

Overland Park Mayor 2021

Response ID:5 Data

1. Candidate Information

1. Candidate Name

Mike Czinege

2. Address

Street Address/Apt/Suite : 6704 W. 132 Street

City/State/Zip : Overland Park, Kansas 66209

3. Phone Number

913-915-0700

4. Email Address

mikeczinege@gmail.com

5. Campaign Website

www.mikeforopmayor.com

2. Candidate Background

6. Occupation/Work History (last 5 years - 25 words or less)

13 Years CIO at AMC Theatres

4 Years CIO Applebee's

8 Years Partner at Ernst & Young

7. Please list political, community and business organizations with whom you have been affiliated and any leadership positions you have held.

17 years - Advisory Board - Helzberg School of Management Rockhurst University

1 year - Advisory Board - Young Republicans of JoCo

8 years - Board and past chair - KVC Behavioral

2 years - Finance Council - Nativity Parish

3 years - School Council - Nativity Parish School

3. Issues and Policy

8. List your top three policy issues? (100 words or less)

1. Restoring the voice of residents to city government and being responsive to residents. Residents have been overridden by a city council with a fixation on growth at all costs and been ignoring quality of life of residents.

2. Dealing with rising crime. Violent and property crime are on the rise and we must deal with this immediately. From 2016-2019 violent crime is up 30+% and property crime is up 14% according to the Kansas Bureau of Investigation.

3. Reforming city development incentives must be done to restore equity to the local tax burden.

9. What are your views on the services and value the City's citizens receive for their local tax dollars? (100 words or less)

Most basic services are reasonable, but there are issues. For example, the proliferation of chip seal as a standard road maintenance is unacceptable. Property taxes are high and the latest budget proposes to raise them even higher. Since 1997

OP property tax revenue collected by Overland Park has risen 320%, 6 times the rate of inflation. OP must make better use of tax dollars collected from residents. Tax Foundation rated Kansas 8th highest for state and local taxes. Johnson County has lost a net of \$309 MM of adjust gross income from families leaving for lower tax areas.

10. Regarding the City's budget, a 1-mill property tax increase to fund the recommendations of the Mental Health Task Force has been proposed for 2022. Do you support the task for recommendations? Do you support increasing the mill levy for this purpose? Discuss why/why not and how you would fund the recommendations if you support them but not the mill levy increase. (100 words or less)

Mental health is growing issue in our community, particularly in police encounters. I support co-responders to assist police. However, I do not support any increase in the city property tax. Homeowners have already suffered a significant city property tax increase, and with rising valuations the overall tax burden is crippling for many residents, especially seniors. At a time when current city leadership found excess funds for multi-million dollar overruns for an Arboretum visitor center, we can surely pare waste in the budget to fund co-responders without a property tax increase. The city must set meaningful priorities and restore fiscal stewardship.

11. What changes, if any, would you like to see in the City's proposed budget for 2022?

I am not in favor of increases in the City's proposed budget. The City claims the increase is 9.6% when compared to the current year budget. However, when comparing the proposed budget to the estimated spending in the current year it is a 38.9% increase. The City needs to find a way to live at current spending levels as residents and businesses are recovering from the effects of the Covid-19 shutdowns and spending less themselves.

12. What role, if any, do you believe the City should play in economic development to bring jobs and capital investment to the community? (100 words or less)

. The City should play an active role in economic development to bring jobs and capital investment to the community. The most important aspects of a city for a business and residents to consider for relocation are safety, quality of life, education, infrastructure, and low taxes. Tax subsidies should be a last resort incentive for economic growth. Studies have shown that tax subsidies are at best a temporary benefit and only raise the tax burden on existing residents. Johnson County has seen an exodus of net adjusted gross of \$309 MM in the last 5 years because of high taxes.

13. As the City considers future development and redevelopment projects, describe your views on how the City should best manage and balance growth? (100 words or less)

The failure of current city leadership to pace growth with infrastructure is the chief issue we must address to ensure OP's quality of life. The city's "growth and density at all costs" agenda must change. OP's success was built on desirable safe single family neighborhoods and strong schools. In contrast, packing every square inch of land in the city and annexing more to do the same has stressed city resources with unprecedented congestion and rising crime. It's time to restore single family neighborhoods and green space as our priorities to ensure the quality life desired by OP families.

14. What do you believe are the greatest challenges the City faces over the next ten years and how would you address them? (100 words or less)

I believe rising crime, the proliferation of high rise and high density apartment complexes, high state and local taxes are the most significant issues facing the City. From 2016-2019 Kansas Bureau of Investigation reports that violent crime in Overland Park is up over 30%. We must support and fund law enforcement to combat this safety issue. The City must slow the intrusion of high density apartment community into the community that is causing congestion and reducing quality of life of residents. We must work within the City and collaborate with the state to reduce the tax burden on residents.

15. Do you believe the current city manager form of government we have is appropriate for Overland Park or would you favor a "strong mayor" form of government? (100 words or less)

I am in favor of continuing the current city manager form of government. I believe it is beneficial to have a business professional that manages the operations, administration, and day to day functions of the City. The mayor and city council can dedicate themselves to policy related issues.

16. It is estimated that replacing chip seal road resurfacing with a method similar to surrounding cities will cost more than

\$20 million per year. Do you favor eliminating the chip seal process, and if so, how would you pay for the increased cost? (100 words or less)

I am in favor of replacing the chip seal road resurfacing method. Chip seal was designed for rural roads and never intended for urban or suburban roads. I am not convinced the cost to replace chip seal is the published \$20 MM. I recommend initiating a road surface investigation to find alternatives to chip seal and identify the real costs to implement each alternative. We should strive to find the funds to replace chip seal in the current budget. I recommend a budget task force to examine the budget to find spending reduction opportunities.

17. What specific proposals do you have to support the goal of providing access to affordable housing throughout the City? (100 words or less)

Overland Park was developed as a suburban community primarily comprised of single family homes and planned neighborhoods. The recent trend to spot-zoned high density developments is contrary to the character of the community where residents have invested their savings to provide a strong quality of life free of congestion for their families. The KC metro area is easily accessible with often no more than a 30-minute trip to reach most parts of the city. Building dense developments alongside established neighborhoods is driving many longtime residents to flee to more rural areas.

18. Since its founding in 1960, Overland Park leaders have had a long history of visionary planning. What do you believe the City should do today to ensure the City's prosperity for the next 60-years? (100 words or less)

At its founding, OP had a visionary plan for the city and for several decades following, OP found success offering desirable single family neighborhoods and strong schools to attract residents, quality jobs and create an affordable community in which to retire. Unfortunately, that vision has fallen prey to haphazard spot zoning, neglected infrastructure and excessive unnecessary tax giveaways to incentivize unmanageable density and a costly pursuit of unrealistic and failed promises of new jobs. Our future hinges on restoring the formula that made OP successful, prioritizing quality neighborhoods, efficient infrastructure and strong schools to attract families and long-lasting quality jobs.

19. Do you believe the City of Overland Park is headed in the right direction?

I do not. I believe there are warning signals that we need to heed. As I mentioned earlier, violent and property crime are up 33% and 14% respectively 2016-2019. City Council is proposing a 38% increase in 2022 budget over projected 2021 spend levels, while many OP residents and business are themselves cutting back to return from COVID shutdowns. High density housing is causing increasing congestion and is putting strains on our infrastructure. Residents are leaving Johnson County, and Overland Park, for more rural areas seeking the quality of life they had when they first moved to the area.

20. How would your service as Mayor of Overland Park differ from the current mayor?

I believe the Mayor needs to be a champion for the residents of Overland Park, and work to improve the quality of life for those residents within the City. Wasting tax dollars on tax subsidies to developers on prime city real estate only increases the tax burden on residents.

I would put the priorities of Overland Park residents and businesses first. I would make all city activities more transparent and accountable, including law enforcement and financial transactions with developers. I would focus on providing quality city services and the lowest possible tax levels.

21. Do you believe the City of Overland Park City Council is responsive to the needs of the community? What is your approach to governance?

I do not believe the City Council has been responsive enough to the needs and wishes of the community. The City Council has consistently ignored the voices of its residents on important issues. At last count there were 27 HOAs that have signed a petition to eliminate chip seal as a road maintenance solution. The toll road on 69 highway is opposed by many residents that believe, as I do, that City Council should have worked with the state legislature to find alternatives. I would hold open council meetings, and seek and listen to the opinion of residents.

22. Why are you seeking this public office?

Overland Park is a top rated city and has been a great place to live, work, and raise a family. I believe the City is facing significant challenges with rising crime, high state and local taxes, congestion, and infrastructure issues. I believe these challenges cannot be solved with the same approach as in the past and with the current leadership. I believe Overland Park needs a new approach to problem solving that is based on sound business principles, and fact based financial analysis. Overland Park and Johnson County will continue to see an exodus without solving these problems effectively.

23. What do you believe makes you uniquely qualified to serve in this position and most distinguishes you from your opponent(s) in this race?

I am a 30-year resident of Overland Park and have raised 3 children here with my wife, Nancy. I recently retired from a 44-year career as a business executive running large organizations and solving complex business problems. I was the CIO at AMC Theaters and Applebee's Restaurants for 17 years and a partner at Ernst & Young for 8 years. I will bring the business skills acquired in my career to the City to develop a strategic direction and solve existing problems. The City needs a problem solver with business experience, not another politician.