

# Overland Park City Council 2021

Response ID:14 Data

## 1. Candidate Information

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### 1. Candidate Name

Stacie Gram

### 2. Address

Street Address/Apt/Suite : 11004 W. 125th St.

City/State/Zip : Overland Park, KS 66213

### 3. Phone Number

913-558-0584

### 4. Email Address

StacieGram4OP@gmail.com

### 5. Campaign Website

StacieGram4OP.com

## 2. Candidate Background

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

Vice President Healthcare Claims, CNA Insurance (Current)

AVP Healthcare Claims, CNA Insurance

Head of Casualty Claims NA, Swiss Re

Claims Manager, Vice President, Swiss Re

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

Overland Park City Council, Public Safety, Community Development and Public Works Committees.

Overland Park Chamber of Commerce, Board of Directors, 2nd Vice Chair

ForwardOP, Board of Directors

Blue Valley Northwest Bandwagon, President

Blue Valley Business and Education for Schools of Tomorrow Committee

AdventHealth South Advisory Committee

Leadership Overland Park

Junior League of Wyandotte and Johnson Counties in Kansas

CASA volunteer

President, Mother to Mother in Johnson County

St. Thomas Episcopal Church

School room parent, PTO volunteer, Oak Hill Elementary, Oxford Middle and BVNW

### 3. Issues and Policy

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

1. Implementing the ForwardOP vision embraced by residents will chart the course for our city as a vibrant, safe, and economically thriving community for years to come. The plan builds on the strengths that already make Overland Park among the best cities in the nation.
2. The Infrastructure Advisory Group will help address critical infrastructure needs for the next 15 years, providing recommendations for replacing aging streets, sidewalks, streetlights and stormwater systems.
3. Responsible growth that includes varied housing choices at affordable prices, sustainable building initiatives and mixed-use development.

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

City residents receive excellent value for their tax dollars. Overland Park residents pay city property taxes that are half or less of our neighboring Johnson County cities, yet we receive top notch city services from a professional staff. Our response time on snow removal, storm cleanup and code enforcement is fast and efficient. We enjoy extensive amenities like golf courses, parks, pools, the soccer complex, the arboretum and the farmstead. There is good reason why we are consistently rated among the best cities in which to live in the country.

#### 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 advocated for the adoption of the Mental Health Task Force recommendations. If passed, we will add a Behavioral Health Unit to the police department with 11 plain-clothes officers and 3 mental health co-responders, providing 24/7 coverage for service calls related to mental health. All officers will receive crisis intervention training so they are prepared to handle mental health issues. These enhancements will improve safety for residents as our police respond to over 2000 calls each year involving mental health. I support the mill levy increase which will also pay for additional fire fighters and cyber security resources and staffing.

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

The 2022 budget is a comprehensive, responsible use of our taxpayer dollars. Overland Park has benefitted from professional management for 60 years and the budget reflects that approach, focusing on enhancements to public safety, city services and infrastructure, parks and amenities. With city property tax the lowest of any other first-class city in Kansas, Overland Park operates in a fiscally prudent manner. There are many areas I would like to fund – upgraded road surfaces, new sidewalks, park improvements, housing and climate change initiatives, but those are all issues we must tackle together as we move the city forward.

**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)**

Overland Park's future success depends on partnerships between the city, the business community, the Chamber of Commerce, public entities, volunteer organizations, industry groups and residents. All have a role to play in attracting and retaining businesses and creating jobs. I support the city's continued leadership on the Chamber's Economic Development Council.

**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)**

Overland Park's growth will look different depending on what part of the city you are in. In the southern part of the city, we can consider greenfield development that mixes residential with retail and unique new businesses and entertainment venues while being cautious about overdevelopment. In the northern part of the city, we must creatively find infill opportunities that add small multiplexes or mixed-use developments to grow in established areas. It is a challenge the Council must consider thoughtfully and not take a 'one size fits all' approach to.

**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)**

- Addressing aging infrastructure needs. I believe the Infrastructure Advisory Group that I advocated for is the correct approach to addressing this complex issue.
- Fulfilling the vision of ForwardOP. The Board will need to convene community groups and residents to push those goals forward.
- The comprehensive land use plan will be addressed in 2022. Public input will be needed as we look at the city's master plan for land use and this will be key to our design for the future.

**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 favor the current City Manager form of government. Our city has been professionally run by top talent in their fields for over 60 years and the results speak for themselves. The City Manager, as an experienced professional, should hire staff, make key decisions and recommendations to the Council. I believe that a 'strong mayor' form of government would put too much authority in one elected official and create greater instability among city staff.

**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 no fan of chip seal and favor phasing it out. I advocated for the Infrastructure Advisory Group to comprehensively review our infrastructure needs including chip seal, but also our aging sidewalks, streetlights, curbs and stormwater drainage systems. Once we have the Advisory Group's recommendations, we can address funding alternatives that may include property or sales taxes, or cuts to planned future development. We should not make these decisions without substantial public input, reviewing our alternatives and addressing all infrastructure needs together.

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

We should consider rezoning that allows higher density infill development such as multiplex units. We also should consider changing zoning and HOA rules to allow for accessory dwelling units on lots that will accommodate them. Another option is to embark on public/private partnerships to build cottage communities or to provide funding to support construction of attainable rental units. We also need programs to provide funding to rehabilitate older homes so that they can remain viable living spaces.

Of course, this all must be done with public input and an appreciation of the impact on surrounding property owners.

**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)**

The city is at a pivotal point in its history in that we must both address our needs and our wants. ForwardOP provides the road map for our future as directed by our residents. To ensure success, we need to combine the efforts of city staff and Council, business, industry and non-profit groups and residents to convene to push those priorities forward. At the same time, the new Infrastructure Advisory Group must identify options for fixing our aging infrastructure, and renewed effort should be put toward supporting our older residential neighborhoods so they continue to thrive.

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

Overland Park is headed in the right direction and with the right leadership and management going forward, we can continue its record of success. There is a reason why we were recently named the #1 city in which to raise a family and the #4 city in which to live in the country. But we should not take that success for granted. It came about because of fiscally sound management, forward thinking and courageous decision making. Voters should look for candidates with a background and experience in civic leadership and complex decision making and with true commitment to Overland Park.

**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?**

I believe the city is responsive to the day-to-day needs of the community and provides a high level of service to residents. However, I also see an opportunity for more forward thinking, transparency, and public involvement. My approach to governance is to talk more to residents, advance and explore ideas, be more open to new thoughts and ways of doing things. It's one reason I'm so excited about ForwardOP because I can see our future there and I would really like to work on the initiatives I believe will make us a true top city of the future.

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

Overland Park is my hometown and I want to see it build on its success for the future. I have lived, worked and raised my kids in the city for many years. When the vacancy arose on the Council last year, I felt it was an opportunity to give back to the city that has given so much to me. I want to ensure we provide a best-in-class city for my parents, as they 'age in place' in Overland Park, my kids, as they start their working lives, for families, and for everyone who lives and works in Overland Park.

**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?**

I am a life-long OP resident with a commitment to public service. I was active in the Chamber of Commerce, ForwardOP, Leadership Overland Park, and committees for the Blue Valley School District and AdventHealth South. I volunteered extensively in my children's schools, most recently leading the BVNW Bandwagon. My professional experience as an attorney and insurance executive also benefits me as a Council member. I have the training and the discipline to do the homework necessary to understand the implications of decisions before the Council. I truly love Overland Park and have a passion for our city!