

# Mayor and/or City Council 2021

Response ID:90 Data

## 1. Candidate Information

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### 1. Candidate Name

Mary Larson

### 2. Candidate for Ward # (if applicable)

City Council Ward 2

### 3. Address

Street Address/Apt/Suite : 2109 W. 117th Street

City/State/Zip : Leawood, KS 66211

### 4. Phone Number

913-345-1870

### 5. Email Address

Mvanlarson@gmail.com

### 6. Campaign Website

N/A

## 2. Candidate Background

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

Leawood City Council - 4 years

Attorney licensed in Kansas and Missouri with mediation training.

### 8. If you are or have been affiliated with a chamber of commerce or other business organization, please list which organization(s) and any leadership positions you have held.

Leawood Chamber of Commerce

### 9. Other recent political/community experience (50 words or less)

My favorite recent community experience is completing the Leawood Citizens Police Academy. I currently serve on the Ironhorse Advisory Committee, the Leawood Stormwater Committee and the Leawood Chamber of Commerce Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

## 3. Issues and Policy

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### 10. As a candidate, what are your top three policy issues? (100 words or less)

It's difficult to isolate just three policy issues of interest, but economic recovery for the Leawood businesses affected by the pandemic is at the top of my list, in addition to development of the 135th Street corridor and improving/increasing communication avenues between local government and Leawood residents.

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

I believe Leawood provides its residents excellent value for their local tax dollars. Our Leawood Police Department, Fire

Department, Parks and Recreation, and Public Works Department are all tops in their class. Leawood is consistently ranked as one of the safest cities in Kansas, our Fire Department is nationally accredited, Parks and Rec does an outstanding job with our city's recreational facilities and programs, and Public Works has proactively repaired defective curbs, replaced aging corrugated metal pipes and provides stellar snow removal in the winter...just to name a few items.

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**12. What changes, if any, would you like to see to the City budget? (100 words or less)**

Leawood has consistently put together a conservative budget year after year. This has served our community well, particularly in challenging economic periods. I wouldn't change a thing.

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**13. 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)**

Leawood should and does play an important role in economic development for our community. It's important for City leaders to know the needs of local business and how the City can best support the growth/stability of local business. There are a variety of ways the City can provide this support through local ordinances, community development and planning, infrastructure and City services.

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**14. 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)**

City decisions regarding development and redevelopment projects involve a delicate balance between what is good for business and what is good for the surrounding community. We always want to encourage development growth, but not at the expense of nearby residential communities which will be most affected by any development proposals. Leawood's motto is "Growing With Distinction". This really sums up the balance needed for successful development.

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**15. What is your philosophy on the role the City should play in terms of metro-area issues? (100 words or less)**

Leawood is one of the smaller cities in the KC metro, but that doesn't mean it shouldn't be a leader in terms of metro-area issues. A few of the areas I'm proud to say Leawood has taken the lead in are non-discrimination, sustainability and art in public spaces.

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**16. What do you believe the takeaways for the City should be, if any, from the COVID-19 pandemic experience? (100 words or less)**

Local government takeaways from the COVID-19 pandemic include conservative budgeting, being able quickly and effectively communicate with residents, and the importance of creativity/ingenuity in dealing with a new and constantly changing public health landscape.

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**17. 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)**

The greatest challenges Leawood faces over the next ten years are to maintain the incredible momentum of economic development, increasing property values, providing an extremely high level of public services, and planning the development of the limited remaining portions of open land in Leawood, particularly along the 135th Street corridor.

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**18. Why are you seeking this public office? (100 words or less)**

I'm seeking the position on the City Council because I love living in Leawood, have been a resident since 1996 and I just simply want to be of service. I'm at the point in my life that I'm able to give back to the community that I love.

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**19. What do you believe makes you uniquely qualified to serve in this position and most distinguishes you from your opponent(s) in this race? (100 words or less)**

Leawood is chock full of smart professionals who would make terrific City Council members. It's difficult to say I'm uniquely qualified. Perhaps the one attribute that sets me apart is unbridled optimism. I learned this from my father and it's an attitude I apply to everything I do. Unbridled optimism has been a valuable asset thus far in my four years as a public servant. I hope to put it to good use for another four years.