

# Overland Park Mayor 2021

Response ID:8 Data

## 1. Candidate Information

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### 1. Candidate Name

Clay Norkey

### 2. Address

Street Address/Apt/Suite : 9435 W. 157th Ct.

City/State/Zip : Overland Park, KS 66221

### 3. Phone Number

913-579-1080

### 4. Email Address

clay@claynorkey.com

### 5. Campaign Website

<https://www.claynorkey.com>

## 2. Candidate Background

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

Clayton Thomas LLC (Law Firm) (Owner/Managing Attorney) (2017-present).

Shook, Hardy & Bacon, LLP (Law Firm) (Attorney) (1999-2017).

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

Blue Valley Recreation Commission (Commissioner / Vice Chair) (2015-present).

Lawyers Association of Kansas City (President, Director, Member) (2000-present).

Wilshire Farms Home Owners Association (President, Committee Chair, Director) (2017-present).

Father's Club (BVW Chapter Co-Founder & Chair) (2019-present).

Church of the Resurrection--UM (Board of Trustees, Chair; Church Council, Chair; Member) (2000-present).

Blue Valley Legislative Education & Advocacy Group (2019-present).

Operation Breakthrough (Tutor; Skippy & Skivvies Drive, Chair & Team Leader) (2001-2017).

Leadership Overland Park (Overland Park Chamber of Commerce) (Graduate) (2008).

Kansas Bar Association (Long-time Member, Legislative Committee (2009-11)).

Johnson County Bar Association (Member, Community Outreach (2016)).

### 3. Issues and Policy

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

- Creating a thriving economic environment with good, high-paying jobs
- Safe, affordable, and accessible homes, including our young adults, our seniors, our families, and all those who work in Overland Park.
- A safe and healthy community built on transparency and accountability.

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

We can always do better and must never settle for the status quo. Overall, Overland Park's mill levy (property tax) is the lowest of all first-class cities in Johnson County — by nearly half. And for that, our residents receive good value for their tax dollars. We certainly have room for improvement, and the pandemic has shown that belt-tightening can work. So we must always remain fiscally responsible, search for efficiencies, and make smart investment decisions that grow our economy and provide the services our residents want and need.

#### 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 fully support the recommendations of the Mental Health Task Force. It is a great start for addressing mental-health issues in our city. And if we are to support our police officers, our mental-health workers, and truly take on the mental-health issues that we face today and into the future, we must fund the task force's recommendations. As I understand it, a one-mill increase works out to be about \$40 per year on average for each household. For all that is proposed, it appears to be a good investment.

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

Coming out of the pandemic, I believe stability in the budget is a primary objective. Now is not the time to be cutting essential services, nor is it the time to institute a large tax increase. As the economy begins accelerating, we will have a better idea of what our post-pandemic outlook will be.

#### 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, and particularly the Mayor, should be vocal advocates for economic development, job growth, and capital investment into the community. The Mayor should be a leading advocate for policies at the local and state level that make our community attractive — including our exceptional education options at the secondary and post-secondary level. Careful planning, with community input and public engagement, is vital for our future success and prosperity. As Mayor, I will promote the attractiveness of our overall community and be prepared to use competitive tools when necessary to bring good, high-paying jobs and to help our city thrive.

#### 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)

Growth is best managed and balanced by having a solid plan to act as a guide for our future. And that plan must be based on reliable data, informed projections, and strong public engagement. We must also be flexible and act reasonably and rationally to changing circumstances. A thorough review of zoning and ordinances that align with the people's goals will go a long way to setting expectations, creating a more vibrant community, and expediting and lowering costs for new development and redevelopment.

#### 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)

Some of the many challenges our city will face over the next ten years are also opportunities, and include (1) having safe, affordable, and accessible housing; (2) building community connectedness across our now-large city; (3) addressing aging

infrastructure; (4) making smart development and redevelopment choices that consider sustainability and resident concerns; (5) keeping and attracting young people to our area; and (6) addressing the projected growth in our senior population. It will take determination, a strong sense of collaboration in working with others, and bold, new leadership to tackle these challenges.

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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)**

Having a city-manager form of government helps ensure that we have professional staff running the day-to-day operations of the city and informing the governing body of necessary and relevant information. But it only works if the elected body is willing to provide solid guidance, hold the city manager and staff accountable, and be fully transparent. We can, and we must, do better in this area. As mayor, I will foster a culture of transparency and accountability in all areas of local government.

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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)**

Chip seal has been a top resident complaint for over 15 years. If we can replace it with a reasonably affordable and better solution, I am all in. The current \$20M price tag, however, is too high to accept without a thorough review of options. That review should have been conducted years ago, but our city leaders were not proactive here. I will ensure that the task force is staffed and expedites its review so all options can be considered before the next round of budget considerations. We should always look for better, more cost-effective methods in all we do.

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**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 must partner with community agencies and advocates to bring safe, affordable, and accessible housing to fruition. This includes utilizing UCS's Housing Toolkit to guide us. At the city level, we must conduct a comprehensive review of zoning and other ordinances with the goal of identifying and rectifying current impediments to reaching this goal. Further, we should consider using Overland Park's existing land bank and also creating a housing trust fund, both of which can be used to make housing attainable. Finally, we need to promote education on this issue and collaborate with all stakeholders.

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**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've come a long way since 1960, thanks to the hard-working people of this area and bold visionary leaders who stepped up to serve. To ensure our future prosperity, we must continue to bring in new leaders who cast a future vision of a thriving community, bring new perspectives and voices to the table, and are willing to work hard. Of course, we must address the immediate concerns of today, but we must not sacrifice our future by becoming comfortable with the status quo. It's time, again, to elect bold, new leaders to break the stagnation and take us forward.

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

Overland Park is a great place to live and raise a family. It receives awards and accolades. But we are at a crossroads and risk falling victim to the status quo. We cannot let up. We must elect leaders who will take us to the next level. We need new leaders who are comfortable being out there vocally advocating for our city. Leaders who will engage effectively with our residents, with business leaders and community advocates, and with other city, county, state, and federal leaders. As mayor, I will work collaboratively and effectively to lead us forward.

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

I respect our current mayor and his long service to our city. My service would differ in several ways, however, and one way would be reflective of today's landscape. Our residents expect and want a dynamic leader who is out in the community, engaging with people, and communicating often and effectively. As a mayor for tomorrow, I will not be cloistered in the backroom. You will see me in the community, you will hear about our successes, and I will be transparent about our failures. It's all a part of transparency and accountability, which we all deserve and demand.

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**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?**

The city needs to do a better job in being responsive to the needs of the community. The handling of the officer-involved shooting of John Albers is a prime example. The slow trickle of information over three and a half years was unacceptable. We need leadership that is more transparent. We need less defensiveness from and more accountability. My approach is one of full transparency and accountability. We should celebrate and share our successes, while acknowledging, rectifying, and learning from our mistakes.

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## **22. Why are you seeking this public office?**

I am seeking this office because I believe we need more rational and reasonable people in public office. I am committed to raising up new voices that reflect the make-up of our city and have a passion for service. I am firmly committed to the idea of giving back to the community and stepping up to serve in ways that I can be effective and impactful. I chose Overland Park as my home 22 years ago, and I want to be sure it is a place that my nine children will want to call home as they enter adulthood.

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## **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 have lived, worked, played, served, and worshipped in this community for over 22 years. As an attorney, I bring a legal background and critical-analysis skills that will benefit the council. As a mediator, I've been trained to find common ground and reach collaborative solutions. As a commissioner with BVRC and a leader in non-profits, I have the fiscal-responsibility experience for taxpayer or donor funds. And as a father to nine with extensive community leadership experience who is committed to doing what is right, I am uniquely situated to take us into the future using both heart and head.

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