

## 2019 CANDIDATE PROFILE GUIDE

### MERRIAM CITY COUNCILMEMBER CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

**Candidate Name:** Jason Silvers

**Candidate for Ward #:** 1

**Address:**

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Merriam, KS 66203

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**Campaign Treasurer:** Jennifer Silvers

**Candidate's Occupation:** Marketing

**Work History – Last Five Years** (25 word limit):

I currently work in the marketing department of a non-profit where I help educate members on how to stay current with their certification.

**Most Recent Political/Community Experience** (25 word limit?):

I sat on the Plaza/Westport Neighborhood Group's board and the initial group which helped develop Kansas City's first off-leash dog park in Penn Valley Park.

**Are you, or have you been, affiliated with a local or state chamber of commerce? If yes, please list chamber(s) and any leadership positions you have held** (25 word limit):

N/A

**Are you, or have you been, affiliated with any other business organization(s)? If yes, please list organization(s)** (25 word limit):

N/A

**As a candidate, what are your top three policy issues** (25 words per line):

1. Keep Merriam DIVERSE by welcoming people of all socioeconomic status, ethnic background, and sexual orientation.
2. Keep Merriam AFFORDABLE by maintaining a good mix of available housing from apartments and duplexes to condominiums and single-family homes.
3. Keep Merriam SUSTAINABLE by attracting local and out-of-town businesses to our city as responsible partners of growth.

**What are your views on the services and value citizens receive for their local tax dollars?**

Ever since moving to Merriam seven years ago, I have been impressed by the services provided by the City. During my first year as a Merriam resident, I learned how quickly snow was removed after a storm, witnessed capital improvement projects like upgraded streetlights and sidewalks, and experienced the wealth of public services like the community center, Farmers' Market, the Car and Motorcycle Show, "Party in YOUR Park," and multiple other events, all funded by sales tax dollars.

**What changes, if any, would you propose to the current City budget?**

So far, I have been impressed by Merriam's City budget. I can't think of any other city I've lived where the budget was funded primarily by a sales tax on purchases made by visitors from outside city limits.

**What role, if any, do you believe the City should play in economic development to bring jobs and capital investment to our City?**

I feel the City plays a large role in economic development, job creation, and capital investment but believe any decision should keep the overall health of the city and its citizens in mind. To me, this means attracting companies with limited or no TIF incentives, and any use of TIF should only be given to companies that will generate significant sales tax that can be applied to capital improvement projects.

**What do you think the three greatest opportunities are for the City's economy in the next ten years and how would you capitalize on them?**

I believe the three greatest economic opportunities for Merriam in the next ten years are first, help incentivize a grocery store to open within the city limits. After Hen House closed, Merriam has become a food desert for residents. Second, Merriam needs to embrace its status as Kansas City's automotive corridor and should promote that fact to surrounding areas. And third, Merriam should focus on developing and improving neighborhood parks, making it an even more desirable place for families to live, play, and spend.

**What is your philosophy on the role the City should play in terms of metro-area issues?**

The main function of a city, its leaders, and staff are to satisfy the needs, wishes, and health of its citizens. If its residents aren't happy the city isn't healthy, and an unhealthy city is a stagnant city.

**What do you think are the greatest challenges and/or opportunities for the City in the next ten years and how would you address them?**

I believe the greatest challenge for Merriam is its small footprint with limited to no room for new growth. Merriam needs to create a strategic plan to pinpoint areas for affordable, multi-family housing and desirable shopping centers. Merriam's needs to promote its easy accessibility to I-35, downtown, and Overland Park, making it a great place to open a business and live.

**What do you believe most distinguishes you from your opponent(s) in this race, making you best suited to serve?**

I believe my five years as a member of my former neighborhood group, along with five additional years as an appointed board member of my former neighborhood group, distinguishes me from my opponents. In those ten years, I worked closely with and sometimes opposed the Kansas City, Missouri City Council on multiple developments and capital improvement proposals. In that time, I learned valuable lessons regarding the power of cooperation between the City and its citizens.