



2023

BOARD OF ALDERMEN

VOTER GUIDE

WARD 12

MARCH 7TH, APRIL 4TH ELECTION DAY



Important Dates



Register to vote by 02/08



Request a mail in absentee ballot by 2/22



Vote absentee in person by 03/06



March 7th, April 4th ELECTION DAY

Role of the BOA

The Board of Aldermen is the legislative body of the City of St. Louis and creates, passes, and amends local laws, as well as approves the City's budget every year. There are now fourteen aldermen, after ward reduction, one from each ward in the City and a Board of Aldermen President.

**All candidates running for the Board of Alderman were sent these questions.
Answers are copied verbatim without any editing.**



WARD 12

Adopted on 12/27/2021

City of St. Louis - Planning & Urban Design Agency

Legend

- WARD 12 2021
- WARDS 2011
- NEIGHBORHOODS
- BLOCKS
- PARCELS
- BUILDING
- PARKS

PLANNING
Growth Vision

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

2021

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Voting Locations

Polls open from 6am-7pm

YOU CAN VOTE AT ANY LOCATION.

Buder Library

4401 Hampton Ave

Central Library

1303 Olive St

Friendly Temple Missionary Church

5544 Dr. MLK Dr

Hamilton Elementary School

5819 West Minster Pl

Missouri School For The Blind

3867 Magnolia Ave

Nance Elementary School

8959 Riverview Blvd

Newstead M. B. Church

725 Bellerive Blvd

Our Lady of Sorrows Church

5020 Rhodes Ave

Salvation Army Temple Corps

2740 Arsenal St

Schlafly Library

225 N. Euclid Ave

Woodward Elementary School

725 Bellerive Blvd

Voter ID Requirements

Show one of the forms of acceptable identification and sign the poll book to obtain your ballot:

- A nonexpired Missouri driver or non-driver license;
- A nonexpired military ID, including a veteran's ID card;
- A nonexpired United States passport; or
- Another photo ID issued by the United States or the state of Missouri which is either not expired or expired after the date of the most recent general election.

Ward 12 Candidates



Darron Collins-Bey



Tashara Earl



Yolanda Brown



Sharon Tyus



Walter Rush

Question 1

Please provide a 250-word introduction explaining why you feel that voters in your ward should elect you as their representation to the Board of Aldermen.

Tashara Earl

I am Tashara T. Earl, a 34-year-old St. Louis native and lifelong resident of the Baden neighborhood in North St. Louis where I currently serve as President of the Revitalization of Baden Association (ROBA). I am actively involved with St. Louis Vacancy Collaborative, Gateway of Neighborhood Fund, SLACO, and Delmar Main Street. Serving in these leadership positions has been a heartfelt mission to uplift the community that helped to shape my ambition and elevated my action for change. I am running to be Alderwoman for the new 12th ward because I believe revitalization is public safety. St. Louisans deserved great leaders who put people first before ego to build stronger, safer and vibrant communities across the city filled with new and greater opportunities. Now is the time to elect new and qualified leaders who will work together for the betterment of society. We are on the rise to thrive by revitalizing our neighborhoods to make them safe and vibrant to live, work, and play. I am committed to bringing positive change to our community.

Darron Collins-Bey, Yolanda Brown, Walter Rush and Sharon Tyus

Did not respond.

Question 2

What do you believe to be the most important role(s) of an Alderperson?

Tashara Earl

I believe the important role of an alderperson is to be the voice for the people by advocating and representing the interests of our ward residents. I believe the alderperson best serves our stakeholders through collective work, push partnership, appropriation and legislation. It's important for the alderperson to educate, engage and empower their residents to be a part of the decision making process for participatory budgeting, conditional use hearings, vision for the community and much more. Meeting the needs of the community through policy programming to create sustainable vibrant neighborhoods is also crucial.

Darron Collins-Bey, Yolanda Brown, Walter Rush and Sharon Tyus

Did not respond.

Question 3

What is your plan for maximizing community participation around legislative processes in order to make things more accessible and transparent in St. Louis?

Tashara Earl

Ways in which we currently govern don't always work for most people. Supporting, expanding, funding citizen-center institutions like citizen oversight boards, Cure Violence and participatory budgeting will increase accessibility and transparency of these institutions. We have to change the way we do business as usual. Expanding the community development review boards across the city to pull more citizens in the process will increase public education around the process and empower them to be more involved with more wisdom. It's important to build equitable engagement to enhance the trust in our community by meeting residents where they are. This is a combination of showing up to community events to build relationships with the residents to then work towards disseminating information via newsletters, mailers, notice updates, flyers to make sure they are informed on the legislative process and how to get involved.

Darron Collins-Bey, Yolanda Brown, Walter Rush and Sharon Tyus

Did not respond.

Question 4

TIF: Although TIFs and other sorts of tax incentives and credits are intended to be used to spur development in blighted areas, in St. Louis they are overwhelmingly used in wealthier areas. What should be done differently (please be specific)?

Tashara Earl

In my work with organizations like St. Louis Vacancy Collaborative, Revitalization of Baden Association, Community Builders Network and other community development organizations, I help to explore new ways in which tax incentives can be used in meaningful ways to spur development in areas of our city that have had decades of disinvestment. Having a comprehensive plan for how we use tax incentives ensures that they are used as intended, and not just to support the wealthiest communities. It's crucial for all involved stakeholders to come together to create the comprehensive plan and to create a robust tax incentive process that works for the city.

Darron Collins-Bey, Yolanda Brown, Walter Rush and Sharon Tyus

Did not respond.

Question 5

What role do you believe that Alderpersons should play in education in the City of St. Louis?

Tashara Earl

Advocate allocating funds for improvements to security measures, technology, school infrastructure, school buses, after-school programs, extracurricular activities, and other projects. I will advocate raising salaries for our teachers and staff. Funding allocations for behavioral health resources to support students, families, and schools to cope, recover and heal from a traumatic event. We have a high number of children with housing instability. I will work with human and children services and community organizations to gain resources for housing stability for our students. In addition, I think the Alderperson should work with SLPS for the Building Revitalization process to reinvest and reuse these vacant school building for community use and affordable housing to help the unhoused.

Darron Collins-Bey, Yolanda Brown, Walter Rush and Sharon Tyus

Did not respond.

Question 6

How would you more effectively address intra community violence and harm in the city of St. Louis, and more specifically in your ward?

Tashara Earl

Study after study has shown that providing opportunities and resources has the greatest impact on reducing crime and violence. We must address these issues with meaningful input from those most affected. We also must properly fund and expand agencies like Cure Violence, COB and St. Louis Violence Prevention Commission.

Darron Collins-Bey, Yolanda Brown, Walter Rush and Sharon Tyus

Did not respond.

Question 7

One of the first bills proposed in this upcoming State legislative session included returning local control of the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department back to the state of Missouri. What is your stance on local control and pre-emptive attacks on local policy?

Tashara Earl

St. Louis city worked for many years to get local control of our police department. One of the reasons the city wanted control was so that we could provide greater oversight of police. I think that we need to maintain local control and oppose acts from the state legislature to take away the autonomy of St. Louis. Although any policy may possess its imperfections, I believe a comprehensive, independent review may help identify issues to cure those defunct areas within the policy. Further, objective third party facilitators may assist with information exchange forums to aid local government and police personnel in embracing an equitable local control governance policy for the police department. This will ultimately prove to garner more support for both (local) community stakeholders and police personnel to embrace the ideals of maintaining an autonomous operation of city departments, particularly the police department.

Darron Collins-Bey, Yolanda Brown, Walter Rush and Sharon Tyus

Did not respond.

Question 8

In what ways should the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department be more accountable to the residents of this city? How would you ensure that SLMPD achieves those standards of accountability?

Tashara Earl

The police department should work fervently to strengthen its engagement with the community as problem solving partners versus overarching enforcers. The chief of police along with the city's department of public safety should ensure officers are involved with all community affairs, to include events and meetings. I believe a 360 degree education initiative will benefit both the community and police department in that a clear understanding in the respective perspectives and needs are communicated. Additionally, I believe the practice of assigning more officers to foot patrols and neighborhood reporting (i.e. field roll calls, and duty reporting substations), as practiced in other cities, will increase awareness and accountability for the community and police department, respectively.

Darron Collins-Bey, Yolanda Brown, Walter Rush and Sharon Tyus

Did not respond.

Question 9

With the passage of BB 116, we will see the beginnings of a Universal Basic Income program for residents of the city. The current program outlines that you have to be a city resident, have a child(ren) under the age of 18 enrolled in the public school district, and not exceed 170% of the Federal Poverty Level. How do you feel about this Universal Basic Income? If you support UBI, how would you seek to expand this program to include those that don't fall under these current requirements? (I.E. Homeless, those city residents who chose to enroll students into city charter schools, etc.)

Tashara Earl

UBI is essential in rectifying the pervasive economic inequity in our city. Successful models exist globally that may inform how St. Louis can position itself as a national leader in UBI. I support the pilot program, and encourage using the data we get to refine and expand the program. This program can be a tool for helping families make ends meet and to provide a stepping stone for financial stability. If St. Louis becomes a leader of this, we can be a force to push this to be a national program to impact more families.

Darron Collins-Bey, Yolanda Brown, Walter Rush and Sharon Tyus

Did not respond.

Question 10

What concrete steps will you take to alleviate homelessness in the City of St. Louis?

Tashara Earl

I believe we must start addressing homelessness by first looking at all the ways we currently exacerbate the problem. The de facto criminalization of the unhoused must cease. We must eliminate practices such as: threatening, ticketing, and even arresting people for living in public spaces, even when they have no other alternatives; making it illegal for people to sit, sleep, or even eat in public places, despite the absence of adequate alternatives; and giving outsized influence to business interest on policies and practices around homelessness. These policies and practices often violate constitutional, civil, and human rights, traumatize unhoused individuals by negatively impacting their physical and mental health, and create arrest records, fines, and fees that stand in the way of them securing jobs or housing.

We must also be proactive and forward thinking in preventing homelessness by strengthening housing protections and eliminating unjust evictions; by increasing access to and availability of affordable housing; and by reducing our reliance on law enforcement to address homelessness. Also, squarely addressing the intersection of racism and homelessness is essential, given that Black, Indigenous and other people of color are more likely to experience homelessness and more likely to be targeted by police for enforcement. Today, I am working with State Representative Kimberly-Ann Collins on legislation aimed at establishing policies for the unhoused by passing a homeless bill of rights. Our unhoused residents should not be discriminated against by any employer because of the lack of an address and housing instability.

Darron Collins-Bey, Yolanda Brown, Walter Rush and Sharon Tyus

Did not respond.

Question 11

How do you plan to fund needed infrastructure improvements in the city, particularly in areas impacted by flooding?

Tashara Earl

It is essential to look at ways in which our current revenue streams are regressive in that those who are able to pay more, are allowed to and often incentivized to pay significantly less than their share, (i.e., major corporations and developers.) We need to look closely at tax giveaways, and restructure policies to recapture significant lost revenue. Income, sales and property taxes must reflect a commitment to fairness and equity.

Darron Collins-Bey, Yolanda Brown, Walter Rush and Sharon Tyus

Did not respond.

Question 12

What are some of your biggest priorities for ARPA spending?

Tashara Earl

Ensuring the success of programs such as UBI, addressing homelessness and prioritizing infrastructure development should take precedence in allocating ARPA spending. We must balance providing resources for the most marginalized, with

Darron Collins-Bey, Yolanda Brown, Walter Rush and Sharon Tyus

Did not respond.

Question 13

One of the greatest factors around increasing economic mobility in the region is through increasing public transit access. How do you plan to make public transit more accessible across the city?

Tashara Earl

Expansion of the light rail system to include a robust north/south line, as well as revisiting light rail expansion to the St. Charles/St. Peters can significantly enhance the ease and mobility of lower income citizens to access public transit for personal use and employment opportunities.

Darron Collins-Bey, Yolanda Brown, Walter Rush and Sharon Tyus

Did not respond.

Question 14

Issues of environmental racism affect many families in St Louis. How do you plan to address issues such as lead poisoning, food apartheid, illegal dumping, and air quality that leads to higher rates of asthma?

Tashara Earl

I support following the recommendations of the environmental racism report to address environmental racism in our community. This means dedicated resources to addressing lead poisoning, food, deserts, illegal dumping, and mechanisms to improve air quality in the city. We must also pursue green infrastructure funding, planting of trees, working with EPA and using LSEM to hold private land owners accountable.

Darron Collins-Bey, Yolanda Brown, Walter Rush and Sharon Tyus

Did not respond.

Question 15

How will you use your position on the Board of Alderman to increase access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care including but not limited to abortion care, pregnancy, and postpartum support?

Tashara Earl

I will advocate for reproductive health, justice and rights by working with pro-choice, elected officials on the local/state level and other prominent organizations who are working on key legislative priorities. I will work towards policy changes to support family paid leave for all St. Louisians/Missourians no matter their income level. I will work with organizations to bring more awareness around reproductive health disparities so we can have conversations on how to change these unjust policies and work towards implementing the change in our community. I plan to work towards policies on the local and state level to provide paid family leave no matter your income/gender. I will listen to my constituents to learn of other issues that have been unheard, muffled or dimmed to bring it back to the forefront so more people can get involved to push for change in government.

Darron Collins-Bey, Yolanda Brown, Walter Rush and Sharon Tyus

Did not respond.

Question 16

With more than 25% of renters in the city of St. Louis being rent-burdened, what is your plan to expand access to affordable housing and advocate for renter protections throughout the city?

Tashara Earl

I will work with organizations like Affordable Housing Trust Fund, Legal Services of Eastern Missouri, Tenant Rights organizations to advocate, support and effectively create policies that strengthen housing protections. I support the Tenet bill of rights and making sure all renters are protection.

Darron Collins-Bey, Yolanda Brown, Walter Rush and Sharon Tyus

Did not respond.

Question 17

Do you support the demand for a citywide reparations process? Please explain your position.

Tashara Earl

Racial inequity and the consequences of Jim Crow policies are pernicious and enduring ills that can and should be addressed by comprehensive reparations. I support the Mayor's City of St. Louis Reparations Commission. We must be courageous and committed in developing methods and potential funding resources for directly repairing the harms that have been inflicted.

Darron Collins-Bey, Yolanda Brown, Walter Rush and Sharon Tyus

Did not respond.

Question 18

What is your position on privatization as it relates to city assets? Please explain your position.

Tashara Earl

I do not support the privatization of city assets. When public assets are privatized, it tends to only benefit, wealthy, investors, and not communities, especially low income, communities of color..

Darron Collins-Bey, Yolanda Brown, Walter Rush and Sharon Tyus

Did not respond.

Question 19

What is your position on city/county reunification? Please explain your position.

Tashara Earl

I think that the city and county should be striving to streamline their policies and services and work more collaboratively across city borders. Any efforts to merge the city and county need to be led by residence of the city and county, and have ample public engagement.

Darron Collins-Bey, Yolanda Brown, Walter Rush and Sharon Tyus

Did not respond.