

# Rethos 2024 Minnesota Candidate Survey Responses



**Candidate Response Guide:**

- [Rich Tru \(District 3A\) .....2](#)
  
- [Aron Schnaser \(District 7A\) .....5](#)
  
- [Jennifer Nuesse \(District 17B\) .....8](#)
  
- [Chris Brazelton \(District 29A\) .....10](#)
  
- [Kt Jacobs \(District 39B\) .....12](#)
  
- [Jen Fox \(District 41B\) .....14](#)
  
- [Cheryl Youakim \(District 46B\) .....16](#)
  
- [Nathan Kells \(District 48A\) .....18](#)
  
- [Kristi Pursell \(District 58A\) .....29](#)
  
- [Bob Sullentrop \(District 62B\) .....31](#)

**District**  
**Full Name**  
**Party Affiliation**

3A  
Rich Tru  
Forward Party



---

**Are you familiar with MN Main Streets?**

Unsure

**Can you give an example of a historic downtown, neighborhood, or individual business in a historic building that is thriving? What has made this place successful? How might it serve as a model for other Minnesota communities that are struggling?**

Downtown Grand Marais. I believe understanding what it has, utilizing its' history, and pairing that with businesses and public places to immerse people into that "vibe" is what helped it revitalize its' downtown area. It's nature with being an arty area, working with businesses and the city to get a new auditorium for the school to foster local artists that go with the fact artists come to visit, as do the outdoor recreational types that want to bring back something to remind themselves of that trip and out views. Having that unique tie of public, private cooperative goals and share resources is key. Even the non-profit YMCA, got the school a gym and pool by creating a YMCA as an addition to the existing school when there was not gym or pool at the school anymore. Sharing the resource between the school and the non-profit, children and adults. Then, adding biking lanes and having the district off the main road but very close to it makes it accessible, yet not overly car-centric. Key Takeaways: Find what it is you have and what is the modern entertainment value this could be, how can near-future infrastructure from the municipality or state be changed to facilitate this AND what local community projects would benefit in tandem, create a community guide to help people who may want to open businesses be successful in terms of types that are wanted/needed, and then find way through events and festivals to market the area authentically but in a modern non-old-fashioned way bringing locals and people passing through together.

**Given the increasing number of Minnesota communities seeking to revitalize their historic commercial districts through the Minnesota Main Streets program, how would you advocate for securing increased state funding to ensure the program's growth and long-term sustainability?**

I would like to see an increase in funding between historical preservation needs and essential businesses (gyms, grocery, charging stations, etc) to share a new, larger pool of money that would aim at multiuse, multipurpose projects. Like going from commercial only zoning to mix use as an analogy. This could also be done through environmental clean up money being allocated too, I know a lot of older towns where the railroads and old factory sites make it hard to use large amounts of land typically close to downtown areas. I think if we look at multiple areas for a mix of funding, it would be easier for politicians from both sides to get on board. If it was demand very successful and in need of larger funding for a various number of theoretical reasons looking into taxing larger corporations a sort of "reclaiming our downtowns" tax fund, to directly fund these initiatives. Amazon, gas stations, Walmarts, etc these things kill local pharmacies, local produce farmers, bakeries, corner stores and more. I'm not saying this will stop that, but maybe we can use these funds to start businesses that are resilient to these kinds of companies by offering non-mass produced crap that people feel is something they can't get elsewhere. Fund modern needs like bars with seasonal rooftop dining, because getting people outside when we can grows an area as it fosters community, and by extension local planning and development. Also, funds through bonding bills directed to municipalities with historic theatres that could be turned into and explore local community theatre or just a unique small movie theatre that can also be rented for events. presentations, etc. the idea is funding will come from the fact it is mix use need.

**District**  
**Full Name**  
**Party Affiliation**

3A  
Rich Tru  
Forward Party



**What are your thoughts on incorporating the Minnesota Main Streets program as a permanent line item in the state budget, and how do you see this investment benefiting both rural and urban economies in our state?**

I see it helping small towns by giving a community a change to thrive again, making the amenities attractive for young adults to move there, when these communities need health care providers, teachers, civil engineers, etc. when people prefer to be closer to nature or activities they like (kayaking, rock climbing, trail biking, horse riding, etc) and to help these communities not feel so old, and dying that the locals feel the need to not isolate. People are vulnerable right now, I see this being a budget item or as a program that has a percentage from multiple sources of other budget line items. This will help small towns take care of the needs of their larger than urban senior and vet populations, better their education and mental health of children, increase the connection person-to-person leading to less hate and better health, and so much more. Better lives and health and education bring the cost of many expensive services down by reducing them.

**Given the rising demand for affordable housing and adaptable commercial spaces, how would you prioritize legislative support for the CUB tax credit to ensure these vacant properties can be transformed into valuable community assets?**

First of all, I don't believe the 15 years or older guideline requirement is a good number, it needs to be older. A lot of the homes built within 15-50 years ago, where not of a good sound quality, and if they were we wouldn't have them empty and needing updates. I believe much older buildings have a desire to be renovated, like in Duluth with their old county jail, some people were very into the "theme" of that building, but some cookie cutter building from the era of Suburbia is not desired and is a waste of time that just gives money to developers to do overly expensive projects that will not service in the long run anyone but themselves. Summation, those numbers need to change before I could get behind them. It seems half-assed in my opinion and I've seen how programs like this get taken advantage of in other cities like those on the west coast. Make it better is the priority and it will be easier to pass too.

**What measures would you advocate for to ensure small and mid-sized projects, particularly in rural areas or smaller towns, benefit from the CUB tax credit and contribute to local economic revitalization?**

Advocate for commercial buildings where it makes sense, to be converted into affordable housing if offices are not needed as most old factories wouldn't meet modern manufacturing needs even if retrofitted. Bring back old amenity sites (buildings of history to the city, and known) to have a modern use and mixed design. Again, I said a lot of this already, amenities in small towns grow or keep population, making the town thrive more and makes people happier, it's a domino effect.

**How do you see the Conversion of Underutilized Buildings (CUB) tax credit aligning with Minnesota's broader goals of sustainable development and reducing wasteful demolition?**

Reduction of waste, it's very good, if it also helps clean up old sites that have harmful chemicals, but if the state funds that those should be for sites that are owned by the city and not for just someone else to profit off of, because they buy up the property cheap knowing this funding is available. Keeping the old with the new also makes areas unique, people want this. I would like to dive more into what is acceptable for these upgrades, like banning them from using gas for heating and appliances as part of the agreement. Eco friendly landscaping. Minimum natural light for every room (healthy for people and less lighting being used during days. I think there is a

**District**  
**Full Name**  
**Party Affiliation**

3A  
Rich Tru  
Forward Party



healthy need for some minimum regulation for the health of people and future goals. If these exist I would need to dive into them and see what if anything is missing.

**How would you support efforts to restore the full value of the Minnesota Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit by allowing it to be distributed in a single year?**

I would support the re-adoption of the old year by year plan rather than the current 5 year disbursement.

**How important do you think it is to ensure that Minnesota remains competitive with other states that offer historic tax credits?**

Extremely. The midwestern history is more industrial and traveling in origin. So finding ways to preserve that in a modern sense that isn't looked on as dirty is very important. We aren't as young as the west coast or as old and rich as the east coast, so we much utilize what we have that should still be kept around. Minimalism is still popular as is open floor concepts, remaking old buildings should be easy. We are also in a need to convert from natural gas over to electric in heating anyways and if we can combine these renovation efforts with efficient energy builds and things like solar panels or geothermal then no better time. We aren't the tall glass buildings of Chicago, but if we can make amazing little towns and through my efforts to bring massive public rail systems to Minnesota and our neighbors that will make this climate change resilient great lakes state very successful now and long term.

**Given the demonstrated economic return of over \$9 for every \$1 invested in the MN HTC, how do you see this program contributing to the state's long-term economic growth, particularly in Greater Minnesota and rural communities?**

I see it as vital. Plain and simple. I need to of course dive deeper into the detail, that is who i am, but the focus is amazing. I've always supported these efforts in a sensible way. I'm not a blanket banner or a yes man, call it bureaucracy if you want, but too often do we miss manage money because compromising for less regulation, and then when it doesn't work people say, "see we told you." No more half-a\*\*ed solutions, this could develop into bigger actions in the future, if universally successful over time.

**Do you agree with the statement “the greenest building is the one that’s already built”? Why or why not?**

No. Think about asbestos. We use to make a lot of crappy, cheap building with dangerous materials. Most we also not the same electrical code and have a use of natural gas. To top it off, commercial sites a lot of the time require clean up from under the building and not all foundations can support more developed modern renovation ideas. Can some be retrofitted to be greener, absolutely, and I want to do that, but there is a reason why we don't keep phones longer than 6 years. Sometimes the materials aren't right for the now or for the future. If we just fix for problems now and not future needs and future problems then we are wasting time and money on something to refixed again, and probably ignoring other issues in the process. Wholistic approaches are necessary.

**Please share with us one place in your district—a business, building, park, landmark, school, place of worship, or any other location—that you believe holds special significance for people in your community. Why do you think it's valued? How can we ensure that future generations continue to learn about and appreciate its importance?**

This is going to be obvious but Split Rock Lighthouse. It passively teaches you about the history of what made people come to settle around Lake Superior. It is a beautiful place to inspire artists. The land around it is an area for recreation from trails, to the water, and the campsite brings in revenue. This site is a landmark too, so it brings

**District**  
**Full Name**  
**Party Affiliation**

3A  
Rich Tru  
Forward Party



people up this way if not the destination. Helps with outdoor learning for local schools. To myself, it has literally be a beacon of what is special about this part of the district that is also my home, that we are a people that have lit the way and forged a path for Minnesota's identity. We were a bedrock of the industrial machine of WW2. We use the nature (lake and cliffside) in a respectful way that, we can do both, nature and human development, without destroy each other.

**District**  
**Full Name**  
**Party Affiliation**

7A  
Aron Schnaser  
DFL



---

**Are you familiar with MN Main Streets?**

Unsure

**Can you give an example of a historic downtown, neighborhood, or individual business in a historic building that is thriving? What has made this place successful? How might it serve as a model for other Minnesota communities that are struggling?**

Yes, Ravenstone Abbey in Coleraine opened earlier this year after renovating an abandoned church. It is a pub, coffee shop and axe throwing gallery. I think it is successful because it provides a unique experience, bringing much needed entertainment to the area, while preserving the historic character of the building. It serves as a model because it avoids flooding the market more conventional uses and designs of the modern era, showing there is a market for preserving the identity of local communities.

**Given the increasing number of Minnesota communities seeking to revitalize their historic commercial districts through the Minnesota Main Streets program, how would you advocate for securing increased state funding to ensure the program's growth and long-term sustainability?**

I would look for the preservation of historic character as well as a solid plan to sustain the business or community-based facility. If proposals can show that they have long term sustainability, it is a good investment because it allows local communities to maintain their character to attract tourism, other businesses, and residents. There should be grants and tax incentives for projects who meet this criteria to help them move the project forward.

**What are your thoughts on incorporating the Minnesota Main Streets program as a permanent line item in the state budget, and how do you see this investment benefiting both rural and urban economies in our state?**

Both urban and rural communities have an interest in preserving historic character because it draws in tourism dollars that support the economy. If projects are planned carefully, I think the initial costs to taxpayers as a permanent line item will more than pay off in the revenue historic businesses and community centers will generate.

**Given the rising demand for affordable housing and adaptable commercial spaces, how would you prioritize legislative support for the CUB tax credit to ensure these vacant properties can be transformed into valuable community assets?**

I would prioritize projects that keeps tax and business revenue in local communities by supporting local businesses and community efforts. That will keep wealth in our communities to provide good paying jobs, affordable housing, good schools, and other services people need. Allowing large for profit companies to take over these properties means less interest in local concerns and the wealth they generate going elsewhere instead of to supporting our communities.

**What measures would you advocate for to ensure small and mid-sized projects, particularly in rural areas or smaller towns, benefit from the CUB tax credit and contribute to local economic revitalization?**

Rural communities are often the most in need of funding because they lack the wealthy tax base to support them. If elected as a representative of a rural district, I would make sure they get their fair share of funding, so it isn't just

**District**  
**Full Name**  
**Party Affiliation**

7A  
Aron Schnaser  
DFL



benefiting the metro areas of the state. Small and mid-sized projects are often the most in need as well, yet they may just as beneficial, if not more so, than large projects. I think projects should be evaluated based on the benefit they bring to local communities, big and small, and small to mid-sized projects, which usually fits the demand of rural communities more than large projects, deserve equal access to funding. Rural and urban communities benefit economically from each other which builds a healthier economy for all of Minnesota. It is time to stop hurting our state with a rural vs. urban divide and start cooperating.

**How do you see the Conversion of Underutilized Buildings (CUB) tax credit aligning with Minnesota's broader goals of sustainable development and reducing wasteful demolition?**

It allows local communities to have a reliable revenue base to provide the services they need to provide without relying on local taxes that harm business sustainability and make housing unaffordable. Communities over reliant on local taxes are less able to provide the services businesses need to survive and providing incomes high enough so these services aren't underfunded. It results in higher costs to the tax payer in the long run because people end up needing more expensive critical services, which is unsustainable. In many cases, I think refurbishing buildings makes more sense than new construction, even if the upfront costs are a bit higher, because newer construction buildings do not preserve the character of communities and often are more cheaply built, resulting in less return on investment in the long run.

**How would you support efforts to restore the full value of the Minnesota Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit by allowing it to be distributed in a single year?**

I would prioritize tax incentives that benefit communities and working families so, the wealth generated stays local and more can participate in our economy to support our businesses. Given tax breaks to large nationwide or multinational businesses means much of the wealth they generate goes elsewhere because workers aren't always paid a living wage. Giving tax breaks to the wealthy doesn't produce enough demand to sustain local businesses, and the fact that small communities are struggling shows that it isn't "trickling down." I want to make sure our tax system benefits our communities and local businesses, not just large companies and the wealthy.

**How important do you think it is to ensure that Minnesota remains competitive with other states that offer historic tax credits?**

We remain competitive with wise investments in our tax credits, making sure they are sustainable so we can benefit from the gains they will bring. Keeping and maintaining historic buildings allows our communities to maintain their unique character that brings in tourism and supports businesses. That is lost when we allow buildings to decay or be replaced with newer construction buildings that look the same as everywhere else.

**Given the demonstrated economic return of over \$9 for every \$1 invested in the MN HTC, how do you see this program contributing to the state's long-term economic growth, particularly in Greater Minnesota and rural communities?**

It shows that investing more funds at the state level will benefit taxpayers over the long run by providing additional revenue. Businesses are struggling in our rural communities. Local government aid has not kept due to rising costs and inflation to maintain services that people rely on. If we can give them a boost by providing them with more HTC funding, it will provide relief to our communities to provide services while keeping the tax burden down for residents and businesses.

**District**  
**Full Name**  
**Party Affiliation**

7A  
Aron Schnaser  
DFL



**Do you agree with the statement “the greenest building is the one that’s already built”? Why or why not?**

It depends. Many buildings, but not all, can be retrofitted to make them more efficient so they need less heat in the winter and less cooling in the summer, and those buildings should be the ones we prioritize. As we are increasingly experiencing the impacts of climate change, it is important that buildings can be made as efficient as possible, and assess the ability to do so case by case.

**Please share with us one place in your district—a business, building, park, landmark, school, place of worship, or any other location—that you believe holds special significance for people in your community. Why do you think it's valued? How can we ensure that future generations continue to learn about and appreciate its importance?**

I teach at Greenway High School that has been open in Coleraine for over 100 years. Its significance comes from its graduates that still live in the area and want it to continue providing quality education and preserving the community it has built. We can continue making sure it is well maintained, so that it can remain open for generations to come. So many old school buildings have been replaced throughout the state because the inability to keep up with maintenance due to funding shortfalls. I think Greenway can serve as a model for how older buildings can continue to provide services at the quality our communities expect.



**District**  
**Full Name**  
**Party Affiliation**

17B  
Jennifer Nuesse  
DFL



---

**Are you familiar with MN Main Streets?**

No

**Can you give an example of a historic downtown, neighborhood, or individual business in a historic building that is thriving? What has made this place successful? How might it serve as a model for other Minnesota communities that are struggling?**

Repurposing was done on a building that was used as a business in previous years, to upgrade the facility for use by a non-profit that employs disabled adults in our community.

**Given the increasing number of Minnesota communities seeking to revitalize their historic commercial districts through the Minnesota Main Streets program, how would you advocate for securing increased state funding to ensure the program's growth and long-term sustainability?**

I would support and sponsor/co-sponsor legislation that increases funding for the preservation of buildings that are in need of repair or renovation. I believe that there are many opportunities to upgrade locations into multi-use facilities into community rooms, day care centers, and senior citizen centers.

**What are your thoughts on incorporating the Minnesota Main Streets program as a permanent line item in the state budget, and how do you see this investment benefiting both rural and urban economies in our state?**

This should be a factor with new legislation to help our small towns and cities in Greater Minnesota thrive. I am aware of many vacant buildings in rural communities in particular that still have good structure that is suitable for many purposes.

**Given the rising demand for affordable housing and adaptable commercial spaces, how would you prioritize legislative support for the CUB tax credit to ensure these vacant properties can be transformed into valuable community assets?**

This should be a high priority area since our rural communities are in need of bringing in new businesses where capital funds might be limited. I would work closely with the League of Minnesota Cities and other organizations like Rethos to help revive the vacant properties.

**What measures would you advocate for to ensure small and mid-sized projects, particularly in rural areas or smaller towns, benefit from the CUB tax credit and contribute to local economic revitalization?**

It is imperative to meet with city leaders and community development organizations such as EDA to help promote the programs that are available.

**How do you see the Conversion of Underutilized Buildings (CUB) tax credit aligning with Minnesota's broader goals of sustainable development and reducing wasteful demolition?**

I was not familiar with the CUB tax credit and am eager to learn more about how this program should be activated for the small towns in our district.

**District** 17B  
**Full Name** Jennifer Nuesse  
**Party Affiliation** DFL



**How would you support efforts to restore the full value of the Minnesota Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit by allowing it to be distributed in a single year?**

I would advocate for the efforts to restore the value for single-year distribution so that resources are readily available for those who apply for this tax credit. It should not be necessary to expect periodic distributions knowing that the funds are to be used for a specific purpose.

**How important do you think it is to ensure that Minnesota remains competitive with other states that offer historic tax credits?**

It is very important to help preserve our legacy and keep our historical structures vibrant when possible. I guess I'm less concerned with being competitive unless it involves allocation of funds and resources to a given state based on need.

**Given the demonstrated economic return of over \$9 for every \$1 invested in the MN HTC, how do you see this program contributing to the state's long-term economic growth, particularly in Greater Minnesota and rural communities?**

This program can only become stronger though maintaining and growing the investments made. Perhaps if LGA (Local Government Aid) were re-evaluated and coupled with funds from other organizations it would become a very successful partnership.

**Do you agree with the statement “the greenest building is the one that’s already built”? Why or why not?**

Not necessarily. Some historic or aging structures contain asbestos, lead paint, or other toxic materials that require abatement. If the building is deemed important enough to preserve and renovate, there should be resources made available for said abatement also.

**Please share with us one place in your district—a business, building, park, landmark, school, place of worship, or any other location—that you believe holds special significance for people in your community. Why do you think it's valued? How can we ensure that future generations continue to learn about and appreciate its importance?**

In Arlington (Sibley County), an aging building where a family-owned pharmacy existed for more than 50 years remains vacant. Due to being non-ADA compliant and in need of modernizing, it remains unsold. Our small town has no pharmacy at the present time and this creates a problem for residents who need prescriptions filled while they have mobility issues or limited transportation options.

**District**  
**Full Name**  
**Party Affiliation**

29A  
Chris Brazelton  
DFL



---

**Are you familiar with MN Main Streets?**

Yes

**What do you think are the benefits of the Minnesota Main Streets program? How might these benefits be extended to other communities throughout the state?**

Maintaining the uniqueness of a community and connections to the past by preserving historic buildings, saving the environmental and financial costs of tear down and replacement, and offering new opportunities for us.

**Given the increasing number of Minnesota communities seeking to revitalize their historic commercial districts through the Minnesota Main Streets program, how would you advocate for securing increased state funding to ensure the program's growth and long-term sustainability?**

I would be happy to advocate for additional funding as seed money to help communities develop plans for preservation, and funding for a share of the cost of rehabilitation and restoration.

**What are your thoughts on incorporating the Minnesota Main Streets program as a permanent line item in the state budget, and how do you see this investment benefiting both rural and urban economies in our state?**

While nothing is permanent as conditions change, it is difficult to make plans with short-term funding. These projects take a lot of time and a long-term funding stream is important to allow communities time to plan. I live in Delano and have seen the benefits of historic buildings being repurposed. An old hardware store in our downtown was rehabilitated into an event space with offices on the second level. The office spaces are rented by several community businesses who were able to remain in the community.

**Given the rising demand for affordable housing and adaptable commercial spaces, how would you prioritize legislative support for the CUB tax credit to ensure these vacant properties can be transformed into valuable community assets?**

You have my attention. I will support this effort and would be happy to co-sponsor the legislation. I am working now on affordable housing solutions in my area and this effort also fits with those priorities.

**What measures would you advocate for to ensure small and mid-sized projects, particularly in rural areas or smaller towns, benefit from the CUB tax credit and contribute to local economic revitalization?**

As is done with other funding projects using state money, the funds would need to be allocated to regional boards who review proposals and determine based on several factors which ones are ready with a solid plan to move forward and have the greatest impact.

**How do you see the Conversion of Underutilized Buildings (CUB) tax credit aligning with Minnesota's broader goals of sustainable development and reducing wasteful demolition?**

Perfectly aligned.

**How would you support efforts to restore the full value of the Minnesota Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit by allowing it to be distributed in a single year?**

**District**  
**Full Name**  
**Party Affiliation**

29A  
Chris Brazelton  
DFL



First, share this information to build support. Bring in the experts for discussion and hearings on the proposal, then carry the bill forward.

**How important do you think it is to ensure that Minnesota remains competitive with other states that offer historic tax credits?**

To access the funding streams and attention of developers we must not lose them to other states with more attractive terms.

**Given the demonstrated economic return of over \$9 for every \$1 invested in the MN HTC, how do you see this program contributing to the state's long-term economic growth, particularly in Greater Minnesota and rural communities?**

Our smaller communities don't have the resources to move these projects forward by themselves. In Delano we have been working on restoration of a historic old city hall that also served as a fire station and library over its lifetime. This project has taken three decades and counting. In the meantime, countless events have not been held in this space while awaiting restoration and needed improvements. Those events that did not happen cannot be quantified, but failed to generate revenue for the community.

**Do you agree with the statement “the greenest building is the one that’s already built”? Why or why not?**

Yes, the materials are already in place and don't need to be manufactured or transported. If the building has good bones and can be updated, the materials don't end up in a landfill.

**Please share with us one place in your district—a business, building, park, landmark, school, place of worship, or any other location—that you believe holds special significance for people in your community. Why do you think it's valued? How can we ensure that future generations continue to learn about and appreciate its importance?**

I have already named two of them. Our historic downtown now has a historic trail with information about the history of the buildings located by markers with QR codes that take a traveler to more detailed information. Understanding that history connects long-time residents with newcomers for an appreciation of the roots that connect the life of our town.

**District**  
**Full Name**  
**Party Affiliation**

39B  
Kt Jacobs  
Republican



---

**Are you familiar with MN Main Streets?**

Yes

**What do you think are the benefits of the Minnesota Main Streets program? How might these benefits be extended to other communities throughout the state?**

Community heritage is important to future generations so they understand the importance of current decisions and how they may impact a city's future direction.

I am a firm believer in knowing where you/your heritage has come from to know where you are going - this is as true for cities as it is for the individual!

**Given the increasing number of Minnesota communities seeking to revitalize their historic commercial districts through the Minnesota Main Streets program, how would you advocate for securing increased state funding to ensure the program's growth and long-term sustainability?**

There must be a solid criterion developed that cities would use as the core to their application for funding. It should include a written diagram/plan that shows what a city anticipates achieving, with tie-ins to its past and how that will form its future.

**What are your thoughts on incorporating the Minnesota Main Streets program as a permanent line item in the state budget, and how do you see this investment benefiting both rural and urban economies in our state?**

I would not want to see it added to upcoming budgets as there is an immediate need to take care of necessities first, but possibly adding it in the future remains open.

History is important and should never be neglected - in either economies.

**Given the rising demand for affordable housing and adaptable commercial spaces, how would you prioritize legislative support for the CUB tax credit to ensure these vacant properties can be transformed into valuable community assets?**

I would not as there are already programs in place to provide TIF, grant and other monies at federal, state, county and municipal levels.

**What measures would you advocate for to ensure small and mid-sized projects, particularly in rural areas or smaller towns, benefit from the CUB tax credit and contribute to local economic revitalization?**

Monies available at the levels I referenced above should be utilized.

**How do you see the Conversion of Underutilized Buildings (CUB) tax credit aligning with Minnesota's broader goals of sustainable development and reducing wasteful demolition?**

I am not in favor of adding an additional layer of tax.

**How would you support efforts to restore the full value of the Minnesota Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit by allowing it to be distributed in a single year?**

**District**  
**Full Name**  
**Party Affiliation**

39B  
Kt Jacobs  
Republican



It depends on the income as well allocation distribution.

**How important do you think it is to ensure that Minnesota remains competitive with other states that offer historic tax credits?**

As I said earlier we need to address necessities and reign in the economy first.

**Given the demonstrated economic return of over \$9 for every \$1 invested in the MN HTC, how do you see this program contributing to the state's long-term economic growth, particularly in Greater Minnesota and rural communities?**

---

**Do you agree with the statement “the greenest building is the one that’s already built”? Why or why not?**

Not necessarily - all depends on the age, construction and sustainable products and processes used.

**Please share with us one place in your district—a business, building, park, landmark, school, place of worship, or any other location—that you believe holds special significance for people in your community. Why do you think it's valued? How can we ensure that future generations continue to learn about and appreciate its importance?**

Our new City Hall is an example of cost savings to the taxpayer and innovative resources for sustainability including thermal and solar sourcing, and state-of-the-art technology - all while entering a condominium agreement with 270 apartment units contained in the 3 floors above our facility.

**District** 41B  
**Full Name** Jen Fox  
**Party Affiliation** DFL



---

**Are you familiar with MN Main Streets?**

Yes

**What do you think are the benefits of the Minnesota Main Streets program? How might these benefits be extended to other communities throughout the state?**

Commercial revitalization and lifting up our local business economy is critical to the longevity of our state.

**Given the increasing number of Minnesota communities seeking to revitalize their historic commercial districts through the Minnesota Main Streets program, how would you advocate for securing increased state funding to ensure the program's growth and long-term sustainability?**

While I do not have an enormous idea of how to secure increased state funding: I know we must continue to invest in our historic commercial districts and enhance our tourism dollars.

**What are your thoughts on incorporating the Minnesota Main Streets program as a permanent line item in the state budget, and how do you see this investment benefiting both rural and urban economies in our state?**

Absolutely! Investing in rural and urban economies is a critical investment in our future.

**Given the rising demand for affordable housing and adaptable commercial spaces, how would you prioritize legislative support for the CUB tax credit to ensure these vacant properties can be transformed into valuable community assets?**

I would work to universalize the conversation about CUB tax credit and engage local governments to lift up the conversation with my colleagues in the House.

**What measures would you advocate for to ensure small and mid-sized projects, particularly in rural areas or smaller towns, benefit from the CUB tax credit and contribute to local economic revitalization?**

I believe we can enhance our rural areas and smaller towns by sharing success stories and provide training for local governments (electeds and employees) to have a perspective of investing in and re-building our underutilized spaces.

**How do you see the Conversion of Underutilized Buildings (CUB) tax credit aligning with Minnesota's broader goals of sustainable development and reducing wasteful demolition?**

Reducing wasteful demolition is key! Investing in our infrastructure is critical! There are ways we can build the CUB tax credit into a narrative about how Minnesota invests in our communities and lifts up our local governments.

**How would you support efforts to restore the full value of the Minnesota Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit by allowing it to be distributed in a single year?**

I would consistently work with Rethos and local governments around MN to fully understand the value and investment needed and advocate as such.

**District**  
**Full Name**  
**Party Affiliation**

41B  
Jen Fox  
DFL



**How important do you think it is to ensure that Minnesota remains competitive with other states that offer historic tax credits?**

I believe it is extremely important for the State of MN invests in both commercial and residential historic tax credits.

**Given the demonstrated economic return of over \$9 for every \$1 invested in the MN HTC, how do you see this program contributing to the state's long-term economic growth, particularly in Greater Minnesota and rural communities?**

Continued investments in historic tax credits in Minnesota will boost local economies, drive tourism, and continue to create a robust culture in our state.

**Do you agree with the statement “the greenest building is the one that’s already built”? Why or why not?**

Yes -- demolition and reclamation of buildings and areas is wasteful, expensive, and often detrimental to our environment. We need to know the materials (hazardous and otherwise) our contractors are working with to keep our environment and communities safe.

**Please share with us one place in your district—a business, building, park, landmark, school, place of worship, or any other location—that you believe holds special significance for people in your community. Why do you think it's valued? How can we ensure that future generations continue to learn about and appreciate its importance?**

The Historic Downtown District in Hastings is incredibly valuable to our community, and we work hard on Hastings City Council and HEDRA to invest and support the redevelopment of our sacred downtown District.



**District** 46B  
**Full Name** Cheryl Youakim  
**Party Affiliation** DFL



---

**Are you familiar with MN Main Streets?**

Yes

**What do you think are the benefits of the Minnesota Main Streets program? How might these benefits be extended to other communities throughout the state?**

I am familiar with the program, but more familiar with the Minnesota Historic Tax Credit. I believe that cities need every tool in the tool box to rehab their Main Streets and underused buildings. I would support increasing state funding with this program.

**Given the increasing number of Minnesota communities seeking to revitalize their historic commercial districts through the Minnesota Main Streets program, how would you advocate for securing increased state funding to ensure the program's growth and long-term sustainability?**

I would support increased funding for this program, especially if we could tie it to the Federal program.

**What are your thoughts on incorporating the Minnesota Main Streets program as a permanent line item in the state budget, and how do you see this investment benefiting both rural and urban economies in our state?**

I think it will take two to three years to gain momentum around making it a permanent part of the budget. But, starting with increases funds with one-time money and collecting data (similar to what the Historic Tax Credit has done) will show the need for it to be part of permanent funding.

**Given the rising demand for affordable housing and adaptable commercial spaces, how would you prioritize legislative support for the CUB tax credit to ensure these vacant properties can be transformed into valuable community assets?**

I would support this approach and like how it is structured similar to the Historic Tax Credit. It would be helpful to have Federal money to partner this credit with. Has there been some successful projects to point to in other states and or data to show the success?

**What measures would you advocate for to ensure small and mid-sized projects, particularly in rural areas or smaller towns, benefit from the CUB tax credit and contribute to local economic revitalization?**

It would take developing relationships with legislators from communities across the state as well as local leaders. It would be helpful to divide up the state into regions to look at for project areas. And, to have some examples on how capitalizing federal, state, and private dollars can work.

**How do you see the Conversion of Underutilized Buildings (CUB) tax credit aligning with Minnesota's broader goals of sustainable development and reducing wasteful demolition?**

It aligns well with sustainability. Especially since 80% of the dollars used to rehab a building goes toward labor versus material. Reuse is much more stable than rebuilding.

**How would you support efforts to restore the full value of the Minnesota Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit by allowing it to be distributed in a single year?**

**District**  
**Full Name**  
**Party Affiliation**

46B  
Cheryl Youakim  
DFL



I think it would be a heavy lift to have it distribute it in a single year, but I do support moving towards that.

**How important do you think it is to ensure that Minnesota remains competitive with other states that offer historic tax credits?**

Extremely important! Offering a local match that combines with the Federal dollars brings more investment interest to Minnesota.

**Given the demonstrated economic return of over \$9 for every \$1 invested in the MN HTC, how do you see this program contributing to the state's long-term economic growth, particularly in Greater Minnesota and rural communities?**

It contributes in so many ways. I keep looking at the Ely theater project to show how it can revitalize a community Mainstreet. And, we have a lot of old office buildings in the Twin cities area that will be needing some help.

**Do you agree with the statement “the greenest building is the one that’s already built”? Why or why not?**

Yes. Because 80% of the cost of rehabbing a building goes into labor instead of new materials.

**Please share with us one place in your district—a business, building, park, landmark, school, place of worship, or any other location—that you believe holds special significance for people in your community. Why do you think it's valued? How can we ensure that future generations continue to learn about and appreciate its importance?**

We have quite a few old buildings on Main Street Hopkins that will need some work over the next few years. For Hopkins, it is more about the feeling of the entire Mainstreet than a particular building.

**District**  
**Full Name**  
**Party Affiliation**

48A  
Nathan Kells  
DFL



---

**Are you familiar with MN Main Streets?**

No

**What do you think are the benefits of the Minnesota Main Streets program? How might these benefits be extended to other communities throughout the state?**

A great example of a thriving historic downtown is Stillwater, Minnesota, which has successfully revitalized its heritage and become a vibrant destination. Located on the St. Croix River, Stillwater's downtown is filled with well-preserved 19th-century buildings, many of which have been repurposed for modern businesses, including restaurants, boutiques, galleries, and hotels. Here's what has contributed to its success and how it can serve as a model for other Minnesota communities:

**Factors Contributing to Stillwater's Success:**

**Heritage Preservation:** The community has worked to maintain the architectural integrity of its historic buildings. Local government and preservation societies have played key roles in ensuring that restoration efforts are in line with historic preservation guidelines.

**Tourism and Branding:** Stillwater has embraced its identity as a historic river town. It markets itself as a destination for tourists, especially those interested in history, antiques, and natural beauty. The scenic views of the river, along with activities such as river cruises and festivals, make it a popular weekend getaway.

**Diverse Business Mix:** Downtown Stillwater offers a range of businesses that cater to both locals and tourists. This includes high-end restaurants, casual cafes, specialty stores, antique shops, and local craft breweries. This variety ensures that the area remains vibrant throughout the year, appealing to a broad audience.

**Community Events and Festivals:** The town regularly hosts events such as art fairs, food festivals, and parades, which draw visitors and foster a strong sense of community engagement. Events also help local businesses by bringing in additional foot traffic.

**Walkability and Accessibility:** Stillwater's downtown is pedestrian-friendly, with ample sidewalks, parks, and scenic walking paths. The ease of walking between shops, restaurants, and the waterfront creates a welcoming atmosphere for visitors.

**Lessons for Struggling Communities in Minnesota:**

**Leverage Historic Assets:** Communities should identify and preserve their historic buildings, which can become key assets for attracting tourists. Providing tax incentives or grants for restoration projects can help business owners invest in these properties.

**Create a Unique Identity:** Like Stillwater has done with its "historic river town" identity, other communities can create a unique brand based on their local heritage, geography, or cultural assets. For example, a town known for its agricultural roots could develop agritourism.

**Diversify the Business Environment:** A mix of businesses that serve both tourists and locals is key to keeping a downtown thriving year-round. Minnesota towns can encourage diverse commercial ventures like artisan shops, cafes, breweries, and galleries.

**District**  
**Full Name**  
**Party Affiliation**

48A  
Nathan Kells  
DFL



**Host Regular Community Events:** Festivals and events can be a huge draw, boosting tourism and encouraging residents to spend more time and money locally. Communities can develop annual or seasonal events to create tradition and drive engagement.

**Improve Walkability:** Ensuring that a downtown or historic area is pedestrian-friendly increases foot traffic and enhances the visitor experience. Communities can focus on improving sidewalks, lighting, and accessibility.

**Given the increasing number of Minnesota communities seeking to revitalize their historic commercial districts through the Minnesota Main Streets program, how would you advocate for securing increased state funding to ensure the program's growth and long-term sustainability?**

To advocate for increased state funding to support the growth and sustainability of the Minnesota Main Streets program, a strategic approach should be developed that highlights the economic, social, and cultural benefits of investing in historic downtown revitalization. Here's how you could structure an effective advocacy campaign:

**Build a Strong Case with Data and Success Stories**

**Highlight Economic Impact:** Present data demonstrating the economic benefits of the Minnesota Main Streets program, including increased business activity, job creation, and tax revenue from revitalized downtowns. Case studies from cities like Stillwater, Excelsior, and Red Wing could show tangible success and ROI. Statistics from the National Main Street Center also point to significant returns on investment from similar programs across the country.

**Emphasize Job Creation:** Stress that funding Main Streets initiatives supports local businesses and generates jobs, especially in retail, hospitality, construction, and tourism.

**Leverage Historic Preservation:** Present evidence that historic preservation encourages sustainable development. Buildings that are preserved rather than demolished contribute to environmental sustainability, which aligns with statewide green initiatives.

**Foster Broad-Based Coalition Support**

**Engage Stakeholders:** Build a coalition of local government officials, small business owners, preservation groups, and community members who have benefited from Main Streets initiatives. A unified voice, especially from diverse communities across rural and urban Minnesota, will demonstrate the broad appeal and importance of the program.

**Connect with Economic Development Organizations:** Partner with chambers of commerce, regional development commissions, and economic development organizations that recognize the economic potential of revitalized downtowns.

**Highlight Rural and Urban Collaboration:** Show that this program benefits not only smaller towns but also urban neighborhoods with historic commercial districts, bridging the urban-rural divide often seen in state funding discussions.

**Align with State Priorities and Broader Initiatives**

**District**  
**Full Name**  
**Party Affiliation**

48A  
Nathan Kells  
DFL



**Tie to Economic Recovery:** Post-pandemic recovery has been a priority in Minnesota, and revitalizing downtown districts is a key part of rebuilding local economies. Frame increased funding as an investment in long-term economic resilience.

**Align with Tourism and Cultural Initiatives:** Link Main Streets revitalization to Minnesota's broader tourism goals. Show how revitalized historic districts draw both in-state and out-of-state visitors, which fuels local economies.

**Sustainability and Climate Goals:** Connect historic preservation and reuse of existing buildings to Minnesota's climate and sustainability goals, framing it as environmentally responsible development.

**Demonstrate Need for Long-Term Investment**

**Stability for Long-Term Projects:** Highlight that many revitalization efforts are multi-year projects that require sustained investment. A shortfall in funding risks halting successful momentum, undermining years of work. Ensuring long-term funding will allow communities to plan more effectively.

**Request for Scalable Funding:** Rather than asking for one-time grants, advocate for funding that increases in scale as more communities join the program, ensuring that resources are available to meet growing demand.

**Engage Legislators and Present Policy Solutions**

**Lobby Key Lawmakers:** Identify and lobby state legislators who represent districts with successful Main Streets projects, as well as those with struggling downtowns that could benefit. Show them the direct benefits of increased funding to their constituents.

**Present Funding Mechanisms:** Suggest viable funding sources, such as bonding bills, increased appropriations from existing state budgets, or leveraging public-private partnerships. Propose tax incentives or grant-matching programs for cities and private investors.

**What are your thoughts on incorporating the Minnesota Main Streets program as a permanent line item in the state budget, and how do you see this investment benefiting both rural and urban economies in our state?**

**Build a Strong Case with Data and Success Stories**

**Highlight Economic Impact:** Present data demonstrating the economic benefits of the Minnesota Main Streets program, including increased business activity, job creation, and tax revenue from revitalized downtowns. Case studies from cities like Stillwater, Excelsior, and Red Wing could show tangible success and ROI. Statistics from the National Main Street Center also point to significant returns on investment from similar programs across the country.

**Emphasize Job Creation:** Stress that funding Main Streets initiatives supports local businesses and generates jobs, especially in retail, hospitality, construction, and tourism.

**Leverage Historic Preservation:** Present evidence that historic preservation encourages sustainable development. Buildings that are preserved rather than demolished contribute to environmental sustainability, which aligns with statewide green initiatives.

**Foster Broad-Based Coalition Support**

**District**  
**Full Name**  
**Party Affiliation**

48A  
Nathan Kells  
DFL



**Engage Stakeholders:** Build a coalition of local government officials, small business owners, preservation groups, and community members who have benefited from Main Streets initiatives. A unified voice, especially from diverse communities across rural and urban Minnesota, will demonstrate the broad appeal and importance of the program.

**Connect with Economic Development Organizations:** Partner with chambers of commerce, regional development commissions, and economic development organizations that recognize the economic potential of revitalized downtowns.

**Highlight Rural and Urban Collaboration:** Show that this program benefits not only smaller towns but also urban neighborhoods with historic commercial districts, bridging the urban-rural divide often seen in state funding discussions.

**Align with State Priorities and Broader Initiatives**

**Tie to Economic Recovery:** Post-pandemic recovery has been a priority in Minnesota, and revitalizing downtown districts is a key part of rebuilding local economies. Frame increased funding as an investment in long-term economic resilience.

**Align with Tourism and Cultural Initiatives:** Link Main Streets revitalization to Minnesota's broader tourism goals. Show how revitalized historic districts draw both in-state and out-of-state visitors, which fuels local economies.

**Sustainability and Climate Goals:** Connect historic preservation and reuse of existing buildings to Minnesota's climate and sustainability goals, framing it as environmentally responsible development.

**Demonstrate Need for Long-Term Investment**

**Stability for Long-Term Projects:** Highlight that many revitalization efforts are multi-year projects that require sustained investment. A shortfall in funding risks halting successful momentum, undermining years of work. Ensuring long-term funding will allow communities to plan more effectively.

**Request for Scalable Funding:** Rather than asking for one-time grants, advocate for funding that increases in scale as more communities join the program, ensuring that resources are available to meet growing demand.

**Engage Legislators and Present Policy Solutions**

**Lobby Key Lawmakers:** Identify and lobby state legislators who represent districts with successful Main Streets projects, as well as those with struggling downtowns that could benefit. Show them the direct benefits of increased funding to their constituents.

**Present Funding Mechanisms:** Suggest viable funding sources, such as bonding bills, increased appropriations from existing state budgets, or leveraging public-private partnerships. Propose tax incentives or grant-matching programs for cities and private investors participating in the Minnesota Main Streets initiative.

**Show Cost Efficiency:** Demonstrate that the Main Streets approach, focusing on small-business support, historic preservation, and community-based economic development, can be a cost-effective alternative to large-scale redevelopment projects that often require extensive infrastructure changes.

**District**  
**Full Name**  
**Party Affiliation**

48A  
Nathan Kells  
DFL



**Given the rising demand for affordable housing and adaptable commercial spaces, how would you prioritize legislative support for the CUB tax credit to ensure these vacant properties can be transformed into valuable community assets?**

To prioritize legislative support for the Commercial Vacancy & Underutilized Building (CUB) tax credit, especially in the context of the rising demand for affordable housing and adaptable commercial spaces, the strategy must focus on aligning the tax credit with pressing community needs, such as economic revitalization, housing shortages, and sustainable development. Here's how I would approach building a case for strong legislative backing and the long-term success of the CUB tax credit:

**Emphasize the Alignment with Affordable Housing Goals**

**Encourage Mixed-Use Development:** Frame the CUB tax credit as a solution that encourages the redevelopment of vacant or underutilized buildings into mixed-use spaces that include both affordable housing and commercial units. Many communities face housing shortages, and this credit can incentive developers to transform underused properties into much-needed residential spaces. Offering a tax credit for converting upper floors of commercial buildings into apartments, for instance, can meet the demand for affordable housing while boosting the commercial vibrancy of the area.

**Address Housing Supply Issues:** Demonstrate how the CUB tax credit can be a tool to increase housing supply without requiring extensive new construction, which is often cost-prohibitive. Redevelopment of existing properties is quicker and environmentally responsible, providing a much-needed boost to housing in areas facing shortages. This aligns the credit with state and local affordable housing priorities, making it easier to win legislative support.

**Highlight Economic and Community Benefits**

**Revitalization of Main Streets and Downtowns:** Vacant and underutilized buildings in both rural and urban areas are often barriers to economic growth. By transforming these properties into valuable community assets—such as affordable housing, commercial spaces for local businesses, or community hubs—the CUB tax credit will stimulate local economies. Legislators can see this as a win for their districts, especially in areas where economic stagnation or population loss has left buildings empty.

**Job Creation:** Redevelopment projects generate jobs in construction, renovation, and the operation of new businesses or residential spaces. Local employment is a compelling argument for legislative support, as it directly benefits the state's workforce and economy. The ripple effect of increased business activity and consumer spending will appeal to lawmakers focused on economic development.

**Create a Coalition of Key Stakeholders**

**Engage Real Estate Developers and Property Owners:** Developers and property owners are critical players in utilizing the CUB tax credit. Work with real estate associations, local developers, and small property owners to build support for the program. They can provide testimonials or data showing how the tax credit could make underutilized projects financially feasible, which in turn will help build credibility with legislators.

**Local Governments and Economic Development Authorities:** Local governments often struggle with vacant properties that drain resources (e.g., code enforcement) and depress property values. Collaborating with city

**District**  
**Full Name**  
**Party Affiliation**

48A  
Nathan Kells  
DFL



councils, county boards, and economic development agencies will demonstrate widespread demand for the CUB tax credit. Their endorsements can help demonstrate to state legislators the grassroots support and real-world benefits of this initiative.

**Housing Advocates and Community Organizations:** Partnering with housing advocates and nonprofit organizations focused on community development will help highlight the social value of transforming vacant properties into affordable housing. These groups can lobby lawmakers on the community impact of using the CUB tax credit for residential redevelopment, especially for low- and moderate-income households.

**What measures would you advocate for to ensure small and mid-sized projects, particularly in rural areas or smaller towns, benefit from the CUB tax credit and contribute to local economic revitalization?**

To ensure that small and mid-sized projects, particularly in rural areas and smaller towns, benefit from the Commercial Vacancy & Underutilized Building (CUB) tax credit, it's essential to design a program that is accessible, flexible, and tailored to the needs of these communities. These smaller-scale projects often face unique challenges, such as limited financial resources, lower population density, and less access to development expertise. By implementing specific measures, the CUB tax credit can be more effective in driving economic revitalization across Minnesota's rural towns and smaller cities.

**Create Tiered Tax Credit Incentives**

**Tailor the Incentive Structure:** One size doesn't fit all when it comes to redevelopment, especially for smaller projects in rural areas. By offering a tiered tax credit system based on the size and scope of the project, smaller towns can receive a higher proportion of the credit relative to the size of their projects. For example, a smaller tax credit cap could be set for rural areas, but with a higher percentage of the total project cost eligible for the credit. This would ensure that smaller projects can receive meaningful financial support without being overshadowed by larger urban developments.

**Boost for Affordable Housing and Mixed-Use Projects:** Rural towns often need a mix of affordable housing and adaptable commercial spaces to revitalize downtowns. To encourage this, offer bonus incentives for projects that combine residential and commercial use, particularly if they include affordable housing units. Mixed-use projects would help address housing shortages while revitalizing commercial districts, ensuring that these areas are livable and economically vibrant.

**Simplify Application and Compliance Processes**

**Reduce Administrative Barriers:** Smaller developers or local business owners in rural areas may lack the capacity to navigate complex application processes. Simplifying the CUB tax credit application, making it straightforward, and providing templates or step-by-step guides will make the program more accessible to those who may not have a dedicated team for grant writing or financial management.

**Provide Technical Assistance:** Rural communities and small developers often face resource gaps in accessing redevelopment tools. Offering technical assistance through state or regional economic development agencies can help them successfully apply for the CUB tax credit. This could include:

Guidance on navigating the tax credit application process

Help with assessing the feasibility of projects



**District**  
**Full Name**  
**Party Affiliation**

48A  
Nathan Kells  
DFL



Assistance in securing additional funding, such as local grants or low-interest loans

Training in project management and sustainability planning

Promote Partnerships with Local Governments and Nonprofits

Public-Private Partnerships: Encourage partnerships between private developers and local governments or community development organizations to access the CUB tax credit for joint projects. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) can pool resources, making it easier to overcome financial barriers for smaller towns. Local governments can contribute by waiving fees, providing land, or offering additional local tax incentives.

Collaborate with Nonprofits and Community Organizations: Nonprofits, particularly community development organizations, can play a key role in bringing smaller projects to fruition. These groups often have deep local ties and understand the specific needs of their communities. By working together, nonprofits can help secure funding, manage projects, and ensure that developments meet local needs.

Introducing a Rural Set-Aside or Allocation

Dedicated Funding for Rural Projects: To ensure that smaller projects in rural areas are not left behind by larger urban initiatives, a portion of the CUB tax credit funds should be set aside specifically for rural towns and small cities. This "rural allocation" would guarantee that a portion of the funding goes directly to underserved communities.

**How do you see the Conversion of Underutilized Buildings (CUB) tax credit aligning with Minnesota's broader goals of sustainable development and reducing wasteful demolition?**

The Conversion of Underutilized Buildings (CUB) tax credit aligns strongly with Minnesota's broader goals of sustainable development and reducing wasteful demolition in several keyways:

Preserving Existing Infrastructure

Instead of demolishing underutilized buildings and constructing new ones, the CUB tax credit encourages developers to repurpose existing structures. This helps preserve the embodied energy already used in constructing these buildings, reducing the environmental impact that comes with new constructions such as material production, transportation, and increased energy consumption.

By reusing old buildings, the program not only preserves local architectural heritage but also reduces construction waste that would otherwise go to landfills. This directly supports the state's goal of reducing waste and minimizing its environmental footprint.

Fostering Energy-Efficient Retrofits

Through adaptive reuse, the CUB tax credit can incentivize energy-efficient upgrades to older buildings. Rather than being inefficient energy consumers, these buildings can be retrofitted with modern, energy-efficient systems—like improved insulation, efficient HVAC systems, and renewable energy sources (e.g., solar panels). This aligns with Minnesota's sustainability agenda by decreasing the carbon footprint of existing buildings.

**District**  
**Full Name**  
**Party Affiliation**

48A  
Nathan Kells  
DFL



#### Supporting Smart Growth and Compact Development

Tax credit encourages the redevelopment of existing buildings, which is often more compatible with smart growth principles. By focusing on downtowns, main streets, and existing commercial districts, the CUB tax credit discourages urban sprawl. Compact, walkable communities reduce reliance on cars, lower transportation emissions, and contribute to more sustainable, interconnected cities and towns.

#### Avoiding the Environmental Costs of Demolition

Demolition is resource-intensive, producing substantial waste and contributing to air pollution. The CUB tax credit helps minimize this by giving property owners financial incentives to reinvest in existing buildings. This avoids the destructive cycle of demolition and new construction while supporting Minnesota's vision of a circular economy—where resources are reused rather than discarded.

#### Revitalizing Communities with Sustainable Design

By converting vacant or underutilized buildings into housing or mixed-use spaces, the CUB tax credit contributes to the creation of sustainable, community-focused developments. It provides an opportunity for creating resilient neighborhoods that support local businesses, reduce commuting, and build strong, interconnected communities, all of which are essential elements of sustainable urban and rural development.

Incorporating sustainable development principles into redevelopment projects not only helps achieve Minnesota's climate and waste-reduction goals but also transforms vacant properties into assets that benefit the economy, environment, and local communities.

#### **How would you support efforts to restore the full value of the Minnesota Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit by allowing it to be distributed in a single year?**

To support efforts to restore the full value of the Minnesota Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit by allowing it to be distributed in a single year, I would advocate several strategic actions:

##### Highlight Economic Impact

**Demonstrate ROI:** Emphasize how the tax credit has historically spurred private investment, created jobs, and revitalized communities. Restoring the full value in a single year would accelerate these economic benefits, particularly in rural areas and smaller towns where historic properties are integral to local identity.

**Leverage Data:** Use case studies and economic impact data from other states that offer full tax credits in one year, showing that it leads to more robust and timely project completions.

##### Appeal to Sustainability Goals

Historic rehabilitation aligns with Minnesota's goals of sustainability and reducing demolition waste. Allowing the credit to be distributed in one year would make these projects financially viable, reducing wasteful demolition and preserving embodied energy in existing buildings.

##### Mobilize Stakeholders

**District**  
**Full Name**  
**Party Affiliation**

48A  
Nathan Kells  
DFL



Partners with developers, preservation groups, and local governments to build a coalition that lobbies legislators. These groups can provide real-world examples of how the one-year distribution would enable more projects to proceed, benefiting both urban and rural areas.

Create Legislative Champions

Engage with legislators from both parties to create champions for the cause. Emphasize the bipartisan appeal of job creation, local revitalization, and preservation of Minnesota's unique architectural heritage.

This strategy would help ensure the tax credit is restored to its full value, promoting economic growth and preserving Minnesota's historic assets.

**How important do you think it is to ensure that Minnesota remains competitive with other states that offer historic tax credits?**

It is crucial for Minnesota to remain competitive with other states that offer historic tax credits, as this directly impacts economic growth, community revitalization, and the preservation of the state's cultural heritage.

Many states, including Wisconsin, Ohio, and Missouri, offer robust historic tax credit programs that incentivize private investment in the rehabilitation of historic buildings. If Minnesota's program is less competitive, whether through lower credits or more restrictive policies—developers may choose to invest in other states with more attractive incentives. This could result in Minnesota losing out on the economic benefits associated with historic rehabilitation, such as job creation, increased property values, and new housing or commercial spaces.

In addition, staying competitive ensures that Minnesota continues to benefit from sustainable development. Rehabilitating historic buildings supports environmental goals by reducing the need for new construction and minimizing wasteful demolition. If our tax credit lags, it becomes harder to attract projects that contribute to sustainability and urban revitalization.

Moreover, historic tax credits contribute to cultural tourism by preserving iconic structures that define the character of cities and towns. Competing with other states ensures that Minnesota remains a desirable location for both tourism and investment, helping rural areas and urban centers alike.

**Given the demonstrated economic return of over \$9 for every \$1 invested in the MN HTC, how do you see this program contributing to the state's long-term economic growth, particularly in Greater Minnesota and rural communities?**

The Minnesota Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit (HTC), with its demonstrated economic return of over \$9 for every \$1 invested, is a powerful tool for driving long-term economic growth, particularly in Greater Minnesota and rural communities. For many rural towns, historic buildings represent both economic potential and cultural heritage. These buildings, often in downtown or main streets, have fallen into disrepair, limiting their ability to attract businesses and residents. The HTC incentivizes private investment to restore these buildings, transforming them into vibrant spaces for local businesses, affordable housing, or community facilities. This not only stimulates local economies through job creation and increased tax revenue but also revitalizes areas that may otherwise struggle with population decline and economic stagnation. In Greater Minnesota, where resources for new construction may be limited, the HTC serves as a catalyst for sustainable development. Rehabilitating existing structures reduces the need for new materials and wasteful demolition, aligning with the state's sustainability

**District**  
**Full Name**  
**Party Affiliation**

48A  
Nathan Kells  
DFL



goals. Moreover, by preserving the architectural character of these communities, the HTC supports cultural tourism, drawing visitors and boosting local economies. Long-term, this program encourages a cycle of reinvestment, as revitalized areas attract new businesses, residents, and further development. By ensuring that rural communities can benefit from this economic engine, the HTC contributes not only to preserving Minnesota's history but also to securing a prosperous future for its less urbanized regions. HTC is an essential tool for inclusive economic growth across the state.

**Do you agree with the statement “the greenest building is the one that’s already built”? Why or why not?**

I agree with the statement “the greenest building is the one that’s already built.” This perspective underscores the significant environmental benefits of reusing existing structures rather than constructing new ones.

First, existing buildings embody substantial energy and resources already expended during their construction. Demolishing these buildings and starting anew results in wasted materials and energy, contributing to a larger carbon footprint. By rehabilitating and retrofitting older buildings, we conserve this embodied energy and minimize the environmental impact associated with new construction.

Additionally, reusing buildings reduces the amount of construction waste generated, which often ends up in landfills. This aligns with sustainable practices aimed at minimizing waste and promoting resource efficiency.

Furthermore, many older structures can be upgraded with modern, energy-efficient technologies, enhancing their sustainability while preserving their historical and architectural value.

Please share with us one place in your district business, building, park, landmark, school, place of worship, or any other location—that you believe holds special significance for people in your community. Why do you think it's valued? How can we ensure that future generations continue to learn about and appreciate its importance?

**Please share with us one place in your district—a business, building, park, landmark, school, place of worship, or any other location—that you believe holds special significance for people in your community. Why do you think it's valued? How can we ensure that future generations continue to learn about and appreciate its importance?**

One place in my district that holds special significance is the Excelsior Historic District on the shores of Lake Minnetonka. Known for its rich history dating back to the 1850s, Excelsior has long been a gathering place for both locals and visitors, serving as a cultural and commercial hub. The district's quaint downtown, with its well-preserved historic buildings, houses unique local businesses, restaurants, and shops, giving it a distinct charm that connects the community to its past.

This area is highly valued for its architectural heritage, scenic beauty, and the sense of community it fosters. For many, it evokes memories of a simpler time, and its historic roots are a source of pride. Annual events, such as the Excelsior Art on the Lake festival and the 4th of July celebrations, draw people together, reinforcing the district's role as the heart of the community.

To ensure future generations continue to learn about and appreciate its importance, we must prioritize historic preservation efforts. This includes supporting local policies and programs that protect the district's architectural integrity and funding initiatives, such as the Minnesota Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit, that incentivize the restoration and adaptive reuse of historic properties. Incorporating educational programs about the district's

**District**  
**Full Name**  
**Party Affiliation**

48A  
Nathan Kells  
DFL



history into local schools and creating interactive exhibits or heritage trails will also help connect younger generations to the area's significance, fostering ongoing appreciation and stewardship.

**District**  
**Full Name**  
**Party Affiliation**

58A  
Kristi Pursell  
DFL



---

**Are you familiar with MN Main Streets?**

Yes

**What do you think are the benefits of the Minnesota Main Streets program? How might these benefits be extended to other communities throughout the state?**

Creating an identity and hometown pride around downtowns is valuable for the community building that does not to mention to potential for economic development!

**Given the increasing number of Minnesota communities seeking to revitalize their historic commercial districts through the Minnesota Main Streets program, how would you advocate for securing increased state funding to ensure the program's growth and long-term sustainability?**

It's compelling when there's a long line of waitlisted applicants which tells the legislature there is demand.

**What are your thoughts on incorporating the Minnesota Main Streets program as a permanent line item in the state budget, and how do you see this investment benefiting both rural and urban economies in our state?**

As a St. Paul insider, it may take many years of trying, but the persistence is worth doing... hopefully!

**Given the rising demand for affordable housing and adaptable commercial spaces, how would you prioritize legislative support for the CUB tax credit to ensure these vacant properties can be transformed into valuable community assets?**

I think especially if these buildings are converted to dwellings that may be looked favorably by the tax committees and chairs.

**What measures would you advocate for to ensure small and mid-sized projects, particularly in rural areas or smaller towns, benefit from the CUB tax credit and contribute to local economic revitalization?**

Prioritize those things on a scoring rubric for rating the applications.

**How do you see the Conversion of Underutilized Buildings (CUB) tax credit aligning with Minnesota's broader goals of sustainable development and reducing wasteful demolition?**

I think it aligns, but giving a tax credit also means the state isn't taking in that revenue, so the payoff needs to be worth the cost to the People of Minnesota.

**How would you support efforts to restore the full value of the Minnesota Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit by allowing it to be distributed in a single year?**

With housing becoming more of an issue in the state, I'd support the efforts to save older buildings if they can be turned into sustainable and affordable housing.

**How important do you think it is to ensure that Minnesota remains competitive with other states that offer historic tax credits?**

**District**  
**Full Name**  
**Party Affiliation**

58A  
Kristi Pursell  
DFL



It's somewhat important

**Given the demonstrated economic return of over \$9 for every \$1 invested in the MN HTC, how do you see this program contributing to the state's long-term economic growth, particularly in Greater Minnesota and rural communities?**

It would be great if these communities in greater MN could have some skin in the game, but truthfully many of them don't have two Pennies to rub together so it's a great way to help revitalize non-metro area communities.

**Do you agree with the statement "the greenest building is the one that's already built"? Why or why not?**

Not necessarily. There are buildings so energy inefficient they cost the occupants a lot of money and waste natural gas or whatever fuel is being used to heat/cool/etc. that space.

**Please share with us one place in your district—a business, building, park, landmark, school, place of worship, or any other location—that you believe holds special significance for people in your community. Why do you think it's valued? How can we ensure that future generations continue to learn about and appreciate its importance?**

**District**  
**Full Name**  
**Party Affiliation**

62B  
Bob Sullentrop  
Republican



---

**Are you familiar with MN Main Streets?**

No

**Can you give an example of a historic downtown, neighborhood, or individual business in a historic building that is thriving? What has made this place successful? How might it serve as a model for other Minnesota communities that are struggling?**

Main Street in Minneapolis, although it was rehabilitated quite a few years ago and I don't go there anymore so I don't know how it is currently doing.

**Given the increasing number of Minnesota communities seeking to revitalize their historic commercial districts through the Minnesota Main Streets program, how would you advocate for securing increased state funding to ensure the program's growth and long-term sustainability?**

Not sure, other than adding the project to a state bonding bill.

**What are your thoughts on incorporating the Minnesota Main Streets program as a permanent line item in the state budget, and how do you see this investment benefiting both rural and urban economies in our state?**

Not sure, but rehabilitating such areas should have positive results, but if the areas rehabilitated don't attract sufficient people the project could be a net loss.

**Given the rising demand for affordable housing and adaptable commercial spaces, how would you prioritize legislative support for the CUB tax credit to ensure these vacant properties can be transformed into valuable community assets?**

I have no idea.

**What measures would you advocate for to ensure small and mid-sized projects, particularly in rural areas or smaller towns, benefit from the CUB tax credit and contribute to local economic revitalization?**

I suppose audits would be one way to determine if the projects are successful.

**How do you see the Conversion of Underutilized Buildings (CUB) tax credit aligning with Minnesota's broader goals of sustainable development and reducing wasteful demolition?**

If the program is run well by people who know what they are doing it should be successful. But there could be some losers. So, what is needed are people that can pick winners, at least in the greater majority of cases. Otherwise after propping up a failing program for several years, it would eventually be eliminated.

**How would you support efforts to restore the full value of the Minnesota Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit by allowing it to be distributed in a single year?**

No idea

**How important do you think it is to ensure that Minnesota remains competitive with other states that offer historic tax credits?**



**District**  
**Full Name**  
**Party Affiliation**

62B  
Bob Sullentrop  
Republican



It should be given priority as long as it is overall a successful endeavor.

**Given the demonstrated economic return of over \$9 for every \$1 invested in the MN HTC, how do you see this program contributing to the state's long-term economic growth, particularly in Greater Minnesota and rural communities?**

---

**Do you agree with the statement “the greenest building is the one that’s already built”? Why or why not?**

Being a conservative, I like to save things that are worth saving. We live in a throw away society so placing an emphasis on saving things that are worth saving should be given a priority.

**Please share with us one place in your district—a business, building, park, landmark, school, place of worship, or any other location—that you believe holds special significance for people in your community. Why do you think it's valued? How can we ensure that future generations continue to learn about and appreciate its importance?**

I suppose that the ongoing restoration of Lake Street in Minneapolis (if it qualifies) would be worthy. I don't favor all the tearing down of commercial and residential properties in Minneapolis just so we can build more apartment buildings. My favorite restaurant was torn down and is now a five story apartment building.

