

# Overland Park City Council 2021

Response ID:21 Data

## 1. Candidate Information

### 1. Candidate Name

Ryan Spencer

### 2. Address

Street Address/Apt/Suite : 6819 West 80th St

City/State/Zip : Overland Park

### 3. Phone Number

4807731202

### 4. Email Address

ryanspencerforop@gmail.com

### 5. Campaign Website

www.ryanspencerforop.com

## 2. Candidate Background

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

Payroll Specialist for the past 5 years, A/P, A/R, and tax issues.

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

N/A

## 3. Issues and Policy

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

Balancing our long term budget so we don't have to keep taking from the strategic reserves every year, curtailing the unnecessary usage of TIF/CID, and ending off-camera task forces to decide directional courses for the city forcing all council decisions and discussion to be public.

### 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 we get a good value for the cost of living in OP. Residents are continuously rated as happy to live here. I think it could be a lot better though, I think our residents deserve roads that they can be proud of and a police force that is adequately funded and sized for the community we have. I think our parks and rec return is good and other than the debacle that was Santa Fe commons renovation, I don't have issues with those services at all.

### 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 support the recommendations if that's what the OP police force front line officers have said they need to help do their job. I

would only support a mill levy increase for the recommendations if we've already exhausted every other channel for re-prioritizing budgetary items and can't find any other way to pay for it with our existing budget.

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

At this point in the process, it's a little late for major changes. I'd like to see if all 10 CIT officers are truly recommended and necessary. As well as the addition of 52 FTE's. Payroll can and does quickly become your largest expense and just keeping up with similar cities doesn't necessarily mean our city has to.

**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 should be a primary player in bringing economic development to the area. But that should not be at the expense of pulling budgeted money from other services due to tax incentives. Multiple studies from KU and Washington STL show that these incentives do nothing to grow tax bases or job markets compared to similar situations without government intervention. It makes no sense for OP to simultaneously be the largest city in the county that is in every top 10 list but also need to hand out money to convince developers to build here.

**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)**

Redevelopment in the north is crucial to the lasting balance of the city. Forgetting it and focusing on southern sprawl will create nothing but more resentment from ward 1 and 2 residents. We have more than enough empty office and retail space that needs to be redeveloped to bring businesses to older areas of the city without needing to encourage new construction and further sprawl.

**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)**

I think the biggest issues going forward will be to address the cities dependency on tax incentives, the decline in brick and mortar and it's affect on the tax base, and what I've seen and heard as a decline in responsiveness and transparency regarding council decisions. Addressing them, I would push for limiting tax incentives for TRULY blighted areas, re-evaluating our mill rates and the outflow per department in the budget, and voting 100% of the time with the majority views of my ward.

**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)**

The current manager-council form of government is perfect for us and has been shown throughout history to be the most efficient model in a democratic state.

**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)**

The \$20 million figure is actually just the initial cost to update the curb/crosswalk interfaces since they have not all been kept up to code/ADA compliant. With this being an upfront cost to solve a major complaint of residents, we can fund it with a short small sales tax increase or use the infrastructure funding we're supposedly getting this year. Resurfacing similar to what Leawood uses would only be an additional \$3 million per year (if we wouldn't already qualify for a lower bulk rate based on our usage) which could easily be found in a \$300 million budget.

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

I think stopping the tax abatements and rezoning for "luxury" apartments is the number one thing we can do, these complexes do nothing but encourage more overpriced apartments, artificially raise surrounding property values, and price out long existing OP residents. If we are providing any sort of incentives, it should be to developers to build at or below market apartment complexes and be encouraging more single-family home development.

**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)**

I think we need to start re-filling the strategic reserve, having the projected numbers be nothing but losses concerns me. We also need to be re-evaluating our revenue stream to assume losses in brick and mortar sales tax.

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

Overall, I think so. Residents are happy living here and we have a lot of amenities and existing structure in place to allow a lot of different futures of the city to happen depending on where we want to go forward. The issues and proposals for change that I'm hearing from people and that they want to see from their city council are small but important changes that impact their daily lives and the way they interact and hear/are responded to from their 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?**

Overall, no I don't. And that's the consensus I hear from people too. The changes made in meetings with open forum and public discussion are great (if not basic requirements of a functioning democracy), but if you're not actually voting on what you're hearing over that open mic, it might as well not exist. You're never going to make 100% of the people happy 100% of the time, but a lot of the time, they're not even trying. My approach is simple: every issue and vote from me is a direct reflection of what the ward is telling me.

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

I want to end wasteful spending in the council, balance and set forward a responsible budget. I want to preserve what makes OP, and especially my ward, historically significant and the reason people choose it over the southern wards; while also thoughtfully moving the city forward based on what our residents are telling us they want.

**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 100% here to listen, serve, and vote based on what Ward 1 is telling me that want to see and do. I'm not here to push a personal agenda, I'm here to restore a truly representative city government that is based on the will of the people. I don't want to do anything else politically, I'm not using this as a stepping stone in government, I'm a husband and dad who wants to help his community and help his residents have their voice heard.