

Highland District Council's 2024 election – candidates

At-large representative candidates

Casey Ulrich, grid 10



Tell us about yourself and how you can best leverage your strengths to represent your grid and the Highland Park Community.

I am a husband, a father, a teacher, and currently support licensed educators new to Saint Paul Public Schools to learn, grow, and feel supported in their new position. My ability to listen and build relationships across difference allows me to make connections with community members and board members. My experience in education allows me to balance the diverse perspectives of the community while also advocating for those in the community who are traditionally underserved or underrepresented.

What makes the Highland District Council mission meaningful to you?

I believe connected and engaged communities are the cornerstone to building a foundation of opportunity for our young people and traditionally marginalized populations. When we learn to celebrate, understand, and advocate for each other, we learn that our community's diversity is our strength and allows us to build a more thriving neighborhood for all residents. The mission of the Highland District Council aligns with my core values of service, democracy, and community.

When considering new development, how would you balance the desires of the present community with those of future community members?

New development needs to take into account the diverse perspectives of the current residents - both the families and small businesses that have long histories in Highland Park and the new entrepreneurs and young families that live, learn, work, and play here. Development proposals must be shared equitably among all community stakeholders along with a transparent decision making process so that those with more affluence or social capital do not carry an unfair advantage in decision making. As a member of the board, I will encourage the community to intentionally include diverse voices in planning for the future to ensure Highland Park continues to be a neighborhood for people of all backgrounds and lived experiences.

How would you prioritize transportation resources (such as space and funding) for people walking, biking, and driving?

I will advocate for transportation options that incentivize the use of more climate friendly transportation options - bike lanes, EV charging stations, bike share. As a father of young kids, I will also advocate for city improvements to improve pedestrian crossings and walkways. Finally, I will also prioritize the nuts and bolts of transportation issues like working with the city to make sure roads are plowed and potholes are filled and with neighbors to ensure sidewalks are shoveled and drains are cleaned.

How would you consider the needs and desires of members of the community who face obstacles to participation in the public process?

As an educator, I have experience working with students and families who face barriers, and have witnessed the assets they bring to a school community. Similarly, it is imperative we seek out those that have been traditionally left behind - immigrants, black and brown residents, the housing insecure, our very young and our very old - and encourage them to be part of the conversations happening at the Highland District Council. I will encourage partnerships with local schools, religious organizations, and community organizations like the Neighborhood House to tap the wisdom of local institutions with long histories of service in Highland Park, and work to make the Highland District Council more approachable and transparent in its processes.

Colleen Holm, grid 7



Tell us about yourself and how you can best leverage your strengths to represent your grid and the Highland Park Community.

Have lived in the community since graduating from St Catherine University in 1980.

What makes the Highland District Council mission meaningful to you?

Would love to be a part of building a more welcoming and safer neighborhood.

When considering new development, how would you balance the desires of the present community with those of future community members?

Must always communicate with present community members. Communication is key to understanding needs of current residents with influx of new members.

How would you prioritize transportation resources (such as space and funding) for people walking, biking, and driving?

Climate change should make us consider how transportation options will effect our environment.

How would you consider the needs and desires of members of the community who face obstacles to participation in the public process?

Use various communication forums. Social platforms must be an option but not the only option.

Frank Jossi, grid 2



Tell us about yourself and how you can best leverage your strengths to represent your grid and the Highland Park Community.

I served on the Highland District Council for several years before re-joining last year. As an HDC member, I have served as vice president, secretary, committee chair and committee member, focusing on development and transportation. This experience and a career as a journalist covering development, energy and the arts provides me a great background for making a contribution to the HDC.

What makes the Highland District Council mission meaningful to you?

I love the mission statement. I enjoy connecting with neighbors and businesses, learning about they chose Highland and what they think could be better in the neighborhood. In addition, I like the HDC's mission to create events that bring folks together for fun! HDC-sponsored concerts, outdoor movies, clean up days and other activities have offered opportunities for neighbors to get to know one another.

When considering new development, how would you balance the desires of the present community with those of future community members?

I generally support new development and like developers who listen to the community and incorporate their input when it makes sense. St. Paul needs to continue growing to stay healthy and we should embrace new neighbors. There is a balance and we have achieved a good in Highland and I believe that can and will continue.

How would you prioritize transportation resources (such as space and funding) for people walking, biking, and driving?

Again, it's about balance. Because so transportation resources have focused traditionally on cars I have to say I have been impressed by all the efforts to make the neighborhood safer for pedestrians and bikers and I hope to continue the progress. (Full disclosure: I bike nearly every day during the warmer months!)

How would you consider the needs and desires of members of the community who face obstacles to participation in the public process?

This is the toughest question. Not everyone can attend meetings. But we can accept email and text input, continue to zoom meetings and reach out to neighbors through mail, the web and social media to encourage participation and to share their opinions on issues.

John Krenik, grid 9



Tell us about yourself and how you can best leverage your strengths to represent your grid and the Highland Park Community.

I have been a homeowner in Highland Park for 32 years now. Having been involved in many committees concerning public safety, transportation, school planning, this has given me an opportunity to advocate for Highland Park on many different levels. I am concerned with the rise in crime, the wire thefts and auto thefts in Highland. A stolen auto crashed in front of our home in January, as they were out joyriding. I want our neighborhood to be safe for everyone and that is why I am running for Highland District Council.

What makes the Highland District Council mission meaningful to you?

Living in Highland is a very special place for me and it is a beautiful place to live! I am running for Highland District Council to contribute to our community. My focus is on a welcoming community and a safe community. For the past four years I have served on the HDC Transportation Committee, reviewing the needs of Highland Park. My focus on the HDC will be on safe streets. This includes a safe place for walkers, bicycles and autos. Safe Streets also includes safe neighborhoods. Crime is a major concern for me in Highland. Watching someone just help themselves to items in the store and then walk out without paying or breaking into homes and autos is just WRONG! Having personally been exposed to criminal activity to my property, I know all too well the pain people go through when their property has been violated. So on the HDC I want to focus on a safe Highland Park.

When considering new development, how would you balance the desires of the present community with those of future community members?

Good communication is the keystone to any great project! Working together as a team, the HDC, community members, developers and the city need to be honest with each other. The developers and city need to listen to what the community members want. Being on the HDC Transportation Committee I have seen various projects improved greatly with this input and as a HDC member I will be a listener to the needs of the community.

How would you prioritize transportation resources (such as space and funding) for people walking, biking, and driving?

As a member of the HDC Transportation currently, whenever I look at a transportation project, my first priority is public safety. Is the design promoting safety and also I look at the future maintenance of the project so it doesn't go into disrepair and become a safety issue like our public streets are currently in. I am a strong advocate of preventative maintenance.

How would you consider the needs and desires of members of the community who face obstacles to participation in the public process?

Having a vision disability myself due to a criminal assault has made me keenly aware of the issues concerning participation in community groups like the HDC. As a crime victim and public safety advocate and an advocate for everyone to be able to participate in all of these events. I personally have found the HDC to be very welcoming and accommodating to my own personal needs and this issue is very dear to me. As a HDC member I will continue to advocate for the inclusion of all people with any disability, as their participation makes the HDC great!

Kathleen Schubert, grid 6



Tell us about yourself and how you can best leverage your strengths to represent your grid and the Highland Park Community.

I envision Highland Park as a vital and robust community within St Paul and look forward to seeing strengthened community development and improvement. My diverse career in the public, private and non-profit sectors is helpful in identifying, and prioritizing opportunities and collaborating in creative solutions. Being a resident of Highland for over 25 years I have seen the importance of both change and continuity to a vibrant urban neighborhood.

What makes the Highland District Council mission meaningful to you?

Great neighborhoods are not accidental. They require engagement of individuals in neighborhoods to accomplish the District Council mission. I support this engagement.

When considering new development, how would you balance the desires of the present community with those of future community members?

New development (change) and continuity with the past should exist together; and the key word is "balance". Balance is obtained through good planning for the future with professional and resident input and review up front. Issues and disclosure occurs early and plans can be strengthened and conflict minimized.

How would you prioritize transportation resources (such as space and funding) for people walking, biking, and driving?

Many resources are of high priority. Housing, transportation, utility infrastructure, parks and recreation, historic assets, and the ability to well maintain existing resources for all groups.

How would you consider the needs and desires of members of the community who face obstacles to participation in the public process?

All deserve access to the public forum and it is good to know that more avenues have opened electronically. There is still more to do to make electronic participation available to all. Close connection with non-profit organizations could create partnerships to draw more members of the community into the public process.

Paul Johnson, grid 5



Tell us about yourself and how you can best leverage your strengths to represent your grid and the Highland Park Community.

I bring a common sense, balanced approach with fiscal responsibility.

What makes the Highland District Council mission meaningful to you?

To make a difference, it's important to learn the process and start locally.

When considering new development, how would you balance the desires of the present community with those of future community members?

It is always a balance of both. We must bring fiscal responsibility to government and smart growth with an understanding of capital and regional competitiveness.

How would you prioritize transportation resources (such as space and funding) for people walking, biking, and driving?

We need effective transportation for all modes of travel within reason.

How would you consider the needs and desires of members of the community who face obstacles to participation in the public process?

People will need to get engaged how they want to.

Thomas Romens, grid 1



Tell us about yourself and how you can best leverage your strengths to represent your grid and the Highland Park Community.

My professional background is in strategic planning, project management/implementation, grant writing, and budget management. I was the successful author of a number of federal and state discretionary fund grants that provided services to Veterans and to the unemployed. I have been on the Highland District Council for 3 years and have authored a half dozen Capital Improvement Budget Resolutions on behalf of the Council, most recently in March of 2024. With my experience I can be helpful with planning activities and would apply my research and grant writing skills to help secure funds from the City Council to make those plans a reality.

What makes the Highland District Council mission meaningful to you?

I have lived in St. Paul for over 40 years and Highland Park for 13 years which gives me insight into current issues before the Council and energizes me to work together with my neighbors to achieve goals that recognize differences of opinion while seeking consensus. I believe that the role of Highland District Council board members is to listen to the views and concerns of neighbors and businesses, translate those views into actionable decisions, and forward proposed actions to the St Paul City Council. During my years as a council member, I approached issues before the council from the standpoint that, as neighbors, we should compromise to move forward. I was personally involved in helping the council connect with neighbors via my participation in the Council's Home Improvement Fairs, the Neighborhood House food giveaways, and have attended more than a dozen Neighborhood Night Out events to connect with local residents and hear their concerns.

When considering new development, how would you balance the desires of the present community with those of future community members?

New development represents change and is an opportunity for civil discussions of alternatives and hopefully, a consensus decision. While the exact details of proposed developments can be somewhat unknown, the study and analysis of similar developments already in place should be informative. My starting point would be to consider how a development proposal integrates into the community and does not isolate itself from the existing community due to type or scale of development (for example, heavy manufacturing would not be a good fit in a residential neighborhood).

How would you prioritize transportation resources (such as space and funding) for people walking, biking, and driving?

Transportation resources need to be balanced with current identified needs such as better road maintenance, and future needs which include enhanced pedestrian and bicycle safety. During my years on the HDC I have been a strong supporter for safe biking and walking and have authored and submitted a proposal to improve bike trails in Hidden Falls (this project was completed in 2023), authored and submitted four Capital Improvement Budget proposals (one involved a painted pedestrian crosswalk for enhanced safety, two involved improved separation of pedestrians and bicycles on the Mississippi River Blvd. shared trail, and another involved improving traffic flow on Cretin Avenue) which were subsequently endorsed by the executive board and submitted to the City's Capital Improvement Budget Committee. I initiated coordination with the Free Bikes for Kids Program that has resulted in over 250 bikes donated to low-income families in Highland over the past 3 years.

How would you consider the needs and desires of members of the community who face obstacles to participation in the public process?

The Community Engagement Committee of the HDC needs to continue its outreach efforts to meet neighbors on their own turf, where they live and work – the aforementioned Neighborhood House food give-away being an excellent example of such an effort. I served on the 2019-2020 election task force that recommended policy changes to allow the HDC to conduct the annual meeting and the annual election virtually, and helped audit and validate the election process. The election's voter participation data totals clearly demonstrated that technology is a partial solution that enhances participation and eliminates some of the obstacles that limit in person participation.

Grid representative candidates

Grid 2

Tim Morehead



Tell us about yourself and how you can best leverage your strengths to represent your grid and the Highland Park Community.

I have lived in Highland for over 27 years and in the City of St. Paul all my life, which gives me a good understanding of the history, culture, challenges and opportunities of this great city and the Highland neighborhood. My working experience in the telecommunication, construction, security and education arenas has given me some good knowledge to apply

in the Highland Park Community. I also have served on Highland District Council for five years and have served as chair of the councils Community Development Committee.

What makes the Highland District Council mission meaningful to you?

What better mission statement could a community have than this to cover all the basics of our lives. The key point of engaging and connecting with people and entities is paramount to living a worthwhile life. This is a steppingstone to building this vibrant, welcoming and safe community, which is very positive and forward looking for a better future in our neighborhood and the world in general.

When considering new development, how would you balance the desires of the present community with those of future community members?

New development is always a challenge because no one can accurately predict the future. Through my life I have seen so much change which can be hard for some people, but what has helped me is continuously maintaining a good education and understanding on everything around us. I have raised four daughters and have several grandchildren, which constantly reminds me of how things are changing and can see how the world is affecting them as they grow. My experience has shown me that if everyone works together in a collaborative effort with a "win/win" attitude, future development will be created for the common good of all.

How would you prioritize transportation resources (such as space and funding) for people walking, biking, and driving?

As with new development, transportation has its own challenges as well, because we are sharing limited space for all of these types of uses. I believe the key is to maximize the utilization of this limited resource without having one transportation type (walking, biking, and driving) getting an advantage at the expense of another type of transportation need. Again, a collaborative effort with a win/win approach should help develop the best transportation system that will benefit the whole community and maximize the limited resources we have. Funding will always be an issue, but prioritization and maximizing the utilization of the transportation space will help. Other cities and countries have done this and we can learn from their examples.

How would you consider the needs and desires of members of the community who face obstacles to participation in the public process?

First of all, we need to educate ourselves on the obstacles that are out there for some members of our community. I know there are available resources to get us more knowledgeable on these needs. Once we get this education and understanding, we can

use our collaborative efforts, that I have been stressing, to develop solutions to the obstacles.

Grid 4

Kathleen Anderson



Tell us about yourself and how you can best leverage your strengths to represent your grid and the Highland Park Community.

I have been living in Highland Park for the past 5 years after moving from NYC with my family shortly before the pandemic. In that time we have really focused on putting our roots down and building community for ourselves and our young boys. We are so proud of the connections that we've been able to make through friendly outreach with our neighbors, service to others, and being active in the community and civic life - including being involved at a high level with the Highland District Council for the past 3.5 years. I bring my energy, empathy, sense of humor and relationship-building skills, as well as my professional experience and values as a clinical social worker, to best serve the diverse needs of my community.

What makes the Highland District Council mission meaningful to you?

It was happenstance that my family ended up in Highland Park and we couldn't be more pleased that we landed here. We love the walkability, businesses, community offerings, history, green spaces, and strong social connections and civic engagement that we have found here. I want to preserve what makes Highland special while continuing to grow what it has to offer. My work on the Community Engagement Committee over the past 3+ years has really focused on thinking thoughtfully about our programming and events and how we can reach out and include neighbors who have not historically been reached by our outreach. I want all of my neighbors to feel a strong tie to their home and each other.

When considering new development, how would you balance the desires of the present community with those of future community members?

I am a mother to three young children, as well as a social worker by trade. I have long chosen to live in urban settings because I value walkability, variety, and the safety and sense of connections that develop when people are spending their time near one another. My personal and professional values call me to advocate for those who are historically excluded from power: namely, children - who are inheriting catastrophic climate change, the disabled - who deserve access and the freedom of movement and inclusion, and working families - who are struggling with the rising cost of housing. I love the historic

charm of my home as much as anyone, but we cannot meet the moment, nor the needs of future community members, by endlessly pining for the way things "used to be". We have to be creative, open-minded, humble, hopeful, and future-oriented.

How would you prioritize transportation resources (such as space and funding) for people walking, biking, and driving?

I believe that most people want to be able to safely and reliably use all three modes of transportation depending on the weather and their own needs/abilities. We have the largest historical investment in roads and parking and those need to be thoughtfully updated and maintained; however, we need to do more to incentivize others modes of transportation, namely by ensuring safe routes and crossings for pedestrians and cyclists, and the use of sustainable public transit options. I personally love seeing all of the walkers out year round and want to ensure that that continues to be a safe mode of transportation, exercise, and recreation for them.

How would you consider the needs and desires of members of the community who face obstacles to participation in the public process?

Fundamentally, we need to be in the community asking neighbors for input and showing them that we care. My focus on the Community Engagement Committee has included the development of an Engagement Survey to better capture whom the HDC is reaching and what prevents community members from participating. I've connected with other District Councils to identify the very practical ways they reduce barriers to engagement (including meeting, Board and voting structure, relevancy of programming, accessibility considerations, etc.) and brought findings back to the District Council, including proposing the hiring of a community organizer. We all have a role to play in engagement and all elected Board Members need to be prepared to take on that fundamental role.

Grid 6

Jack Rossmann



Tell us about yourself and how you can best leverage your strengths to represent your grid and the Highland Park Community.

I am a retired Macalester College Professor of Psychology who also served as Vice President for Academic Affairs and department chair for several years. My wife and I lived in the Macalester Groveland area for almost 60 years prior to moving to Marvella in Highland Bridge a year ago. Throughout our time on

Cambridge St., we shopped in and had many friends in Highland Park and are delighted with our new opportunity to become better acquainted with the residents of Highland.

What makes the Highland District Council mission meaningful to you?

One of the many strengths of St. Paul is the District Council concept. Council members are able to listen carefully to concerns and creative ideas that residents of our grid express, and, with the support of other Council members, share those concerns and ideas with our city council member and state legislators.

When considering new development, how would you balance the desires of the present community with those of future community members?

Change is never easy, and it is important to listen to all of points of view. After listening carefully, a balance between change and stability can be reached in consultation with other Council members.

How would you prioritize transportation resources (such as space and funding) for people walking, biking, and driving?

This is likely to be a challenge in St. Paul for the foreseeable future. It will be important to listen to those who want to increase safe biking options and those who feel that the use of cars and public transportation will continue to be important in the years ahead. Creative solutions will be needed.

How would you consider the needs and desires of members of the community who face obstacles to participation in the public process?

Through listening sessions, I would first try to clarify the kinds of obstacles community members face. I would then work with other Highland District Council members in an attempt to remove as many of those obstacles as possible.

Kelsey Canaday

Tell us about yourself and how you can best leverage your strengths to represent your grid and the Highland Park Community.

A strength to leverage is engagement. Another strength to leverage is unbiased, neutrality. Being of multiple cross sections is a strength for the community.

What makes the Highland District Council mission meaningful to you?

Tikkun olam, repair the world.

When considering new development, how would you balance the desires of the present community with those of future community members?

Keeping up to date planning by decades. Being intentional to future communities/generations.

How would you prioritize transportation resources (such as space and funding) for people walking, biking, and driving?

Consider options such as park and ride, Evie/ride shares. Open for community insight.

How would you consider the needs and desires of members of the community who face obstacles to participation in the public process?

Be aware of the needs. Possibly dispatch ride services/carpool.

Grid 8

Tom Distad



Tell us about yourself and how you can best leverage your strengths to represent your grid and the Highland Park Community.

I am an active member in the community with by my work and social life. I've been a Twin Cities resident my whole life and want to help make our community a better place to live.

What makes the Highland District Council mission meaningful to you?

I think our world has become a little more isolated and I think local neighborhood groups can help bridge the gap to help people participate more in their community.

When considering new development, how would you balance the desires of the present community with those of future community members?

I think the best way to help find a balance is by listening and acknowledging any fear of change and that most changes are being made to make this great city more accessible to larger groups of people.

How would you prioritize transportation resources (such as space and funding) for people walking, biking, and driving?

I think we need to have a fact based approach to how people are interacting with their streets.

How would you consider the needs and desires of members of the community who face obstacles to participation in the public process?

I think the council has been doing a great job of making all the meetings very accessible to everyone.

Grid 10



Patricia "Patti" Brady

Tell us about yourself and how you can best leverage your strengths to represent your grid and the Highland Park Community.

I have lived in Grid 10 since 2005. I bring my experience as a previous board member, and participation in HD Development committee to continue to meet the needs of our neighborhood as part of Highland Park.

What makes the Highland District Council mission meaningful to you?

The connection to local government is important to me to continue to build our vibrant neighborhood of single family homes, apartments, condos and small businesses.

When considering new development, how would you balance the desires of the present community with those of future community members?

Any new development should have a vision for the future while meeting the real needs of present community.

How would you prioritize transportation resources (such as space and funding) for people walking, biking, and driving?

Resources for transportation needs to be thoughtful allocation for safety of our streets, sidewalks, to be used by all. Street, sidewalk repair and parking, and public transportation is a shared responsibility of city, county and state resources.

How would you consider the needs and desires of members of the community who face obstacles to participation in the public process?

Having the HDC meeting live streamed on zoom is a great benefit for many. Also having meetings out in the community also helps those who cannot travel easily to Highland Community center.

Grid 12

Cheryl Calloway



Tell us about yourself and how you can best leverage your strengths to represent your grid and the Highland Park Community.

I have been the Grid 12 representative for the past two years and believe that there is much that still needs to be done to adequately represent the residents and businesses in this Grid. Those include better communication with apartment dwellers and business owners so that the Council can take more of their views into consideration when considering issues that come before the Council and its committees, and encouraging more apartment and business people to participate in Council activities.

What makes the Highland District Council mission meaningful to you?

As a person of color, I have lived in Highland for the past 5 years and have spent some of my time on the Council trying to raise and increase awareness of inadvertent discriminatory or biased positions of some who participate in Council meeting and committee meeting discussions as well as documents provided by the City or others which contain language or concepts that are discriminatory or biased. This work needs to continue. Plus, there is a dearth of representation on the Council and its committees of people of color and I don't think the mission can be fulfilled until there is better representation of the people who live in Highland.

When considering new development, how would you balance the desires of the present community with those of future community members?

Development activities need to take into account the needs of current and future residents as well as those we want to attract to local businesses. This means consideration not only of the needs and capabilities of the able-bodied but also ease of access to those with differing abilities and transportation modes. Everyone cannot bike or walk to destinations and many, particularly those who might be coming to Highland from other places, will drive and will need someplace to park.

How would you prioritize transportation resources (such as space and funding) for people walking, biking, and driving?

I agree that those who want to walk or bike to their destination should have a safe way to do that, but we also need to keep in mind that everyone will not be able to or want to get from place to place in those ways. We need safe roads and adequate parking (both street and

lot) with appropriate time limitations to allow people to shop or frequent businesses and yet maintain a flow so people can get to a variety of places to shop or visit. I think parking should be more of a priority.

How would you consider the needs and desires of members of the community who face obstacles to participation in the public process?

We have already made our meetings available on live and recorded ZOOM and have implemented closed-captioning, as well as making some of our printed materials available in different languages. We need to continue these efforts and increase the availability of materials in different languages on our website as well as handouts and address the needs of the deaf and hard-of-hearing more than we have.