

**2019 CANDIDATE PROFILE GUIDE**

**MERRIAM CITY COUNCILMEMBER CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Candidate Name:** Whitney Yadrich

**Candidate for Ward #:** 2

**Address:**

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**Campaign Treasurer:** Jessica Persson

**Candidate's Occupation:** Senior Project Manager

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

Senior Project Manager, Team Lead and Project Manager. I have experience in a variety of industries, delivering work locally and globally.

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

Merriam Park PTA Volunteer for 2018 midterm elections Founding member of the Ugly Christmas Sweater Party to benefit Operation Breakthrough

**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):

No.

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

No.

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

1. Improve communication between city hall and citizens by meeting people where they are and encouraging proactive updates.
2. Maximize our city's potential by promoting functional, high-value community projects and work with businesses to keep Merriam a desirable retail destination.
3. Implement and promote infrastructure programs that benefit Merriam now and preserve its future, like street and stormwater funding, sustainable runoff/erosion solutions for residents and walkability.

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

Merriam has tremendous services. We have 4.5 square miles to care for, and we do it well! In the near future, I'd like to see us commit to keeping our current services top-notch, but focus on paying down GO bond debt and make long-term financial plans for projects like the Irene B. French center.

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

We're in the midst of a five-year CIP initiative and about to generate the city's long-term comprehensive plan through 2040. I'd like to see us earmark and appropriate amount of money for investing in renewable energy sources, reducing our carbon footprint and investing in sustainable and low-maintenance water harvesting and beautification options.

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

I believe that city government's role is to support and enhance the health, safety and quality of life for anyone who lives, works and plays in Merriam. As a geographically small city, it is expected that many residents will commute to other cities for work; however, because we are small we should commit to nurturing a diverse economy that does not undercut the value of our location. While incentives are appropriate in some situations, city leaders should build strategic and genuine relationships that provide as many long-term as short-term benefits.

**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?**

1. Development on the northwest corner SM Pkwy and Antioch. The library is moving to the community center campus, creating a fresh commercial opportunity in a highly visible spot. 2. Bring a grocery store back to the city. We face competition issues, but the loss of Hen House created a quality of life issue for centrally located residents. 3. Commit to participating in the Metro KC Climate Action Plan in a way that promotes cost savings for residents and for the city itself. We can make money by saving money on long-term sustainable investments while promoting renewable technologies.

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

Merriam's primary goal is to care for those who live, work and play in our city, so I would object to participating in metro-wide issues if it came to the detriment of our citizens. However, if that objective is being fulfilled and we have capacity to participate in mutually beneficial initiatives, why not do so? Examples might be public transportation or community events.

**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?**

Dark store theory poses a legitimate threat to commercial property tax revenue and, in turn, our schools and public safety funding. Because the majority of our city revenue is funding by sales tax, the impact will be less significant than other areas; however, we would need to find a way to make up for that funding or potentially cut back on city services -- the value-add things that make Merriam a great place to live. We should plan near-term budgets with that revenue loss in mind, so if it becomes a reality we are prepared.

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

I am the qualified candidate to serve Ward 2. My husband and I are making our "forever" home here, and care about seeing Merriam through the next 10, 20, 50 years - not rehashing the last 20 years. I have the professional skills and expertise to fully understand and act on information presented to the council, and the humility to ask questions when I need to. I leave personal baggage at the door and collaborate with people from all backgrounds, while being respectful and focused on our common goals. I will always be part of the solution.