growth in Naperville

In addition to our evolving business community, we will be faced with the decision on how to develop the BP campus, north of I-88. We have the luxury and good fortune to be patient and find the right partner for this project. Instead pursuing the east choice of filling this spot with a distribution facility, we should be searching for a partner that would attract high-paying jobs.

To attract new businesses, we need strong work force. While Naperville is considered as one of the best cities for schooling, we don't see many youths coming back. We need to have facilities to attract these youths affordable living



Meghna Bansal

Naperville City Council Candidate



HOW WOULD YOU RATE NAPERVILLE'S BUSINESS INFRASTRUCTURE, AND WHAT PROJECTS WOULD YOU PRIORITIZE FOR GROWTH?

There are many projects in Naperville that need attention. Washington Street Bridge is an important project that needs to be completed soon. Widening of North Aurora Road, and a few other identified streets requires immediate attention due to high traffic volumes. Fifth avenue development is on the horizon, which will prove fruitful for retention of the younger workforce. Infrastructure needs to be developed to tackle new age crimes and cyber crimes.

AFTER YOUR PREVIOUS CAMPAIGN, WHAT LESSONS HAVE YOU LEARNED, AND HOW WILL YOU BETTER SERVE LOCAL BUSINESSES?

I am a returning candidate. After losing my last election by an extremely narrow margin, I dedicated myself extensively working with local businesses, City government and the Naperville community. I have been attending every city council meeting to stay informed and engaged. As a Returning Candidate I realized it is extremely crucial for businesses to engage with the local community and residents. They can participate through local events, sponsorships, or just being present at local gatherings. Many businesses are either small or owned by women entrepreneurs. These businesses are usually flexible and provide very personalised services. But the challenge was to get enough support from the local government and approachability.

Economic development is a necessity for any community as not only it brings jobs and vibrancy, but it also helps ease our tax burden on the residents. I believe it leads towards creating more revenues to the system, brings innovative ideas, creates more jobs, higher wealth, labor support and better quality of life for the residents, kids, and generations to come. We need to focus on unbalanced areas especially south Naperville where residential to business ratio is 95:5. I will work with NACC, NDP and business focused organizations for these goals.

VOTER GUIDE

Find out what key issues that impact Naperville this candidate supports or opposes in the Naperville City Council Election 2025.



Jennifer Bruzan Taylor

Naperville City Council Candidate

Status: Incumbent

Campaign Website: taylorfornaperville.com

Email: jennifer@taylorfornaperville.com

KEY QUESTIONS

Do you support or oppose the Grocery Tax Proposal?

Do you support or oppose the creation of new tax incentives?

Do you support or oppose plans to build the Nichols Library Parking Garage?

Do you support or oppose the redevelopment of the 5th avenue area?

Do you support using city resources to help small businesses recover and stay competitive in Naperville?

SUPPORT	OPPOSE	ABSTAIN
		✓
	✓	
		✓
✓		
✓		

Jennifer Bruzan Taylor

Naperville City Council Candidate



CURRENT OCCUPATION

I am a current Naperville City Councilwoman, first elected in 2021. In this role, I serve as the City Council liaison on the Downtown Naperville Alliance (DNA), the Regulatory Committee of the DuPage Mayors and Managers Conference, and the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB). I volunteer as a City Council liaison to the Naperville Environment and Sustainability Task Force (NEST). I previously served as the City Council liaison to the Naperville Public Library Board of Trustees.

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

JD, Boston College Law School, 2007; BA, Vanderbilt University (magna cum laude), 2004; Neuqua Valley High School Class of 2000 (1st Graduating Class). I am admitted to practice law in the State of Illinois, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the Northern District of Illinois, and the United States Supreme Court.

RELEVANT BUSINESS EXPERIENCE

I spent most of my career in public service, first as a Cook County prosecutor and now in my first term as a Naperville City Councilwoman. I also taught Constitutional Law at North Central College. My background instilled in me a deep respect for and understanding of the proper role of government. I earned a BA from Vanderbilt University and a JD from Boston College Law School, and am part of the first graduating class of Neuqua Valley High School.

I previously served on the DuPage Children's Museum NextGen Board and as Vice Chairwoman of the Westside Homeowner's Association (WHOA). In 2019, I was involved with the Housing Conditions Focus Group to assess the housing shortages in the City, and was the WHOA neighborhood liaison to the Nichols Library Parking Garage Working Group. I am a prior member of multiple professional organizations, such as the DuPage County Bar Association, the Chicago Bar Association, and the Illinois Bar Association.

My husband and I are small business owners, and so I understand the day to day challenges our business community faces, including how our decisions not just impact us but that of our employees.



Jennifer Bruzan Taylor

Naperville City Council Candidate



ELABORATE ON YOUR POSITION FOR THE ABOVE KEY QUESTIONS.

When I ran in 2021 and in my re-election campaign, I repeatedly reiterate that I make my decisions based on facts, research, and speaking to stakeholders, staff, residents, and business owners. This is how all decisions should be made, and not be pre-decided before doing the work and listening to our community input. Anything I marked as “support” or “oppose” is because I already am on the record as to a particular position. All these yes/no questions are topics that are nuanced and no candidate, whether new or up for re-election, should be making such decisions before that item is before them on the Council dais.

WHAT ARE THE TOP CHALLENGES FACING NAPERVILLE’S BUSINESS COMMUNITY?

As a City we need to continue to focus on economic development, which means supporting our business community and reasonable development, so that we can continue to maintain a high level of City services at one of the lowest tax rates in the area. Since I was elected in 2021, the City has continually lowered the tax rate and so for the 2025 budget we passed the lowest tax rate since 1968. The City can do this because it attracts great development and businesses that allows the City to receive more revenue from food, sales, and beverage taxes than we do from property taxes. It is estimated that about half of these dollars comes from visitors. We are the second largest economic center in the state and have the second largest hospitality industry in the state - the first for both being Chicago. To maintain this vibrant local economy that is built upon the blood, sweat, and tears of our business owners, as a City we need to ensure our businesses, visitors, residents feel safe to come out and shop, maintain adequate parking, support attractions to draw visitors here, lobby against state mandates that hurt our local businesses, and continue to work to lower taxes.



Jennifer Bruzan Taylor

Naperville City Council Candidate



WHAT IS YOUR ACTION PLAN FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH?

As a small business owner myself, I understand the everyday stresses our business owners face. As the City Council liaison to the Downtown Naperville Alliance (DNA), which is made up of downtown business owners, I heard the concerns expressed by other business owners. After COVID, our downtown businesses suffered from large groups coming downtown just to hang out and create an intimidating environment for those who want to shop and dine here. Originally, the City had one dedicated police officer to downtown. I advocated for the hiring of three additional officers dedicated to downtown, and the passing of an ordinance restricting people's activities within our parking garages, both of which significantly improved this past summer's atmosphere. It also helps visitors feel more comfortable parking in our parking garages. Speaking of parking, I also voted for the City to obtain four new EV charging stations for downtown, so that the growing visitors with EV vehicles can charge and shop.

HOW WILL YOU COLLABORATE WITH THE NAPERVILLE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

As a current Naperville City Councilwoman, I consider the Naperville Chamber a stakeholder in our community, and always reach out to its staff and members when the City is facing a topic of interest or issue that impacts our business community. In addition, as the City Council liaison to the Downtown Naperville Alliance (DNA), which is made up of downtown Naperville business owners, the Chamber's staff and members often reach out to me as well when they need help, want to share a position or issue, and/or want to receive the general City's perspective on a topic. It is a give and take relationship that helps myself, the City, local businesses, the Chamber, and the community at large.



Jennifer Bruzan Taylor

Naperville City Council Candidate



WHAT ARE YOUR BUDGET PRIORITIES FOR BUSINESSES?

The City has a vibrant economy that continues to lower the property tax rate when other local government bodies keep raising their tax rate. As a current Naperville City Councilwoman, I voted each year to lower the City portion of your property tax bill, while maintaining a high level of services not seen in other communities. For 2025, property taxes only accounted for \$58.8M of a \$641M budget, and mainly pay for staff, including our fire and police departments, as well as our pension obligations.

Infrastructure investment is important to me because I see it as a public safety issue. It is essential to the safety of our residents, business owners, and visitors that we invest in our infrastructure, especially our water utility infrastructure. Our water utility infrastructure is facing the end of its useful life, which means the City needs to significantly invest in this infrastructure over the next five years. If we delay, we face the potential of unsafe drinking water and sewer backups in basements. In the 2025 budget, I voted for multiple water and electric utility infrastructure projects, and to balance the cost between both our current and future ratepayers since both will enjoy the benefits of these improvements. Many do not realize, that our non-utility infrastructure projects, such as road construction, is entirely paid for through the home rule sales tax (HRST), not from property taxes, and about half of the HRST dollars comes from visitors to Naperville.

WHAT ARE YOUR REVENUE AND TAX STRATEGIES?

Naperville is unique because the City supports a thriving local economy that allows us to collect more revenue from food, beverage, and sales tax than from property taxes. Because of our strong hospitality industry, about half of this money comes from visitors. As a Councilwoman, I voted for new development that adds more tax revenue to the City, which spreads out the City portion of the property taxes for all residents and business owners. I focus on increasing commercial development, especially in District 204 which is underfunded, so that we increase the number of properties paying property taxes without adding children to the schools. I voted for numerous developments that help District 204 tax payers, including Matrix Club, Lifetime Gym, Block 59, Chick Fil A, and more. Plus, a portion of the I-88 corridor falls within District 204.



Jennifer Bruzan Taylor

Naperville City Council Candidate



HOW WILL YOU HELP BUILD A STRONG WORKFORCE PIPELINE FOR NAPERVILLE'S EMPLOYERS?

As a Councilwoman, I always work to grow Naperville, which includes enticing our youth to live and work in Naperville. I always am looking for ways to encourage more workers to move to Naperville, such as the multiple residential projects I approved that focuses on young professionals, like the development at the old Devry campus. The City and myself also has a good relationship with North Central College. I know I always am balancing supporting the College in its growing needs while at the same time respecting the needs of the surrounding residential neighborhood. Another huge issue in the construction industry is the decreasing amount of youth entering the trades. To help counteract that problem, as a Councilwoman I re-brought forth and was able to get passed a Responsible Bidder Ordinance (RBO), that requires all City construction contracts over \$500K to use contractors with an apprenticeship program to ensure not only high-quality work, but that we also are encouraging a new generation to enter our trades.

HOW WOULD YOU HELP BUSINESSES ADAPT TO ECONOMIC CHANGES, NEW TECHNOLOGIES, AND WORKFORCE CHALLENGES?

As a Councilwoman and a small business owner, I understand the need to maintain communication with other business owners to discuss and learn how others are handling challenges. The City encourages this collaboration by supporting a City board, Downtown Naperville Alliance (DNA), that is made up of downtown business owners. DNA dedicates itself to marketing the downtown to continually drive foot traffic to the businesses. It also serves as a space for business owners to collaborate and learn from each other. The City also maintains a private/public partnership with the Naperville Development Partnership (NDP), which has a dual role. NDP advertises and supports Naperville's hospitality industry, while also bringing new development and businesses to Naperville. The City also lobbies for and against State initiatives that hurt our business community. In the early fall, the Chamber requested the City's help in advocating against a bill that hurt our restaurants and its employees. Despite a majority of Council supporting such action, under the old lobbying process, a small number of Councilmen were able to stop our lobbying efforts under the cloak of confidentiality. In response, I proposed and successfully changed our lobbying process so that it takes a majority to direct staff and all votes are completely transparent. Naperville prides itself on being business friendly, and these some of the many ways we work to support our local business and development community.



Jennifer Bruzan Taylor

Naperville City Council Candidate



HOW WOULD YOU RATE NAPERVILLE'S BUSINESS INFRASTRUCTURE, AND WHAT PROJECTS WOULD YOU PRIORITIZE FOR GROWTH?

Naperville is known for its high level of services at one of the lowest tax rates in the area. This is partly due to its responsiveness to its infrastructure needs. A complaint often heard is that the City has too much construction ongoing. Well, it is this construction that keeps our roads easy to drive, our sidewalks safe and easy to walk, our business areas attractive to visit. These infrastructure projects also keep our community safe, such as our water infrastructure projects that maintains safe drinking water and prevents sewer backups. We aggressively are investing in replacing all the lead piping, years ahead of the Illinois EPA requirements. 99.17% of all lead pipes in Naperville are replaced, and unlike many other communities, the City pays for the replacement from the street to your house or business water connection. Our electric utility is beginning an infrastructure project that undergrounds the remaining 5% of overhead electric lines that cause about half of all power outages. That is important to businesses because if the power goes out, business cannot be transacted. We do this investment, while still charging lower utility rates than are paid in our surrounding communities. In addition, our road construction projects are paid for through the home rule sales tax (HRST), where about half the money comes from visitors. Knowing all this, I rate our high and cost-effective attention to our infrastructure as a 10.

HOW HAVE YOUR ACTIONS BENEFITED NAPERVILLE'S BUSINESS COMMUNITY, AND WHAT'S NEXT IF RE-ELECTED?

- Every year since elected, the City has lowered its property tax rate and passed for 2025 the lowest property tax rate since 1968
- The City is the second largest economic center in the State and has the second largest hospitality industry in the State
- Voted for multiple commercial developments that help our schools and keep our property taxes down, such as Matrix Club and related properties, Japanese market and related businesses, Block 59, Heinen's Grocery, DeVry campus redevelopment, Chick Fil A, 7 Brew Coffee, Taco Bell, Freddy's and much more
- Supported the reinvigoration of the I-88 corridor by authorizing funding of \$300K for a consultant to help plan its future and for targeted marketing, and the creation of a steering committee of C-Suite executives along the corridor to attract suppliers and customers
- Voted for municipal investments, such as improvements to our water and electric infrastructure, to ensure that Naperville continues to enjoy safe drinking water and reliable source of energy
- Re-brought forth and got passed the Responsible Bid Ordinance
- Voted for the hiring and dedication of four police officers to our downtown, and restricting how people use our parking garages to make our downtown safer and more enjoyable
- Advocated for the City to place the twenty acres at 103rd & Rt 59 on the tax rolls.
- Requested staff to look at improving the traffic flow on Webster Street between Jefferson and Van Buren
- Changed the lobbying process to make it tr

VOTER GUIDE

Find out what key issues that impact Naperville this candidate supports or opposes in the Naperville City Council Election 2025.



Mary Gibson

Naperville City Council Candidate

Candidate Status: New Candidate

Campaign Website: MaryforNaperville.com

Email: MaryGibson224@gmail.com

KEY QUESTIONS

Do you support or oppose the Grocery Tax Proposal?

Do you support or oppose the creation of new tax incentives?

Do you support or oppose plans to build the Nichols Library Parking Garage?

Do you support or oppose the redevelopment of the 5th avenue area?

Do you support using city resources to help small businesses recover and stay competitive in Naperville?

SUPPORT	OPPOSE	ABSTAIN
		✓
		✓
✓		
✓		
✓		



Candidate Biography and Priorities

Mary Gibson

Naperville City Council Candidate



CURRENT OCCUPATION

I was elected to Naperville Park District Board in 2021. As Park District Commissioner, I exercised prudent fiscal management over a \$53+ million budget and assets that span 138 parks, developed and implemented a 3-year strategic plan to guide the District's vision, purpose, and priorities, championed environmental sustainability measures such as native plantings and shoreline stabilization, updated employee policies to attract and retain the best staff for our city, and expanded programs and partnerships resulting in the highest resident satisfaction scores since we began tracking the metric. During my time with the Naperville Park District, we have also significantly increased our sponsorship offerings and partnerships with local businesses.

I was honored to be unanimously elected by my fellow Commissioners as Board President three times and Board Vice President in my first year, and I was awarded Master Board Member designation by the Illinois Association of Park Districts (IAPD) in recognition of my commitment to being a knowledgeable representative of my community. Additionally, I have served as Naperville Riverwalk Commissioner since 2021 and am a member of the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). Lastly, I'm a graduate of both Naperville Citizen Police Academy and Naperville Citizen Fire Academy.

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

JD, Boston College Law School, 2007; BA, Vanderbilt University (magna cum laude), 2004; Neuqua Valley High School Class of 2000 (1st Graduating Class). I am admitted to practice law in the State of Illinois, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the Northern District of Illinois, and the United States Supreme Court.

RELEVANT BUSINESS EXPERIENCE

As a director at a data analytics firm, I advised Fortune 500 companies, government entities, and non-profits on public sentiment, unforeseen risks and strategic opportunities. I utilize these skills to identify and act on issues and opportunities facing the Park District and would do the same on city-wide decisions on City Council.



Mary Gibson

Naperville City Council Candidate



ELABORATE ON YOUR POSITION FOR THE ABOVE KEY QUESTIONS.

I chose abstain for several answers in the above section because public policy is not a zero sum game, and context is needed otherwise it risks misleading voters. For all items that come before council, I will weigh the context and needs of the city with an openness to creative solutions.

To elaborate on one answer from above, the solution to the \$6 million annual shortfall from the repeal of the state grocery tax is not a problem with only one solution. There are several levers that we need to consider and model to arrive at the best solution. The first step should be a review of the existing expenditures and budget to identify areas where we can reduce waste and redundant costs to shore up some of the shortfall without compromising safety or quality of resident services. We should also analyze our other revenue sources to identify any that are priced below market. We can certainly look at underutilized assets to determine if it makes sense to sell any; however, that is not an annual source of revenue. Once we have completed all of that analysis we will know the true annual shortfall and then be able to work collaboratively on how to address it, which may include a grocery tax, although I want to explore all of our options before adding an additional burden to our residents.

WHAT ARE THE TOP CHALLENGES FACING NAPERVILLE'S BUSINESS COMMUNITY?

Challenges facing Naperville's business community include infrastructure, an educated/trained workforce, and responsible development. An example of city infrastructure that hurt local businesses is the Washington St bridge replacement, which has significantly exceeded the projected time to complete and has negatively impacted downtown Naperville businesses. When the City Council receives a bid that looks too good to be true, it is Council's responsibility to reality test the vendor's assumptions to ensure they can execute as promised. With regard to providing an educated/trained workforce, we must have amenities and safety to attract workers to put down roots in Naperville. If elected, I will work hard to make Naperville the top destination for workers and businesses alike. Lastly, responsible development is an ongoing challenge for the city that directly impacts local businesses and tax revenue. There was much debate about the best use for the former K-Mart space on Ogden and the impact on traffic if Costco moved in. The city provided tax incentives to bring in Costco and the traffic flow design is one that works. It diverts traffic away from the neighborhoods to the north and does not compound Ogden's traffic. With Costco as an anchor tenant, the shopping center has added additional retail and restaurants which has rejuvenated the area. If elected, I will support policies to continue to attract and retain businesses in Naperville.



Mary Gibson

Naperville City Council Candidate



WHAT IS YOUR ACTION PLAN FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH?

Expanding on the challenges identified and partially addressed above, I would prioritize making decisions that will solidify Naperville as the best place to live in the United States. By doing so, we draw people from the city and surrounding communities to our local businesses. We draw people to work here as well as live here. The keys to maintaining Naperville as a top destination include public safety, reasonable development, and providing high quality and reliable services and amenities. I would evaluate tax incentives to draw new businesses to Naperville on a case-by-case basis, prioritizing a strong payback over a reasonable time period. Additionally, I would look for spillover benefits to surrounding businesses (ie Costco drawing more traffic to smaller businesses on Ogden). Lastly, when it comes to infrastructure improvements, I would engage in a thorough vetting of the proposals to ensure that the vendor could deliver as promised, with minimal disruption to local businesses.

HOW WILL YOU COLLABORATE WITH THE NAPERVILLE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Advocacy and collaboration start with listening. I would engage with NACC and participate in its many events to speak directly with its members to understand their concerns and needs as well as the impact of City Council decisions. I would collaborate with the Business Works committee which advocates for business interests with legislators on issues. Many business owners' concerns overlap with mine: development, infrastructure, and taxes. NACC and the Naperville business community are key stakeholders in all of these discussions; I would work with NACC and the members to make sure I'm considering all facets of the issue and arriving at the best decision for the city and our community. It is certainly my goal to maintain and grow Naperville's thriving business community.



Mary Gibson

Naperville City Council Candidate



WHAT ARE YOUR BUDGET PRIORITIES FOR BUSINESSES?

The budget is not a zero sum game. Many budget priorities have ripple effects elsewhere, so while it is important to examine every line item, it is equally important to consider the interrelatedness of line items to achieve our goals. With respect to creating a thriving economic ecosystem, the city needs to have infrastructure in place to meet the needs today and tomorrow as people's consumer and other behaviors evolve. It is critical that we thoroughly vet plans and bids for infrastructure projects to assure completion on time and with minimal disruption to residents and businesses. The protracted Washington Street bridge project has been devastating to businesses downtown. The City's Road Improvement Plan is an important step to improving the traffic flow around town and I would analyze the data so that we are prioritizing the projects that yield the highest impact for the dollar which would benefit our community. Public services like snow removal and trash collection may not sound exciting but are critical and need to be done efficiently and well. Lastly, our city budget must prioritize public safety. I am 100% committed to ensuring Naperville is the safest place in America. I am a proud graduate of both the city's police and fire Citizen Academies and I would use those insights to ensure our first responders continue to have the tools and resources needed to keep our city safe.

WHAT ARE YOUR REVENUE AND TAX STRATEGIES?

By expanding the tax base, we can reduce the burden of property taxes. That's why I support carefully targeted tax incentives in specific cases where they provide clear, long-term benefits that complement versus harm existing businesses. This will attract new businesses to Naperville. We should also look at municipal-specific fees and make sure they are in line with similar suburbs. Lastly, I will be a responsible steward of tax dollars and seek to deliver high quality services and amenities in the city without increasing the budget above the inflation rate, which is consistent with what I have achieved as Park District Commission for the last four years.



Mary Gibson

Naperville City Council Candidate



HOW WILL YOU HELP BUILD A STRONG WORKFORCE PIPELINE FOR NAPERVILLE'S EMPLOYERS?

Naperville has some great partnerships today that we can build on to ensure that we are building a pipeline of talent to meet the current and future needs of employers. The high schools partner with community colleges to offer dual credit courses, such as business courses. They also run mini-Shark Tank programs where students learn how to identify a market need, develop and manufacture products, market products, seek investment, and ultimately bring those ideas to market. Many business leaders in Naperville participate as mentors. Community colleges such as College of DuPage have two year academic programs and trades programs to prepare students for employment. We also benefit from local colleges such as North Central College. Beyond entry-level employees, Naperville benefits from a highly educated population. There are also nonprofits that serve the area for job transitions and re-employment. The Naperville Library offers resume and cover letter coaching with their business librarians and job coaches. The role of the city is to encourage these endeavors to produce a productive and nimble workforce. This may come via grants to fund programs that meet these goals.

HOW WOULD YOU HELP BUSINESSES ADAPT TO ECONOMIC CHANGES, NEW TECHNOLOGIES, AND WORKFORCE CHALLENGES?

We live in a fast-moving, exciting time. AI holds a lot of promise but we have not yet figured out how to harness it to serve us best. Some jobs that exist today may disappear and be replaced by technology. As the workforce's needs evolve, Naperville needs to be in dialogue with local businesses to understand those needs and the gaps in skills, training, and experience so that we can work together to fill those gaps. That may mean sponsoring internships, developing programming at our libraries, or coordinating with nonprofits and local governmental employment institutions to close those gaps.



Mary Gibson

Naperville City Council Candidate



HOW WOULD YOU RATE NAPERVILLE'S BUSINESS INFRASTRUCTURE, AND WHAT PROJECTS WOULD YOU PRIORITIZE FOR GROWTH?

Naperville's current infrastructure adequately supports business operations but there is room for improvement. The most consequential infrastructure projects facing Naperville are the IMEA energy contract and the city's Roads Improvement Plan. IMEA has proposed a decades-long extension on a no-bid basis which is a non-starter. It would be irresponsible to not put our energy contract out to bid to ensure that we are getting the best services at a reasonable cost to resident and business taxpayers. Thus far, residents' needs and costs have received the bulk of attention when we talk about our energy future contract, but we need to ensure business needs, and in particular the structure of business pricing, is considered in any future electric contract. With respect to the Roads Improvement Plan, this will have a direct impact on local businesses. I'm excited to dig into the data to identify the improvements that will yield the largest return for our investment and drive efficient traffic movement throughout the city to save time and cost across all of our stakeholders.

HOW WOULD YOU SUPPORT NAPERVILLE'S BUSINESS COMMUNITY, AND WHAT NEW IDEAS WOULD YOU BRING TO CITY COUNCIL?

While I am a new candidate for City Council, I currently preside over the Naperville Park District board as its president. In that role, I developed and implemented a three-year strategic plan to set the vision and guide the Park District's purpose and priorities. I have also managed a \$53+ million budget and broad portfolio of assets including 138 parks. This experience will be invaluable on the City Council and position me to support and advocate for Naperville's business community. I work collaboratively with my peers of all political stripes to serve our community and will bring that spirit and track record of achievement to the City Council. Our City Council is non-partisan and I believe that our constituents want us to work together on our local issues. You have my commitment that is my top goal. I have seen what is possible when we check our ideologies at the door and get down to work for the people and that is what I will bring to the City Council. I'm committed to keeping taxes low by expanding our tax base in the areas of town that need it most, pursue reasonable development and tax incentives with short payback periods, and deliver high quality reliable services and amenities to keep Naperville as the best place to live and work in the United States.

VOTER GUIDE

Find out what key issues that impact Naperville this candidate supports or opposes in the Naperville City Council Election 2025.



Ian Holzhauser

Naperville City Council Candidate

Candidate Status: Incumbent

Campaign Website: ianholzhauser.com

Email: ian@campbellconcierge.law

KEY QUESTIONS

Do you support or oppose the Grocery Tax Proposal?

Do you support or oppose the creation of new tax incentives?

Do you support or oppose plans to build the Nichols Library Parking Garage?

Do you support or oppose the redevelopment of the 5th avenue area?

Do you support using city resources to help small businesses recover and stay competitive in Naperville?

	SUPPORT	OPPOSE	ABSTAIN
Do you support or oppose the Grocery Tax Proposal?		✓	
Do you support or oppose the creation of new tax incentives?		✓	
Do you support or oppose plans to build the Nichols Library Parking Garage?	✓		
Do you support or oppose the redevelopment of the 5th avenue area?	✓		
Do you support using city resources to help small businesses recover and stay competitive in Naperville?	✓		



Candidate Biography and Priorities

Ian Holzhauer

Naperville City Council Candidate



CURRENT OCCUPATION

I am a partner with Campbell/Holzhauer Concierge Law, serving businesses and families with proactive strategies and preferred access on wills, estates, business and tax laws, and liability law, among others. Previously, I was an attorney with the Naperville firm Nagle & Obarski where I assisted local business clients with comprehensive legal services across various sectors and assisted individuals with estate planning, trusts, and probate matters. I was elected to the Naperville City Council in 2021, championing business interests while also advocating for residents by ensuring that economic growth benefits the entire community. I previously served as board chair for the Naperville Area Chamber of Commerce, helping guide it through its greatest period of financial challenge during the early stages of the pandemic in 2020.

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

I graduated in 2007 with a J.D. from Georgetown Law School, magna cum laude. I received a B.A. in History, summa cum laude, in 2004 from the University of Florida on a full academic scholarship. I am an Air Force veteran and from 2007 to 2014, I had the great honor of serving as a uniformed attorney in the United States Air Force. I am also a proud graduate of Naperville North High School.

RELEVANT BUSINESS EXPERIENCE

As an attorney (and owner of my own law firm), I have represented numerous businesses and have worked on several dozen business purchases, sales or mergers. Other practice areas include assisting with employment law questions, commercial real estate leases, purchases, and sales, and shareholder agreements. In addition to serving as Board Chair of the Naperville Area Chamber of Commerce, I have overseen budgets of Naperville Community Television Channel 17 and First Congregational United Church of Christ. As an employer myself and an advisor for my business clients, I am familiar with the challenges facing many small businesses, and also the value of entrepreneurs to our community.



Ian Holzhauer

Naperville City Council Candidate



ELABORATE ON YOUR POSITION FOR THE ABOVE KEY QUESTIONS.

Support: Fifth Avenue Station Development.

The Fifth Avenue Station area represents a tremendous opportunity to drive economic growth while enhancing one of Naperville’s key gateways. Although previous redevelopment efforts stalled before the City Council, we now have the momentum to move this project forward in a way that benefits both businesses and residents.

As a vital transit hub connecting our city to Chicago and the suburbs, the current state of the Fifth Avenue railway station—marked by aging parking lots and a lack of amenities—does not reflect the best of Naperville. We have a chance to transform this area into a thriving, mixed-use, transit-oriented development that supports local businesses, attracts new investment, and improves the commuter experience.

To ensure a thoughtful and strategic approach, I proposed that City Staff engage the Urban Land Institute (ULI) to conduct an independent study of potential uses for the site. The City Council agreed and ultimately commissioned ULI to lead this effort, incorporating community input and benchmarking against best practices in comparable communities nationwide. By beginning with a transparent, research-driven plan from a nonprofit with no financial stake in the project, we can build consensus among all parties and create a development that is both economically sustainable and aligned with Naperville’s long-term vision. Your collaboration and support as business leaders will be critical in making this a success.

WHAT ARE THE TOP CHALLENGES FACING NAPERVILLE’S BUSINESS COMMUNITY?

Naperville has long been a model for economic success, with a thriving business community, a highly skilled workforce, and a high quality of life. However, we are facing key challenges that will require strategic solutions to ensure long-term growth and stability.

One major concern is the increasing vacancy of office space along the I-88 corridor. As remote and hybrid work arrangements become the norm, older office buildings—many of which were designed for a different era of business—struggle to attract tenants. This not only impacts property values but also the surrounding businesses that rely on office workers.

At the same time, we are navigating a tight labor market. Many experienced workers are retiring, and the incoming workforce is smaller. Additionally, more individuals are choosing to stay out of the labor force altogether. Fortunately, Naperville has bucked some of these national trends due to our strong schools and universities, vibrant economy, and high quality of life, which make us an attractive place to live and work. However, to remain competitive, we must continue supporting workforce development initiatives, ensuring businesses have access to the skilled employees they need.

Financially, Naperville has enjoyed several years of strong tax revenues, bolstered by a strong real estate market and programs like ARPA. However, we will likely have to tighten our belts, particularly if these trends do not continue.



Ian Holzhauser

Naperville City Council Candidate



WHAT IS YOUR ACTION PLAN FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH?

To ensure Naperville remains a thriving business hub while maintaining our high quality of life, we must take a proactive approach to economic development. This action plan outlines key initiatives to address current challenges:

1. Revitalizing the I-88 Corridor

I plan to advocate for a comprehensive I-88 redevelopment plan, incorporating recommendations from the Naperville Development Partnership, and to explore opportunities for repurposing vacant office space, including unique and innovative uses.

2. Maintaining Quality of Life & Workforce Competitiveness

Naperville's high quality of life is a key factor in attracting and retaining top talent. To sustain this we need to continue investing in our businesses, infrastructure, workforce development initiatives and fostering collaboration with our local schools and universities.

3. Keeping Naperville a Competitive Business Destination

To keep Naperville competitive, I believe in holding the line on sale taxes, ensuring that Naperville remains an attractive destination for businesses and consumers. Additionally, I favor more programs to keep small businesses thriving in Naperville.

4. Expanding Commercial Development in South Naperville

A balanced approach to development will strengthen the city's overall economy and equalize tax liability between District 203 and 204 residents. This will require not losing focus on the need to support commercial development in D204.

HOW WILL YOU COLLABORATE WITH THE NAPERVILLE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

As a City Council member, it is important that we actively collaborate with the Naperville Area Chamber of Commerce to foster a pro-business environment and drive economic growth. Some ways to continue our successes over the next four years are through leveraging the expertise of the Chamber and the Naperville Development Partnership on key projects/issues such as revitalizing the I-88 corridor and redevelopment of the Fifth Avenue Station and others. As I have in my first term, I will continue to maintain a close relationship with Chamber CEO Kaylin Risvold - she has my number and I'm always happy to take her call.

The Chamber of Commerce is an integral partner in keeping Naperville and its economy strong. By staying connected and through open dialogue, we can ensure that city priorities are aligned with the needs of our business community. As a City Council member, I will continue to work alongside the Chamber, its board and businesses to make sure that Naperville continues to be a top destination for families and businesses.



Ian Holzhauer

Naperville City Council Candidate



WHAT ARE YOUR BUDGET PRIORITIES FOR BUSINESSES?

As a City Council member, I am committed to balancing Naperville's budget through fiscal responsibility, strategic investment, and policies that support business growth without overburdening taxpayers. A strong economic environment depends on a balance of well-maintained infrastructure, efficient public services, and a competitive business climate. Investing in infrastructure is crucial, such as maintaining roads, utilities, and transportation, revitalizing and redeveloping underutilized areas and attracting new businesses. All will serve to increase property values and keep our economic machine strong. I firmly oppose raising sales taxes and instead believe we can and should expand the commercial tax base through responsible development, particularly in underutilized areas like south Naperville. Seeking efficiencies in city operations is also key as well as leveraging public-private partnerships to help fund key projects. By focusing on smart growth and responsible budgeting, we can ensure Naperville remains a thriving economic hub for years to come.

WHAT ARE YOUR REVENUE AND TAX STRATEGIES?

As a City Council member, I am committed to ensuring Naperville's economic growth while avoiding policies that overburden our businesses, particularly small businesses. The goal should be increasing economic growth to increase the tax base, not increasing tax rates. I firmly oppose increasing sales taxes, as doing so would make Naperville less competitive and could hinder local businesses and consumer spending. Small businesses are the backbone of our community. While programs like tax districts and rebates have been effective in attracting large businesses, I believe we must do more to support our small business owners. This could include targeted incentives, lowering barriers to entry, and more accessible financial support to help these businesses grow and thrive in Naperville. By fostering a pro-business environment through thoughtful, balanced tax policies, we can ensure our city remains a vibrant, prosperous place for businesses of all sizes. This will broaden the tax base, rather than simply imposing more of a burden on the existing tax base.



Ian Holzhauer

Naperville City Council Candidate



HOW WILL YOU HELP BUILD A STRONG WORKFORCE PIPELINE FOR NAPERVILLE'S EMPLOYERS?

As a City Council member, I advocate for building a strong workforce pipeline, which is essential to ensuring Naperville remains a thriving business hub. To meet the current and future needs of employers, I will continue to collaborate with local educational institutions, including Naperville's schools, colleges, and vocational programs, as well as business leaders. By working together, we can align educational curricula with the skills and training businesses need today and in the future. This includes expanding internship programs, apprenticeships, and mentorship opportunities that provide real-world experience to students and help businesses access a skilled talent pool. I will also continue to advocate for workforce development initiatives that focus on areas with high demand, such as technology, healthcare, and skilled trades, as well as push the city to hire from local employers that leverage these initiatives. Through these partnerships, we can create a seamless pipeline from education to employment.

HOW WOULD YOU HELP BUSINESSES ADAPT TO ECONOMIC CHANGES, NEW TECHNOLOGIES, AND WORKFORCE CHALLENGES?

In a rapidly changing economy, it is crucial we support businesses in adapting to new technologies, market demands, and workforce challenges. As a business owner, I have heavily utilized local school district internship programs both in technology and the legal field. If re-elected, I would prioritize expanding these public-private partnerships, particularly as our youth are exceptionally well-suited to assist businesses in navigating the new frontier of AI. By creating a collaborative environment between businesses, educational institutions, the city, NDP and the Chamber we can help companies adapt and thrive in a constantly evolving economy.



Ian Holzhauer

Naperville City Council Candidate



HOW WOULD YOU RATE NAPERVILLE'S BUSINESS INFRASTRUCTURE, AND WHAT PROJECTS WOULD YOU PRIORITIZE FOR GROWTH?

I would rate Naperville's current infrastructure as an 8 out of 10 in terms of supporting business operations. Our city has a very strong foundation, including state-of-the-art underground utilities, well maintained roads, and excellent public safety resources, all of which help support business activity. However, there are always areas where we can improve, especially as businesses face new challenges and opportunities.

To ensure businesses continue to thrive, I would prioritize the following infrastructure projects: First, upgrading and modernizing key commercial corridors, like the I-88 corridor, which has a large volume of unused office space, to attract new businesses. Second, I would focus on revitalizing underdeveloped or aging commercial areas, particularly in south Naperville.

Additionally, supporting sustainable infrastructure projects that align with green technologies and eco-friendly building standards will not only improve our city's infrastructure but also make it more appealing to forward-thinking businesses.

By prioritizing these projects, we can ensure that Naperville remains an ideal location for both new businesses and those looking to expand.

HOW HAVE YOUR ACTIONS BENEFITED NAPERVILLE'S BUSINESS COMMUNITY, AND WHAT'S NEXT IF RE-ELECTED?

I have consistently supported initiatives that enhance Naperville's downtown, ensuring it remains a vibrant and attractive destination for both residents and visitors. One of the key investments I championed was the downtown streetscape and Riverwalk improvements, which are essential for keeping our downtown area appealing to shoppers and businesses alike. These upgrades improve pedestrian accessibility, beautify public spaces, and create an inviting atmosphere that encourages people to spend time, dine and shop in our establishments. This passion for investing in our core public attractions will continue to be a priority.

As mentioned before, I have worked with the Naperville Development Partnership (NDP) and their consultant to provide input on a comprehensive redevelopment plan for the I-88 corridor, our regional economic engine. Most recently, I sided with the Downtown Naperville Alliance in maintaining the retail character of the first floor of buildings in the downtown area. This was a crucial decision, as keeping first-floor retail is essential for maintaining a vibrant, walkable, active downtown. Active storefronts attract foot traffic contribute to safety by creating a sense of activity and surveillance and fosters economic growth and protects the unique character of Naperville's downtown, which is one of our city's most cherished assets.

VOTER GUIDE

Find out what key issues that impact Naperville this candidate supports or opposes in the Naperville City Council Election 2025.



Nag Jaiswal

Naperville City Council Candidate

Candidate Status: Returning Candidate

Campaign Website: NagJaiswal.com

Email: nag.jaiswal@gmail.com

KEY QUESTIONS

Do you support or oppose the Grocery Tax Proposal?

Do you support or oppose the creation of new tax incentives?

Do you support or oppose plans to build the Nichols Library Parking Garage?

Do you support or oppose the redevelopment of the 5th avenue area?

Do you support using city resources to help small businesses recover and stay competitive in Naperville?

	SUPPORT	OPPOSE	ABSTAIN
Do you support or oppose the Grocery Tax Proposal?		✓	
Do you support or oppose the creation of new tax incentives?	✓		
Do you support or oppose plans to build the Nichols Library Parking Garage?			✓
Do you support or oppose the redevelopment of the 5th avenue area?	✓		
Do you support using city resources to help small businesses recover and stay competitive in Naperville?	✓		



Candidate Biography and Priorities

Nag Jaiswal

Naperville City Council Candidate



CURRENT OCCUPATION

Salesforce, Senior Program Architect, 2016 – Present

- Advise high-profile clients in multiple verticals such as hospitality, retail, healthcare, high-tech, and manufacturing sectors on digital transformation strategies.
- Delivered strategic planning and Salesforce implementations, including Sales Cloud, CPQ, and Marketing Cloud.
- Guided enterprise architecture initiatives and organizational alignment for global transformation programs.

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

- Executive MBA – Northern Illinois University
- Master of Science – Electrical & Computer Engineering, Western Michigan University
- Bachelor of Engineering – Electronics & Communications, Osmania University
- Certified Illinois Assessment Officer – Illinois Property Assessment Institute – 2024

RELEVANT BUSINESS EXPERIENCE

Dynamic and visionary thought leader with over 30 years of experience managing startups, mid-sized, and large global organizations. Proven expertise in enterprise architecture, sales & marketing, digital transformation, CRM, and business strategy development. Trusted advisor to Fortune 200 companies with a track record of delivering impactful solutions across diverse industries. Adept at aligning technology strategies with business goals to foster growth and operational efficiency.

Community Involvement & Recognition

- Rotary Sunrise Naperville Board Member
- Secretary, Association of American Engineers of Indian Origin (AAEIO)
- Akshaya Patra Foundation – Chicago Chapter Board Member
- Candidate, Naperville City Council (2025, 2023) & Naperville Park District (2021)
- Citizen Taskforce Member, IPSD 204 School District, 2024
- Past Commissioner, Human Rights and Fair Housing, City of Naperville
- Vice President, Indian American Business Council (IABC)

Healthcare Expertise

- Advisor for Behavioral Health Technology DrCloudEHR – Ensofttek Inc. (2023 – Present)
- IDD Implementation Expert for multiple IDD organizations in Washington DC - 2023-Current
- Clinical Technology Expert, CoVID Vaccine Trials – IQVIA (2020 – 2021)
- Salesforce Health Cloud Expert (2020 – Present)
- Cook County Behavioral Health Community Member - 2024 - Present



Nag Jaiswal

Naperville City Council Candidate



ELABORATE ON YOUR POSITION FOR THE ABOVE KEY QUESTIONS.

Oppose Grocery Tax: Naperville residents are already burdened by rising costs as a result of inflation and economic uncertainty. I oppose any near term tax increases that will impact on personal budgets of residents.

Parking Lot: City should consider broadening its capital spend strategy from local downtown to broader Naperville. Almost all projects are downtown centric resulting in underdeveloped areas that require boost.

WHAT ARE THE TOP CHALLENGES FACING NAPERVILLE'S BUSINESS COMMUNITY?

- Permits and Approvals: Current approvals process is a manual process prone to inconsistent outcomes with regards to duration and complexities.
- Economic imbalance between 2 school districts/counties
- Failure to attract large businesses



Nag Jaiswal

Naperville City Council Candidate



WHAT IS YOUR ACTION PLAN FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH?

- Automate, set SLAs for speedy approvals to business proposals. This will reduce overall project cost and eliminate uncertainties
- Increase trade in South Naperville by incentivizing new development, re-zoning and re-districting
- Encourage businesses that can attract young adults to remain in Naperville by offering young adult games & entertainment options
- NDP and Chamber should collaborate with industry leaders to attract larger business which in turn will boost local SMBs

HOW WILL YOU COLLABORATE WITH THE NAPERVILLE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

A healthy partnership between NDP, NACC, City Council, other business communities is required for a vibrant Naperville. I plan to work with all key stakeholders to come up with a strategic blueprint that clearly articulates city's growth strategy and its near-term and long-term plan to implement the strategy.



Nag Jaiswal

Naperville City Council Candidate



WHAT ARE YOUR BUDGET PRIORITIES FOR BUSINESSES?

City's long-term Energy strategy is key to its growth. AI and related technologies create a huge gap between supply and demand of power needs. Naperville is uniquely positioned with its independent power company and power-grid. City has to plan future needs of growth and ensure proper budgetary spends are in place to meet growth.

Public Safety and Behavioral Health require budgetary allocations for effective policing and ambulatory services. Fire department has done a tremendous job in meeting behavioral health needs through ambulatory services. Additional grants and spend is needed. Technology investments are required for Police department for effective vehicle and crime monitoring.

WHAT ARE YOUR REVENUE AND TAX STRATEGIES?

City should focus on spend-local strategy incentivizing local residents to shop small, shop local with a points based discount model that can bring in additional tax revenue and business. In addition, city can boost revenue through ad spaces.



Nag Jaiswal

Naperville City Council Candidate



HOW WILL YOU HELP BUILD A STRONG WORKFORCE PIPELINE FOR NAPERVILLE'S EMPLOYERS?

Incubation spaces that combines education, real-estate and leadership to join forces for a startup culture that will build a talent pool that can grow and remain local

HOW WOULD YOU HELP BUSINESSES ADAPT TO ECONOMIC CHANGES, NEW TECHNOLOGIES, AND WORKFORCE CHALLENGES?

Collaborate with Universities and Business Leaders to come up with forums, seminars and JVs. Encourage B2B networking environment.



Nag Jaiswal

Naperville City Council Candidate



HOW WOULD YOU RATE NAPERVILLE'S BUSINESS INFRASTRUCTURE, AND WHAT PROJECTS WOULD YOU PRIORITIZE FOR GROWTH?

Power - 9. Renewables and AI growth strategy.

Roads - 6. Improve on road quality

Water & Sanitation: 9

Safety: 9

Transport: Future state planning for easy movement of vehicular traffic to I-88

AFTER YOUR PREVIOUS CAMPAIGN, WHAT LESSONS HAVE YOU LEARNED, AND HOW WILL YOU BETTER SERVE LOCAL BUSINESSES?

I have been in constant touch with local businesses since my last run and am aware of their challenges. Especially in South Naperville where several businesses have shutdown or in the process of closing. Chamber should expand its footprint in South Naperville and D-204 schools so that local residents and businesses can benefit from the network and resource gaps.

VOTER GUIDE

Find out what key issues that impact Naperville this candidate supports or opposes in the Naperville City Council Election 2025.



Derek McDaniel

Naperville City Council Candidate

Candidate Status: New Candidate

Campaign Website: derekfornaperville.com

Email: dmcdaniel.work@gmail.com

KEY QUESTIONS

Do you support or oppose the Grocery Tax Proposal?

Do you support or oppose the creation of new tax incentives?

Do you support or oppose plans to build the Nichols Library Parking Garage?

Do you support or oppose the redevelopment of the 5th avenue area?

Do you support using city resources to help small businesses recover and stay competitive in Naperville?

	SUPPORT	OPPOSE	ABSTAIN
Do you support or oppose the Grocery Tax Proposal?		✓	
Do you support or oppose the creation of new tax incentives?		✓	
Do you support or oppose plans to build the Nichols Library Parking Garage?		✓	
Do you support or oppose the redevelopment of the 5th avenue area?	✓		
Do you support using city resources to help small businesses recover and stay competitive in Naperville?	✓		

Derek McDaniel

Naperville City Council Candidate



CURRENT OCCUPATION

I currently serve as an Associate Vice-President with Benjamin F. Edwards, where I work as a Financial Advisor, helping families and business owners plan for the future. My role involves providing tailored financial solutions, including investment modeling, financial analysis, and retirement planning, to help my clients achieve their long-term goals.

Prior to joining Benjamin F. Edwards, I worked at Merrill Lynch, where I gained valuable experience in client acquisition and portfolio management. My professional background has equipped me with the expertise to understand and address the financial challenges faced by individuals, families, and businesses, and I am passionate about using this knowledge to benefit our community.

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

I earned my Bachelor of Arts in Marketing from Purdue University and later completed my MBA with a concentration in Corporate Finance from DePaul University, graduating with distinction. While at DePaul, I was honored to receive the Campbell Finance Scholarship and the Nicholson Scholarship for my academic achievements. Additionally, I completed the Wall Street Prep training course, gaining advanced knowledge in Financial Statements Modeling, Corporate Finance, and Trading Comparables. These experiences have provided me with a strong foundation in finance and strategic planning.

RELEVANT BUSINESS EXPERIENCE

My unique qualifications stem from a combination of advanced education, professional expertise, and deep community involvement. I earned my MBA with a concentration in Corporate Finance from DePaul University, equipping me with the analytical and financial skills necessary for effective decision-making. With over six years in the financial services sector and my recent promotion to Associate Vice President-Investments, I have developed a proven ability to manage complex budgets, analyze data, and make fiscally responsible decisions—skills that are essential for serving on the City Council.

In addition to my professional background, I have served two terms on Naperville's Planning & Zoning Commission, where I've worked collaboratively with stakeholders to guide our city's development and zoning policies. This experience has given me a deep understanding of urban planning and the impact of development decisions on infrastructure, community growth, and quality of life. My combined expertise in finance, governance, and community engagement positions me to thoughtfully address the challenges and opportunities facing Naperville.



Derek McDaniel

Naperville City Council Candidate



ELABORATE ON YOUR POSITION FOR THE ABOVE KEY QUESTIONS.

I am generally supportive of the 5th Avenue redevelopment project, as it offers opportunities to increase tax revenue and promote economic growth, which are essential to keeping property taxes low and maintaining Naperville as an affordable community for all residents. However, any proposal must fit well with the surrounding neighborhood, which is family-friendly and vibrant. The concerns and needs of local residents should be a top priority in the planning process.

Additionally, economic development opportunities shouldn't be limited to 5th Avenue. Underutilized parts of Naperville's business districts, along with continued efforts along the I-88 tech corridor, are key areas to consider. I strongly support growth in the tech corridor as it has the potential to bring high-skilled jobs to Naperville, further strengthening our local economy.

WHAT ARE THE TOP CHALLENGES FACING NAPERVILLE'S BUSINESS COMMUNITY?

Naperville's business community faces several key challenges that are critical to address in order to maintain and grow our city's economic success:

Rising Costs for Business Owners: Inflation has significantly increased wages, rent, and other operating expenses, making it more difficult for small businesses to thrive. If we don't find ways to support our local businesses in managing these costs, we risk losing the vibrant diversity that makes Naperville's business districts unique.

Increased Competition from Surrounding Cities: Nearby communities are stepping up their economic development efforts, offering incentives to attract businesses and consumers. Naperville must remain competitive by fostering a pro-business environment that attracts new enterprises while supporting existing ones.

Infrastructure Improvements: Maintaining and upgrading infrastructure, including roads, utilities, and parking, is essential for supporting our business districts. Ensuring that our infrastructure meets the needs of businesses and their customers is critical to attracting and retaining commerce in Naperville. These issues are critical to Naperville's long-term economic success. Addressing them will help us maintain our reputation as a regional economic leader, support our local entrepreneurs, and ensure the continued prosperity of our community.



Derek McDaniel

Naperville City Council Candidate



WHAT IS YOUR ACTION PLAN FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH?

To address the challenges facing Naperville's business community, I would focus on policies and initiatives that support local businesses, attract new investment, and ensure a thriving and diverse economic environment.

Opposition to Policies that Burden Businesses: I oppose the Tipped Wage Ordinance recently passed at the state level. This measure has significantly increased costs for restaurant owners and is opposed by many restaurant workers who feel it does not align with their needs.

Smart and Targeted Zoning Updates: I support targeted zoning updates similar to those that succeeded along the East Ogden corridor. Specifically, I would propose an amendment to the definition of "financial institution" in downtown zoning districts. This amendment would include retail banking and would require these firms to seek approval on a case-by-case basis through the variance process. Retail banks do not generate sales or food and beverage tax revenue. Limiting their presence on the first floor would allow more space for businesses that contribute directly to Naperville's tax base and vibrant downtown economy.

Infrastructure and Business-Friendly Initiatives: Infrastructure improvements, such as enhanced parking options and well-maintained roads, are critical for supporting businesses and attracting customers. Additionally, I would work to streamline processes for business owners, such as permitting and licensing, to reduce barriers to opening and expanding businesses in Naperville.

HOW WOULD YOU COLLABORATE WITH THE NAPERVILLE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE?

As a current member of the Business Works Committee and a former board member of the Naperville Area Chamber of Commerce, I am well-positioned to collaborate effectively with the Chamber to promote economic growth in our district. I plan to leverage my existing relationships both within and outside of the organization to strengthen partnerships and foster initiatives that support our local business community.

Additionally, I intend to continue serving on the Business Works Committee as a dedicated voice and liaison for the Naperville City Council. By maintaining open communication and working collaboratively with the Chamber, I will ensure that the perspectives and needs of our business community are represented in policymaking, and together, we can create an environment that encourages innovation, investment, and sustained economic growth.



Derek McDaniel

Naperville City Council Candidate



WHAT ARE YOUR BUDGET PRIORITIES FOR BUSINESSES?

I believe balancing the city's budget requires a commitment to fiscal discipline and strategic decision-making. I am committed to ensuring that we continue to spend tax dollars wisely, allowing Naperville to maintain one of the lowest property tax rates in the state. Keeping property taxes low ensures Naperville remains an affordable and desirable place to live and work, benefiting all residents and businesses alike.

Another priority is to grow our local economy by attracting new businesses to Naperville and revitalizing underperforming areas. My experience on the Planning and Zoning Commission has shown my commitment to smart economic development. I have consistently supported projects like Block 59 and the revitalization of the East Ogden corridor, which have transformed underutilized areas into thriving business hubs. These efforts generate essential sales tax revenue that helps fund city services while alleviating the burden on property taxpayers.

Additionally, investing in our first responders is non-negotiable. Public safety is our number one priority, as it directly impacts both the well-being of our families and the success of our businesses. A safe city is a thriving city.

Finally, as Naperville transitions from a growing community to an aging one, it's essential to invest in maintaining and upgrading our infrastructure. We must plan for the future to ensure our city can continue to support the needs of residents and businesses for years to come.

WHAT ARE YOUR REVENUE AND TAX STRATEGIES?

I believe it should be a top priority to avoid raising Naperville's property tax rate. We need to ensure that Naperville remains an affordable place to live and property taxes are a key component. Instead, we should focus on exploring alternative revenue sources that minimize the financial impact on our residents.

At the same time, I strongly believe we should avoid regressive taxation methods that disproportionately impact lower-income residents. Ensuring that our revenue strategies are fair and equitable is essential to maintaining Naperville's reputation as an inclusive and fiscally responsible community.

Naperville is fortunate to have the lowest home rule sales tax in the western suburbs, which is a competitive advantage for attracting shoppers and diners to our city. Notably, 50% of restaurant and retail sales in Naperville are generated by visitors who do not live here. While I do not support raising taxes or fees as a first resort, aligning our home rule sales tax rate more closely with surrounding suburbs could provide an opportunity to increase revenue without directly impacting local business owners' bottom lines or placing an undue burden on residents

This approach ensures that a significant portion of the tax burden is shared by visitors who benefit from our city's amenities and infrastructure. Balancing the need for government revenue with the burden of taxes requires a thoughtful approach that prioritizes fairness & maintains Naperville's competitive edge.



Derek McDaniel

Naperville City Council Candidate



HOW WILL YOU HELP BUILD A STRONG WORKFORCE PIPELINE FOR NAPERVILLE'S EMPLOYERS?

Naperville is fortunate to have exceptional educational resources that play a crucial role in shaping the future workforce and ensuring the success of our community. To build a strong workforce pipeline that meets the needs of current and future employers, collaboration between our schools, businesses, and local organizations is essential.

I would work closely with the Naperville Development Partnership, which has been instrumental in fostering economic growth and creating connections between businesses and the community. Additionally, partnering with local high schools such as Naperville Central, Neuqua Valley, and others, as well as North Central College and the College of DuPage, will help expand opportunities for students and employers alike.

One key focus would be promoting and encouraging work-study and internship programs that connect students with local businesses. These programs provide students with valuable hands-on experience, help them develop critical skills, and expose them to potential career paths. By strengthening these partnerships, we can ensure students graduate with the knowledge and tools necessary to succeed in today's evolving job market.

Furthermore, I believe it's essential to highlight the importance of skilled trades, labor, and first responder careers, such as police officers and firefighters.

HOW WOULD YOU HELP BUSINESSES ADAPT TO ECONOMIC CHANGES, NEW TECHNOLOGIES, AND WORKFORCE CHALLENGES?

In a rapidly changing economy, it is crucial that businesses have the resources and support they need to adapt to new technologies, market demands, and workforce challenges. As a member of the Naperville City Council, I would work closely with the Naperville Development Partnership to attract and retain businesses that drive innovation and economic growth. I would also establish partnerships with local educational institutions like North Central College and College of DuPage to create workforce development programs that provide specialized training in emerging industries, such as technology, advanced manufacturing, and healthcare. Additionally, I would collaborate with the Naperville Area Chamber of Commerce to better understand the evolving needs of our existing businesses and advocate for initiatives that support their long-term success.

To ensure Naperville businesses remain competitive, I would champion programs that offer small business grants or low-interest loans for technology upgrades, allowing local businesses to invest in automation, cybersecurity, and e-commerce solutions. I would also promote public-private partnerships to develop apprenticeship and internship programs that create direct pipelines between students and local employers, ensuring our workforce is equipped with the skills needed for the jobs of tomorrow.



Derek McDaniel

Naperville City Council Candidate



HOW WOULD YOU RATE NAPERVILLE'S BUSINESS INFRASTRUCTURE, AND WHAT PROJECTS WOULD YOU PRIORITIZE FOR GROWTH?

Naperville's infrastructure is at a critical juncture. While projects such as the Washington Street Bridge replacement and the Downtown Streetscape improvements may be costly, they are essential to the continued health and vitality of our community. As a city that is no longer in its growth phase but transitioning into an aging community, these updates are necessary to ensure safety, functionality, and sustainability.

Infrastructure improvements are the single largest driver of the 2025 budget, accounting for \$179.38 million. Much of the infrastructure installed decades ago is now at the 'end of its useful life' and requires replacement. Proactively addressing these needs will not only maintain the quality of life for our residents but also ensure that Naperville remains an attractive place for businesses and visitors. Thoughtful investment in infrastructure today will help us avoid higher costs and greater challenges down the road.

HOW WOULD YOU SUPPORT NAPERVILLE'S BUSINESS COMMUNITY, AND WHAT NEW IDEAS WOULD YOU BRING TO CITY COUNCIL?

As a new candidate for Naperville City Council, I bring both a deep commitment to supporting our business community and a fresh perspective to promoting economic growth and business success. My two terms as a Planning and Zoning Commissioner have provided me with invaluable experience in evaluating projects and initiatives that drive economic development while balancing the needs of residents and businesses

I also have established relationships with members of the Naperville Development Partnership and other community leaders. My ability to work with key stakeholders across the city ensures that I can hit the ground running to create meaningful partnerships and solutions.

As a member of the Naperville City Council, I would bring fresh ideas to the table, such as:
Targeted Zoning Updates: Building on the success of areas like the E. Ogden corridor, I would focus on smart zoning changes to attract the right mix of businesses in underutilized areas, while maintaining the character of our community.

Advocating for a Diverse Economy: By promoting partnerships between businesses and educational institutions like Naperville Central, Neuqua Valley, North Central College, and the College of DuPage, we can develop a pipeline of skilled workers to meet the demands of our local economy.

A Balanced Approach to Policy: I would work to ensure that policies, like the Tipped Wage Ordinance, do not create undue burdens for business owners while remaining responsive to the needs of workers.

VOTER GUIDE

Find out what key issues that impact Naperville this candidate supports or opposes in the Naperville City Council Election 2025.



Ashfaq Syed

Naperville City Council Candidate

Status: Returning Candidate

Campaign Website: ashfaqfornaperville.com

Email: contact@ashfaqfornaperville.com

KEY QUESTIONS

Do you support or oppose the Grocery Tax Proposal?

Do you support or oppose the creation of new tax incentives?

Do you support or oppose plans to build the Nichols Library Parking Garage?

Do you support or oppose the redevelopment of the 5th avenue area?

Do you support using city resources to help small businesses recover and stay competitive in Naperville?

	SUPPORT	OPPOSE	ABSTAIN
Do you support or oppose the Grocery Tax Proposal?		✓	
Do you support or oppose the creation of new tax incentives?		✓	
Do you support or oppose plans to build the Nichols Library Parking Garage?		✓	
Do you support or oppose the redevelopment of the 5th avenue area?	✓		
Do you support using city resources to help small businesses recover and stay competitive in Naperville?	✓		



Candidate Biography and Priorities

Ashfaq Syed

Naperville City Council Candidate



CURRENT OCCUPATION

Banker and Business Owner

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

JD, Boston College Law School, 2007; BA, Vanderbilt University (magna cum laude), 2004; Neuqua Valley High School Class of 2000 (1st Graduating Class). I am admitted to practice law in the State of Illinois, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the Northern District of Illinois, and the United States Supreme Court.

RELEVANT BUSINESS EXPERIENCE

With a successful career in finance and banking, I bring a strong background in fiscal management, budget oversight, and economic strategy—critical skills for serving on the Naperville City Council. As Co-Chair of the 2020 Complete Count Committee, I helped Naperville secure millions in state and federal funding through a best-in-the-nation census response rate, ensuring resources were properly allocated to support local businesses and community services.

As President of the Naperville Public Library Board, I oversee a multi-million dollar budget, ensuring efficient operations while maintaining one of the highest-rated public library systems in the nation. My experience in contract negotiations, strategic financial planning, and resource management has strengthened public services while keeping costs low for residents.

Additionally, my work on the Board of Directors for Loaves & Fishes Community Services and the Naperville Environment and Sustainability Task Force has allowed me to develop partnerships, secure funding, and implement programs that directly benefit Naperville businesses and families.

I understand economic development, responsible budgeting, and smart investments—ensuring Naperville remains a place where businesses thrive and residents receive high-quality services without unnecessary financial burden.



Ashfaq Syed

Naperville City Council Candidate



ELABORATE ON YOUR POSITION FOR THE ABOVE KEY QUESTIONS.

I support allocating city resources to create programs and incentives that help small businesses recover, grow, and remain competitive in Naperville's economy. Small businesses are the backbone of our local economy, providing jobs, driving innovation, and fostering a unique and thriving community. However, they face increasing challenges such as rising operational costs, supply chain disruptions, and workforce shortages.

To ensure that Naperville remains a hub for small business success, I'll advocate for:

- A dedicated small business grant or loan program to assist with expansion, technology upgrades, and hiring.
- Prioritizing Naperville-based businesses for city RFPs and contracts to keep taxpayer dollars circulating within the community.
- Streamlining the permitting process to make it easier for entrepreneurs to launch and expand businesses.
- Providing technical support and resources to help businesses adapt to changing market demands.
- Developing partnerships with regional and national business networks to ensure Naperville's businesses have opportunities to grow beyond our city's borders.

Naperville has the potential to be a leader in economic innovation, with businesses that are not just competitive locally, but regionally and nationally as well. By investing in smart business policies and fostering a pro-business climate, we can create an environment where entrepreneurs and small businesses thrive, bringing jobs and long-term economic stability to our community.

WHAT ARE THE TOP CHALLENGES FACING NAPERVILLE'S BUSINESS COMMUNITY?

Naperville's business community faces several challenges that impact economic success:

- Commercial Affordability: Rising property costs and leasing rates make it difficult for small businesses to thrive.
- Infrastructure & Traffic: Congestion and limited transit options hinder accessibility for customers and employees.
- Regulatory Barriers: Business owners cite zoning, licensing, and approval processes as obstacles to expansion and innovation.

Addressing these challenges is essential to ensuring that Naperville remains a business-friendly city that fosters both entrepreneurial success and corporate investment.



Ashfaq Syed

Naperville City Council Candidate



WHAT IS YOUR ACTION PLAN FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH?

To strengthen Naperville's economy, I will focus on:

- Streamlining Business Approvals: Reduce bureaucratic hurdles by improving the permitting process.
- Public-Private Partnerships: Collaborate with businesses to develop job training programs tailored to local industry needs.
- Infrastructure Investments: Improve transportation and parking to support business growth.
- Incentives for Growth: Explore incentives for businesses investing in sustainability, job creation, and technology.
- Supporting Small Businesses: Develop mentorship programs and access to low-interest business loans.

By fostering innovation, reducing red tape, and investing in infrastructure, we can keep Naperville's economy strong.

HOW WILL YOU COLLABORATE WITH THE NAPERVILLE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Naperville Area Chamber of Commerce is vital to a thriving business climate. As a Council Member, I will:

- Engage in Regular Dialogue with the Chamber to understand evolving business needs.
- Advocate for Business-Friendly Policies that simplify regulations and promote economic growth.
- Support Infrastructure Investments that improve business accessibility and commercial districts.
- Champion Entrepreneurship Programs that connect startups with mentorship, funding, and networking opportunities.
- Encourage Workforce Development Partnerships between businesses, schools, and workforce training organizations.
- Promote Local Business Participation in City Bidding Processes by working with the Chamber to inform members about city contracts and ensuring transparency in procurement opportunities.

A strong business community means a strong Naperville. My commitment is to work collaboratively with the Chamber to maintain a competitive and prosperous local economy.



WHAT ARE YOUR BUDGET PRIORITIES FOR BUSINESSES?

A balanced budget should reflect both fiscal responsibility and economic growth by:

- Prioritizing Infrastructure Improvements: Enhancing roads, public transit, and commercial districts to support business operations.
- Supporting Business Incentives: Investing in local grants and tax credits to encourage new business development.
- Public Safety & Emergency Services: Ensuring Naperville remains a safe place for businesses and customers.
- Sustainability Initiatives: Promoting energy efficiency programs that reduce costs for businesses.
- Smart Spending Strategies: Carefully assessing new expenditures while ensuring long-term financial stability.
- Ensuring Fair and Transparent Procurement Practices: Reviewing the city's bidding process to prioritize Naperville-based businesses for municipal contracts and RFPs.

By aligning our budget with business growth, we can create a thriving and resilient local economy.

WHAT ARE YOUR REVENUE AND TAX STRATEGIES?

Naperville must maintain a competitive tax structure that supports business growth while ensuring the city's financial health. My approach:

- Avoid Overburdening Businesses: Keep business taxes low while diversifying revenue sources.
- Leverage Grants & State Funding: Secure external funding for key infrastructure and business development programs.
- Review and Modernize Fee Structures: Ensure that permit and licensing fees remain fair and reflect actual service costs.
- Promote Economic Expansion: A growing business community leads to increased revenue through sales tax and property taxes.
- Encourage Smart Development: Strategically plan commercial and mixed-use developments that generate long-term revenue.
- Support Local Procurement: Keep tax dollars in Naperville by ensuring that city contracts and vendor partnerships prioritize local businesses whenever possible.

A strong local economy depends on policies that attract investment while maintaining financial responsibility.



HOW WILL YOU HELP BUILD A STRONG WORKFORCE PIPELINE FOR NAPERVILLE'S EMPLOYERS?

Naperville businesses need a skilled workforce. I will advocate for:

- Stronger Partnerships with Local Schools & Colleges: Expand vocational training and apprenticeships.
- Business-Led Job Training Programs: Connect businesses with students and job seekers for mentorship and hands-on experience.
- Encouraging High-Growth Industries: Support STEM, tech, healthcare, and trade programs to prepare workers for in-demand jobs.
- Attracting & Retaining Talent: Invest in quality of life initiatives—affordable housing, transit, and cultural amenities—to keep professionals in Naperville.
- Apprenticeship & Internship Incentives: Work with city government and businesses to expand internship and apprenticeship programs for local high school and college students, ensuring a steady pipeline of skilled workers.

By bridging education and industry needs, we can ensure Naperville remains a top destination for talent and innovation.

HOW WOULD YOU HELP BUSINESSES ADAPT TO ECONOMIC CHANGES, NEW TECHNOLOGIES, AND WORKFORCE CHALLENGES?

In today's fast-changing economy, businesses must be able to adapt and innovate. I will:

- Expand Small Business Resources: Provide access to grants and technical support for businesses adopting new technologies.
- Encourage Digital Transformation: Help businesses integrate e-commerce, digital marketing, and automation.
- Advocate for Smart Zoning Policies: Allow businesses to repurpose spaces and expand operations efficiently.
- Support Sustainability Programs: Help businesses reduce operational costs through energy efficiency incentives.
- Develop Remote Work & Shared Space Strategies: Foster a flexible work environment that attracts startups and growing businesses.
- Ensure Local Businesses Are Included in Economic Growth Plans: Encourage policies that prioritize Naperville-based businesses when the city invests in economic development projects.

A business-friendly city must equip companies with the resources to stay competitive and grow.



Ashfaq Syed

Naperville City Council Candidate



HOW WOULD YOU RATE NAPERVILLE'S BUSINESS INFRASTRUCTURE, AND WHAT PROJECTS WOULD YOU PRIORITIZE FOR GROWTH?

Rating: 7/10 – Naperville's infrastructure is strong but needs modernization to support future growth.

Priorities:

- Transit & Parking Improvements: Address traffic congestion and ensure accessible parking.
- High-Speed Internet Expansion: Invest in industry leading broadband to support tech and remote-work businesses.
- Smart Traffic Management: Use data-driven approaches to improve road efficiency.
- Sustainable Infrastructure: Expand electric vehicle charging stations and green building incentives.
- Revitalizing Commercial Districts: Support projects that enhance downtown and business corridors.
- Ensure Infrastructure Investments Support Local Businesses: Prioritize construction and maintenance contracts for Naperville-based businesses, ensuring that city infrastructure projects boost the local economy.

A future-ready Naperville requires investment in transportation, technology, and sustainability.

AFTER YOUR PREVIOUS CAMPAIGN, WHAT LESSONS HAVE YOU LEARNED, AND HOW WILL YOU BETTER SERVE LOCAL BUSINESSES?

Running for office has given me invaluable insight into the needs and challenges facing Naperville's business community. Through conversations with businesses, entrepreneurs, and stakeholders, I have gained a deeper understanding of how we can better support small businesses, foster economic growth, and ensure a thriving local economy.

One lesson from my previous campaign is the need for stronger partnerships between the city and our business community. Many businesses feel disconnected from city resources and decision-making processes. If elected, I will advocate for proactive engagement with businesses, ensuring that they have a direct line of communication with city leaders and a seat at the table when economic policies are being shaped.

Additionally, I have learned that prioritizing local businesses for city contracts and RFPs is a crucial step in keeping Naperville's economy strong. Investing in local businesses not only creates jobs and strengthens our tax base but also ensures that our city's success benefits those who have invested in our community.

I also recognize the importance of helping businesses stay competitive—not just locally, but regionally and nationally. Naperville should leverage its position as an economic hub by expanding workforce development programs, streamlining business regulations, and fostering innovation through smart economic incentives.

I will take these lessons and use them to champion policies that enhance economic success.

VOTER GUIDE

Find out what key issues that impact Naperville this candidate supports or opposes in the Naperville City Council Election 2025.



Dr. Benjamin (Benny) White

Naperville City Council Candidate Candidate

Status: Incumbent

Campaign Website: bennywhite.org

Email: benny@bennywhite.org

KEY QUESTIONS

Do you support or oppose the Grocery Tax Proposal?

Do you support or oppose the creation of new tax incentives?

Do you support or oppose plans to build the Nichols Library Parking Garage?

Do you support or oppose the redevelopment of the 5th avenue area?

Do you support using city resources to help small businesses recover and stay competitive in Naperville?

	SUPPORT	OPPOSE	ABSTAIN
Do you support or oppose the Grocery Tax Proposal?		✓	
Do you support or oppose the creation of new tax incentives?		✓	
Do you support or oppose plans to build the Nichols Library Parking Garage?	✓		
Do you support or oppose the redevelopment of the 5th avenue area?	✓		
Do you support using city resources to help small businesses recover and stay competitive in Naperville?	✓		



Candidate Biography and Priorities

Dr. Benjamin (Benny) White

Naperville City Council Candidate



CURRENT OCCUPATION

I have worked my whole life as a public servant, leader, and educator. As a member of the Naperville City Council since 2017, I played a key role in shaping policies that foster economic growth, public safety, and community development. My leadership experience extends beyond governance as a retired U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel serving 22 years as a Field Artillery Officer, leading and mentoring soldiers in high-stakes environments. In addition to my public service, I am committed to shaping future leaders as a Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) instructor at Joliet West High School, also serving as the department head. In this role, I work to instill leadership, discipline, and civic responsibility in young cadets, preparing them for success in military and civilian careers. My extensive experience in leadership, education, and public service enables me to continue making a meaningful impact in Naperville.

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

DBA, Values-Driven Leadership, Benedictine University

MBA, Webster University

MS, Kinesiology, Indiana University

BS, Management, United States Military Academy at West Point

I believe my strong academic foundation complements my leadership experience. I earned a Bachelor of Science in Management Studies from the United States Military Academy at West Point, one of the best possible places to develop the critical thinking and leadership skills that later shaped my military and public service career. I earned a Master of Science in Kinesiology from Indiana University, focusing on leadership, performance, and human development.

Following that, and knowing that it would serve me well both in the military and beyond, I obtained an MBA from Webster University, acquiring financial and organizational that I've been able to put to use on the City Council. I earned a Doctorate in Values-Driven Leadership from Benedictine University because of my dedication to ethical decision-making and community service.



Candidate Biography and Priorities

Dr. Benjamin (Benny) White

Naperville City Council Candidate



RELEVANT BUSINESS EXPERIENCE

During my 22-year career as an Army officer, I managed budgets at increasingly larger levels, set measurable goals, and maintained operational readiness. I was responsible for budgets in the seven figures, working on bases in the U.S. and overseas.

I earned an MBA at Webster University while I was serving as an officer in the United States Army, aware that business knowledge would be useful in military leadership as well as my work after retirement. Since being elected in 2017, I've been a member of the board of the Naperville Development Partnership to the present, and also serve on the Downtown Advisory Committee. Those roles have allowed me to collaborate with local business leaders, attracting new investments and supporting economic sustainability.

Those experiences, in addition to the day-to-day decisions that affect businesses in Naperville made by the City Council, have kept me knowledgeable about Naperville's business environment. The addition of a second Costco, very unusual for a suburb, and the development of Block 59 were directly tied to how well the business community could work with the City. My roles as on the Indian Prairie School District 204 Board of Education and the Naperville Board of Fire and Police Commissioners also strengthened my expertise in financial oversight, strategic planning, and policy implementation.

ELABORATE ON YOUR POSITION FOR THE ABOVE KEY QUESTIONS.

Naperville currently has only one TIF (Tax Increment Financing) example, the Water Street District, which has worked well. What kept it working was that the money available could only be used for public improvements that can last. TIFs have a poor reputation in Illinois because of their overuse and bad management in the city of Chicago, depriving their school district of the tax dollars they need for decades. Entities that receive property taxes from a TIF, most importantly school districts, which rely on real estate taxes and do not benefit from sales taxes, have to sign off on a TIF, and they only do so if they think they will pay off in tax dollars in the future. Naperville was careful to require the money available to the developer to be spent on brick and mortar public improvements that benefit all the residents. Now Water Street is a thriving area, featuring restaurants, a hotel and banquet facility, and small shops. It does exactly what it was designed to do from the City's point of view, which is to create a continuous flow from Naper Settlement to the Municipal Center, Water Street, the Riverwalk, and the downtown. It takes advantage of the riverfront and even incorporates public art in the mosaics along the river. TIFs are serious business, and this example of one that worked so well shows that any request for another would have to demonstrate a huge benefit before being approved, so I think additional ones are unlikely.



Dr. Benjamin (Benny) White

Naperville City Council Candidate



WHAT ARE THE TOP CHALLENGES FACING NAPERVILLE'S BUSINESS COMMUNITY?

Naperville's business community faces significant challenges that are common to many urban and suburban communities in the post-COVID era: (1) Workforce shortages—local businesses, especially restaurants, struggle to find skilled workers due to shifting labor trends where many people can still work from home (2) Commercial space affordability— potential businesses complain of rising rents that make it hard to continue to make a profit or establish a new business. (3) Regulations —business owners often have to navigate complicated permitting and licensing requirements. That is something the Council can definitely work on. (4) Changing consumer behavior—increased online competition is a challenge. After considerable lobbying, Naperville now receives a share of online sales tax. You'll notice that when you make an online purchase, local tax is added when previously that was reserved for in-person purchases, helping to level the playing field for brick and mortar stores (5) Transportation and infrastructure—traffic congestion and parking concerns affect accessibility. We have been going through some growing pains as the Washington Street bridge improvements have dragged on and we all look forward to its completion. The sidewalk improvements have made our streets safer and more walkable for pedestrians. These challenges are critical because a strong business climate drives economic growth, creates jobs, and sustains Naperville's reputation as a thriving economic hub.

WHAT IS YOUR ACTION PLAN FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH?

Addressing workforce shortages requires partnerships with schools, including encouraging internships and connections to our high schools, and supporting and hosting job fairs. To support small businesses, I propose reviewing zoning laws and incentives for affordable commercial space. Simplifying regulations and streamlining permitting will ease the burden on entrepreneurs. We have accomplished some of this with the online permitting functions that are helpful for businesses and residents. Infrastructure investments, such as smart traffic solutions and increased downtown parking, will enhance accessibility. The Chamber is key to providing a robust marketing strategy promoting Naperville as a business-friendly city to continue to attract investment and sustain economic prosperity. Although their missions are not exactly the same, I would like to see the Chamber and the Naperville Development Partnership to work together on encouraging businesses to locate and thrive in Naperville. That would be a win-win for the City.



Dr. Benjamin (Benny) White

Naperville City Council Candidate



HOW WILL YOU COLLABORATE WITH THE NAPERVILLE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

City elected officials are already very tuned in to the Chamber's calendar and events, and the Council pays a lot of attention to NACC, both publicly as we attend ribbon cuttings and luncheons and hear their comments at City Council meetings, and behind the scenes doing our homework, reading their correspondence and talking with Chamber members to get their input. Many of the members of the Chamber are very small businesses and non-profits, so important to the social and economic fabric of the City. I support joint initiatives like workforce development programs, networking events, and business mentoring. (I have spoken several times at Chamber events.) I also propose creating an advisory council with Chamber representatives to streamline policies that affect our businesses. In addition, we can enhance promotional campaigns that highlight Naperville's business advantages, leveraging the Chamber's resources to attract investors and entrepreneurs.

WHAT ARE YOUR BUDGET PRIORITIES FOR BUSINESSES?

Since I've been on the council, the city's financials are in the best shape they have been since the recession. We have maintained our AAA /aaa bond rating, and reserves are at 40%, far exceeding the initial goal of 25%. Naperville has always prioritized infrastructure and public safety, factors that all businesses consider when deciding where to locate. Since we have our own municipal utility and are facing decisions about whether to extend the IMEA contract or go in a different direction, we must keep the business community in mind when we make that decision, since their utility bills can be a significant expense.

A balanced budget should prioritize infrastructure, public safety, and business development. Maintaining well-funded roads, utilities, and public transportation ensures businesses remain accessible. Supporting public safety keeps Naperville attractive for investment. Economic incentives, such as tax abatements for new businesses and grants for innovation, should be considered. Cutting unnecessary bureaucracy and investing in digital transformation will make it easier for businesses to operate efficiently. Ultimately, responsible fiscal management that keeps taxes low while investing in growth is key to a thriving economic ecosystem.



Dr. Benjamin (Benny) White

Naperville City Council Candidate



WHAT ARE YOUR REVENUE AND TAX STRATEGIES?

Naperville has sought for a long time to balance its tax structure so that it is not too dependent on any one revenue stream. That is one of the factors that has allowed us to maintain an AAA/aaa bond rating. Sales tax, residential real estate tax, real estate transfer tax, gasoline tax, shares of state taxes, and fees for permits and services all provide funding to support the City's budget. By the way - the City cannot impose a grocery tax even if it wished to, to make up for the shortfall caused by the suspension of the state grocery tax. Any increase would have to be an across-the-board home rule sales tax increase, not just for groceries. Strategic investments in tourism and events will drive additional revenue without raising taxes, encouraging sustainable economic growth. Our SECA (Special Events and Community Arts) programs offer many events, including parades and festivals, that draw thousands of visitors to Naperville every year. I believe Naperville already has created tax policies that do not overburden businesses.

To avoid overburdening businesses, we should diversify revenue streams by expanding public-private partnerships and attracting high-value industries. Encouraging mixed-use developments will boost property tax revenues while maintaining a balanced commercial-residential tax ratio. Reviewing local business tax structures to ensure competitiveness without compromising city services is essential. I support tax incentives for small businesses and startup.

HOW WILL YOU HELP BUILD A STRONG WORKFORCE PIPELINE FOR NAPERVILLE'S EMPLOYERS?

Building a strong workforce pipeline starts with supporting education-industry partnerships, and Naperville is fortunate to have outstanding institutions leading the way. Districts 203 and 204, along with North Central College and the College of DuPage, are already deeply focused on preparing a 21st-century workforce. Partnerships with healthcare institutions, like our local hospitals, are also key to equipping students with the skills needed for careers in health care. As a councilman, I will work to support these efforts by encouraging programs that expand internships and apprenticeships, giving students real-world experience while helping businesses address talent gaps. I will also advocate for initiatives that promote STEM education, vocational training, and upskilling programs to ensure Naperville's workforce stays adaptable to emerging industries. Excellence in education is the foundation of Naperville's reputation as a premier place to live, work, and start a business. By strengthening connections between our schools, colleges, employers, and community organizations, we can continue to sustain and grow our local economy.



Dr. Benjamin (Benny) White

Naperville City Council Candidate



HOW WOULD YOU HELP BUSINESSES ADAPT TO ECONOMIC CHANGES, NEW TECHNOLOGIES, AND WORKFORCE CHALLENGES?

Businesses must evolve with technology and market trends to stay competitive, and we've seen how adaptability can lead to success. Shopping centers that were once dominated by big box stores surrounded by massive parking lots are no longer what consumers find desirable. Businesses must adapt to shifting preferences and market demands, just as Barnes & Noble did. After leaving its large space (although it was not its choice), the company returned to a smaller location on Jackson Avenue, recognizing that while the digital-book era has changed how people shop, Naperville residents still value the experience of a brick-and-mortar bookstore. To support this kind of evolution, I believe Naperville should strengthen partnerships with universities and tech incubators to ensure our local businesses stay ahead of industry trends. Offering business education workshops on market shifts, cybersecurity, and sustainability will provide businesses with the tools they need to remain competitive. By fostering innovation and encouraging businesses to adapt to changing consumer needs, Naperville can retain its vibrant business community and continue to attract forward-thinking companies that strengthen our local economy.

HOW WOULD YOU RATE NAPERVILLE'S BUSINESS INFRASTRUCTURE, AND WHAT PROJECTS WOULD YOU PRIORITIZE FOR GROWTH?

Priorities include upgrading roads to reduce congestion, expanding parking in commercial districts, and enhancing broadband access to support tech-driven businesses. Revitalizing older business corridors with streetscape improvements, as we have done downtown, will attract new development. Investing in green infrastructure, such as energy-efficient buildings and smart traffic systems, will create a modern, business-friendly environment.

Among the most important aspects of infrastructure are maintaining a reliable and reasonably priced electrical grid, which we have managed to do successfully for decades. We will be looking for the voice of Naperville businesses when it comes to decisions about how to supply Naperville with power in coming decades. IMEA would like to secure Naperville's continued participation as the supplier of electricity, but we will have options other than signing onto another contract. Naperville's existing electrical system infrastructure, with the majority of power lines underground, helps secure its reliability.



Dr. Benjamin (Benny) White

Naperville City Council Candidate



HOW HAVE YOUR ACTIONS BENEFITED NAPERVILLE'S BUSINESS COMMUNITY, AND WHAT'S NEXT IF RE-ELECTED?

During my time on the Naperville City Council, I have championed initiatives that directly benefit our business community. I've supported policies that streamline business regulations, making it easier for entrepreneurs to start and expand their operations. Recognizing the importance of infrastructure to business success, I've backed investments in road improvements, parking solutions, and other projects that ensure businesses remain accessible to customers and employees. I've worked to strengthen partnerships with the Naperville Area Chamber of Commerce and local organizations, ensuring that business owners' voices are heard and reflected in policy decisions. Key projects like Block 59, Heinen's, and SSA developments in the downtown area show the results of collaboration between business and government. Revitalizing infrastructure and beautifying public spaces help create a vibrant environment for business. I've supported efforts to lower the property tax rate and maintain a low-cost business environment, making Naperville an attractive place to do business. Initiatives along the I-88 corridor have encouraged new business growth and development in the area. As a member of the Naperville Development Partnership, I will continue to support initiatives that bring new businesses to Naperville, help existing businesses expand, and foster an environment where businesses of all sizes can thrive.