

# Overland Park City Council 2021

Response ID:30 Data

## 1. Candidate Information

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### 1. Candidate Name

Ty Gardner

### 2. Address

Street Address/Apt/Suite : 13209 Bond Street

City/State/Zip : Overland Park, KS 66213

### 3. Phone Number

7854181165

### 4. Email Address

ty@tyforop.com

### 5. Campaign Website

tyforop.com

## 2. Candidate Background

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

Current: Law Student

Previous: Huhtamaki

Purchasing Manager - handling \$20MM budget

Project Manager - onboarding \$65MM new business

Sales Manager - managing \$20MM six-state region

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

I have volunteered for Big Brothers Big Sisters, served on the board of a nonprofit focused on encouraging entrepreneurship in an underserved community, and was student president of my MBA program at Indiana University in 2017.

In business I worked nearly a decade for Huhtamaki, a \$3 billion food packaging company. I purchased raw materials for our fifteen manufacturing plants in the US, ran cross-country projects to onboard tens of millions of dollars in new business, and managed a six-state sales region with annual sales of nearly \$20 million.

## 3. Issues and Policy

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

- Protecting what makes Overland Park great today like infrastructure, safety, and being an attractive place to business.

- Building for what our future will demand. Such as becoming a regional leader on sustainability and the treatment of mental health. Creating a city all people can feel welcomed and a sense of belonging.

- Raising expectations for local leadership. Demanding more on transparency, accountability. Expecting leaders who will put in the work to educate and inform our residents at all times, not just when we're asking for your votes.

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

I think that we generally receive good services for our local tax dollars.

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**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)**

I do support the Task Force's recommendations and the increased cost to pay for those recommendations. I believe a key to ensuring Overland Park's future success is to become a regional leader on the treatment of mental health. As a member of the Council I will push us to be even more aggressive on this issue.

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

I will support making Overland Park a regional leader in the treatment of mental health. I would like to see greater city resources devoted to that goal. I also want to see us become a regional leader on sustainability and support us putting our money where our mouths are with this subject.

We need to prioritize investments into making Overland Park a more walkable and bikeable city. This will help make our people healthier, increase quality of life, and also attract the kind of business activity that will help our businesses thrive in an increasingly digital economy.

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**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)**

I don't believe in a one-size-fits-all answer. The appropriate role of the City will differ with each situation. But it starts with having leadership that understands the needs of a diverse business community and help facilitate creative solutions.

My professional and educational experience prepares me for that. I've shown success in the business world managing projects and people. My teams have set sales records and I've consulted on projects for companies in diverse industries. I received an MBA from Indiana University's prestigious Kelley School of Business. This experience prepares me to deliver results for our community.

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**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)**

As in business, different things are needed at different phases in any organization's life cycle. Overland Park is no longer in the startup phase where leadership should pursue growth at all costs. For where the City is today, leadership should focus on strategic growth. We need to aggressively target growth in areas that will be key to our future like mental health, sustainability, and diversity and inclusion efforts. Businesses want to be here, so we should not be handing out incentives like candy. However, we should be willing to use them as a tool where it makes sense strategically.

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**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)**

An entire generation that never gets involved in local government. Most of Overland Park consists of young families raising kids and people in the early and middle parts of their careers. Yet the people we elect are in very different phases of their lives and careers. The issues that most candidates agree are key to our City's future are all wildly popular amongst that younger and middle-aged age group. Yet nothing gets done because this group doesn't vote. If we want to see results, we have to bring more people into the process.

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**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 currently have no issue with the city manager system of government we have in Overland Park.

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**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)**

This burden would likely fall on our homeowners in the form of a property tax increase. And that's where current leadership has failed in defining the discussion on chip seal. I would need to see how that \$20 million per year would translate in terms of property tax increases to give an honest answer to that question. And Council has been unwilling to have this frank conversation with voters. I'll be committed to having those tough conversations instead of forming committees to maybe one day think about addressing a problem that residents have complained about for a decade.

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

The costs to acquire and develop land in Overland Park prevents many affordable housing options because the reality is that businesses operate to make a profit. We can and should look at all options including smaller, more compact homes like we've seen be successful in the Veterans Care Project, accessory dwelling units, and additional senior community housing. But to have success here, we need to be an active partner with the business community. We need leadership that will be clear that this is a priority and work toward creative solutions that can be profitable despite the high investment cost.

**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)**

We have to protect what makes our City great today. The things that today land us on lists of best places in America to live. Strengths like safety, being welcoming to business, and strong infrastructure. But we need leadership that recognizes those won't all be the same things that land us on those lists in the future. We need to prioritize becoming a regional leader in sustainability and the treatment of mental health. And we need to pursue diversity and inclusion efforts to ensure all our residents feel like they are valued and belong.

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

There is a lot about Overland Park that is great today. It's why I choose to live and raise a family here. And it's why we land on lists of best places to live in America. So, we need leadership that will protect those things.

But we also must recognize what's landing us on those lists today will not be the same things landing us on those lists tomorrow. To continue landing on those lists, we need leaders that will aggressively move on issues like mental health, sustainability, diversity and inclusion, and bringing more people into local government.

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

If you are a corporation or someone who donates to local elections, our city government probably works great for you. If not, you've probably never heard from them. My approach to government is to represent all of us and embrace accountability. It's why I knock doors where people tell me I'm the first candidate to come to them and ask their opinion. It's also why I share my personal cell phone number with our residents (785-418-1165). I think someone asking for your vote should put in the work to hear from you.

**21. Why are you seeking this public office?**

Because the work that must be done to build for our City's future isn't getting done. Our leadership is not putting in the work to hear from and educate our residents until it comes time to ask for your votes. If that continues, we'll have disengaged voters and our future needs won't be met. With a newborn, now is certainly not a convenient time to run for office. But the future of the city he'll grow up in is on the line. And I want to be sure it's a city we're proud to hand to his generation one day.

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

Experience. We need someone with a diverse background and set of experiences. I grew up in poverty. I know what it is to struggle and overcome adversity. I've been a renter and homeowner in Overland Park in the last decade and understand the

needs of both groups. I have formal education in political science, business, and law; three area the Council is routinely asked to address. I have proven success in the business world leading people, managing cross-country projects, and delivering record-setting results. Experience isn't just years lived. It's about having the right experience for the job. I do.