

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

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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

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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.



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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.



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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.



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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.



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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.



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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