

Interview: Taylor calls for more community policing, economic opportunities to fight rising crime in Milwaukee

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Addressing Milwaukee's budget challenges and public safety concerns along with making sure formerly incarcerated people have resources they need to reenter the community are mayoral candidate Lena Taylor's main priorities if she becomes the city's next top leader.

The current Democratic state senator and attorney in a WisPolitics.com interview said she wants to increase community policing efforts, provide more community resources and economic opportunities to help reduce rising crime. With the city on course for a third record-breaking year of homicides, the 55 year-old from the north side of Milwaukee said she would work with federal and state officials to create more criminal justice system resources and get courts back on track.

"During the pandemic our court system is at least 2-to-4 years behind," she said. "That's one of the reasons that you see what happened in Waukesha happen, because people are not going to court and going through the system rapidly."

In order to address the rise in car thefts, Taylor said she wants to create more programs to redirect kids interested in cars away from stealing them and push them toward skills such as car sales, auto body work and shop class.

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"We're going to have to wrap around our young people in a different way and partner with our schools and partner with our organizations in the community to

help give them pathways to empowerment, to work, to skills, to entrepreneurship, to another option other than trouble,” she said.

Taylor also wants to tackle racial disparities, which she says became worse under former Mayor Tom Barrett, by investing in neighborhoods across the city rather than just downtown. Taylor challenged Barrett in 2020, capturing 36.5 percent of the vote.

“The disparities that exist are not just in policing, not just in education, it’s in a wealth of areas,” she said. “So one of the things we’ll have to is make sure we don’t just invest in downtown, but we invest in our neighborhoods, that we invest in areas of our city that are very challenged, so that we can make sure that all tides rise.”

She also said she’s concerned about the city’s street car system costing taxpayers millions while only serving downtown, but she added she’s willing to keep an open mind to see if it could serve more Milwaukeeans.

“I’m also concerned that the ridership is not great,” she said. “I’m also concerned that it really was meant to take people to work, and I’m not really certain how that works. So I have an open mind of being able to look at where we are, but I’m very concerned because our budget restraints don’t put me in a position to feel like we will have \$3 million to just put on something that goes around in a circle downtown.”

Listen to the interview [here](#).

See more on the Milwaukee mayoral race at the [Milwaukee Mayoral Race page](#).