

Overland Park Mayor 2021

Response ID:4 Data

1. Candidate Information

1. Candidate Name

Curt Skoog

2. Address

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City/State/Zip : Overland Park, KS

3. Phone Number

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4. Email Address

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5. Campaign Website

curtskoog.com

2. Candidate Background

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

I am the Kansas City Branch Manager for IBTS. We provide services to over 35 small and medium sized cities across the Kansas City Region.

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

- * Overland Park Ward 2 Council Member – 4 terms
- * Overland Park Council President – 2 Times
- * Overland Park Community Development Committee - Chair
- * Overland Park Public Safety Committee – Chair
- * Overland Park Solid Waste Taskforce – Chair
- * Mid-America Regional Council – Chair
- * Mid-America Regional Council – Creating Sustainable Places – Co-Chair
- * Metropolitan Culture District (Bi-State Commission) – Chair
- * Shawnee Mission School District – Elected Advisory Board Member
- * Leadership Kansas – Leadership Program
- * Greater KC Chamber – Centurions Leadership Program
- * Leawood United Methodist Church - Multiple leadership roles.

3. Issues and Policy

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

As a proven, responsible leader that has consistently delivered for Overland Park, my priorities as Mayor are:

1. Supporting Strong, Safe Neighborhoods
- * Implementing Mental Health Taskforce recommendations
 - * Implementing Infrastructure Advisory Board recommendations including Chip Seal

* Reinvesting in neighborhood parks to enhance gathering places.

2. Growing Jobs

* Smart Economic Development

* Creating Gathering Places to attract talented workers to Overland Park (including our children)

3. Nurturing our Excellent Schools

* Smart development creates much needed revenue for all four school districts.

* Expanding partnerships with pre-k through post-secondary education maintain a strong education to workforce pipeline.

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

In my 16 years on the council, I have been focused on assuring that Overland Park increases its level of service to residents and operates efficiently.

Overland Park is rated by third parties:

* Best Place to Raise a Family in America

* #4 Best Place to Live in America

* #8 Best Place to Start a Career

In addition, Overland Park has the lowest city property tax rate in the State of Kansas. A \$300,000 single family house pays approximately \$475 per year in property tax to the city. Which is less than half of tax rate in Leawood.

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)

Public safety is a high priority for me as well as the residents of Overland Park. I support the change in mill levy for the police department to add 11 positions within the new Behavioral Health Unit and for additional firefighters to staff the new fire station.

The behavioral health unit was a recommendation of the Overland Park Mental Health Task Force that spent over a year studying the mental health needs of the Overland Park community. These specially trained officers and mental health professionals will assist those most in need in our community.

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

As a City Council member, we spend all year discussing and proposing items to be included in the upcoming budget. The City Manager's recommended 2022 budget reflects that prioritization. I support the 2022 Budget.

In future budgets I will continue to advocate for including more projects that invest in our infrastructure. From parks to residential streets. These investments benefit neighborhoods and attract new jobs to our community.

High on next years list is money for residential street. The Infrastructure Advisory Board will provide recommendations on improvements that will include options to chip seal and climate change effects.

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)

As Mayor I will lead the city in playing a major role in growing jobs and investments. My track record clearly demonstrates my support for growing local businesses and recruiting new companies to Overland Park.

Attracting high paying jobs is a very competitive activity. With office vacancy rates of 15% there is limited existing space to recruit new employers. Working with building owners to construct office space is critical to our success. The new office buildings must be dynamic places. For example, the Edison Building in downtown Overland Park is adjacent to restaurants and open spaces.

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 Mayor, neighborhoods will continue to be my primary focus. Overland Park's history clearly shows that neighborhoods benefit from quality development. Investment in or near neighborhoods typically creates interest by homeowners to invest in their homes. Quality development adds to the availability of convenient and walkable restaurants, stores, jobs and gathering places.

With new leadership, it is time for our city to revisit its comprehensive plan. I will lead the community through a public discussion to create a consensus on future development. My proven experience will assure that Overland Park will come together and Keep Overland Park Moving Forward.

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)

The key challenge for the next mayor will be leading the city through major staff changes. Quality city leadership has been the hallmark of our stability as a community. This enables our city to be rated as one of the best place to live work and play in America. A stable and successful transition will require the direction of a proven leader. I will need no training to be Mayor. On day one I will be leading this critical transition.

Other challenges include housing, development and infrastructure maintenance. All these topics will be included in next year's comprehensive plan update.

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 support the current city manager form of government. Overland Park's successful track record of employing quality professional city managers is unchallenged.

What is the scientific evidence?

Residents enjoy a high quality of life, the lowest city property tax in Kansas, a AAA bond rating, stable city staff and an extremely high level of satisfaction.

A strong mayor form of government will introduce politics into every city decision. Do we want to be Chicago or Detroit?

I don't think so. I like no drama Overland Park.

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)

For nearly two decades, Overland Park residents have stated that maintenance of city streets is a highest priority. Due to this, the city budgets approximately \$15 million per year on street maintenance. The successful results are clear to anyone driving through our city.

In an effort to review and improve current processes, I was proud to lead the council in creating the Infrastructure Advisory Board. This group of professionals and residents will review how streets are built and maintaining. Chip seal is included. I look forward to their report on recommended changes and options for addressing any increase in cost.

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

For the last few years, I have been focused on identifying the barriers to building attainable housing in Overland Park. The largest barrier is land cost. As a successful and popular place to live, land is in demand. The next barrier is city development standards. The recently completed Small Scale Development study suggested changes. As Mayor I am committed to updating standards that enable more attainable housing to be constructed. This includes innovative neighborhood designs like "Cottage Courts" that create front yards in a shared green space and reduces the amount of paved ground.

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)

As Mayor, I will lead the first public process driven comprehensive plan update in Overland Park history. The plan is used to guide city council and city staff actions moving forward. The public process will utilize work groups focused on specific topics including housing, development, infrastructure and making Overland Park an even more welcoming community. Much like Vision Metcalf, there will be thousands of people participating in developing a community consensus, built on past success, for the future of Overland Park.

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

Overland Park is continually rated as one of the best places in the country to live, work and play. Residents constantly rate Overland Park high in satisfaction surveys. As I knock on doors, I hear that satisfaction. So YES we are headed in the right direction.

But there is hard work to be done. Past success does not guarantee future results.

The following areas will be my focus as Mayor:

1. Updating Comprehensive Plan
2. Supporting Public Safety
3. Maintaining Strong Neighborhoods
4. Partnering with Public Schools

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

I am proud to be endorsed by Carl Gerlach and Ed Eilert and will build on their successes as Mayors. My leadership style will involve more of a public presence. As I have in my role as a city council member and Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) Chairman, I will strongly advocate for policies that will Keep Overland Park Moving Forward.

Overland Park now has a population of over 190,000 and its Mayor needs to be a strong voice for its residents and the Kansas City Region.

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?

My track record on the council for the past 16 years highlights the priority I place on responsiveness to my constituents. It is important to listen to those who contact you, review surveys and results from public process when making decision.

If you just listen to the loudest voice, you are not receiving the insight needed to make the best decisions for the entire community.

I am grateful for resident's reaching out with concerns. I have spent many hours in backyards, living rooms and community gathering places. From flooding to barking dogs I have worked with residents to find resolutions.

22. Why are you seeking this public office?

Overland Park needs a proven and responsible leader to be its next Mayor. I did not make this choice lightly or as a stepping stone to higher office. For decades I have had a passion for community service. From an elected role with the Shawnee Mission School District to being Chairman of the Kansas City Region's Bi-State commission, I have worked with others to make our community better.

Being Mayor of Overland Park is not a job for beginners. Building relationships and finding consensus on tough questions is hard work. Unlike the private sector you cannot dictate a solution.

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?

On August 3rd voters will set a new course for Overland Park. I am the only candidate that is a proven, responsible leader. My 16-year city council track record of implementing improvements through building consensus in the community and among the city council is unmatched. For these reasons, the past two Mayors of Overland Park, Carl Gerlach and Ed Eilert have endorsed my campaign for Mayor.

Throwing rocks from the sidelines is not leadership. I have proven that I put my head down and find solutions to tough problems. That is why I ask for your vote on August 3rd.