



2023

BOARD OF ALDERMEN

VOTER GUIDE

WARD 6

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.**



Legend

- WARD 6 2021
- WARDS 2011
- NEIGHBORHOODS
- BLOCKS
- PARCELS
- BUILDING
- PARKS

WARD 6

Adopted on 12/27/2021

City of St. Louis - Planning & Urban Design Agency

CITY OF ST. LOUIS
PLANNING & URBAN DESIGN

THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND URBAN DESIGN IS A DIVISION OF THE CITY OF ST. LOUIS. THE DEPARTMENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CITY'S PLANNING AND URBAN DESIGN. THE DEPARTMENT IS COMMITTED TO THE CITY'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TO THE WELL-BEING OF ALL CITY RESIDENTS.

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 6 Candidates



Daniela Velazquez



Jennifer Florida

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.

Daniela Velazquez

We are undergoing the biggest change in the City of St. Louis' government in more than 100 years and we have the opportunity of a generation to make the city work for everyone. We must radically reform how our government works – taking a citywide, holistic approach to many issues in order to create equity and collaboration within the city and region that residents are longing for.

I am committed to working with my fellow alderpersons to both serve the ward's needs and develop a government that is efficient, transparent and accountable to our residents. That includes our economic development projects, our policing efforts, our general city services – and our city's budgets.

Voters should elect me because I have committed my life to creating a more inclusive world. I am uniquely qualified to represent the people of the new 6th Ward because I am a part of many communities. I'm an advocate, an activist, a coalition builder and a conduit for change. I'm committed to working with people from different backgrounds and perspectives to find solutions and create change for the greater good.

My personal beliefs have guided my professional choices, and I have worked to make Missouri a more just and equitable place through my involvement in the Ferguson Commission, as director of communications at the ACLU of Missouri, and as a board member of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan St. Louis and as a former board member of Pro Choice Missouri.

I also hope my run for office inspires others to engage in democracy and their community by becoming the first Latina and first person of Puerto Rican descent to serve on the Board of Aldermen.

Jennifer Florida

I served as 15th Ward Alderwoman 2001-2014. Appointed Recorder of Deeds to Defend Marriage Equality, overturning the MO State Ban on Same Sex Marriage. I am passionate about public service, progressive. Early on, I completed advanced community organizing training through the Gamaliel Institute and then an internship with what is now MCU for St. Louis.

The experience inspired connection to community, our fight for justice, freedom, equity. This work builds the fabric of our neighborhoods. My experience, knowledge and ability to work with others will help advance our Ward and City. I work with the people I serve. I listened, built coalitions at the Board of Aldermen and it resulted in legislation that moved us forward: Single Stream Recycling, 100+ units of Affordable Housing, Vacant Building Initiative, South Grand Great StreetScape Improving Pedestrian Safety and Green infrastructure, Bike St. Louis-expanding Safe Cycling, Housing 1st Initiative. When we work together solutions come.

Question 2

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

Daniela Velazquez

As local legislators, alderpersons are responsible for, and responsive to, the residents in their ward. They are the voice of their constituency at City Hall. They help their communities resolve all issues — big, small and everything in between. On a macro-level, they work with other alderpersons to help drive St. Louis in a positive direction, working to help the city grow and prosper, ensuring all residents (especially the ones in their ward) benefit from the city's positive direction.

Jennifer Florida

I believe an Alderperson's primary role is to represent and be responsive and accountable to the people that you serve. Advocate and allocate services that the government has a responsibility to provide. We have a responsibility to strive for the health and welfare, safety of all; provide access to employment, safe housing, clean air, accessible food and initiatives that are sustainable, neighborhood/ community based, a goal for all to thrive.

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?

Daniela Velazquez

First, I would support the creation of a participatory budgeting process, which will allow communities to directly decide how to spend all or parts of the local budget.

Next, I would take a four step approach to revise our policy development processes:

- Revise public participation laws to authorize and support more meaningful civic forms of engagement;
- Use public deliberation (a form of public discussion that seeks collective solutions to challenging social problems) to shape policy decisions;
- Advance human-centered design principles, and;
- Engage in participatory action approaches, like Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR).

Next, I would expand on our public hearings process to be much more inclusive, so that all in our community can participate in the planning processes that will help shape the future of our communities, and our city.

Finally, I would like to adopt pro-voter policies, like automatic voter registration when you apply for a driver's license (and other forward-thinking policies) to increase voter participation. We should always be looking for opportunities to make it easier for people to participate in democracy, not harder.

Jennifer Florida

We could take committee hearings to the community and provide Zoom access.

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)?

Daniela Velazquez

We must establish city-wide best practices for the planning and use of TIFs. That includes creating more transparency when awarding TIFs, creating a scorecard for equitable development and vetting developers before contracts are signed.

Access to TIFs within the underserved areas of St. Louis should also be easier, especially for residents and business owners who could make better use of this tool as a resource for redevelopment in disinvested areas in the city. According to the City of St. Louis website, the city's major TIF districts are located in Midtown and Downtown. Those TIFs would be better served by allocating some to the North Side, where the only TIF development in that area is just above O'Fallon Park.

I also support St. Louis Development Corporation's economic justice plan to invest in an ecosystem where people and businesses can grow and thrive. I will continue to support these efforts at the BOA.

Jennifer Florida

Developments that request subsidies or incentives are analyzed by St. Louis Development Co. They utilize Market Value Analysis and SLDC criteria for more equitable development. LCRA and the TIF Commission make recommendations.

Question 5

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

Daniela Velazquez

The Board of Aldermen is responsible for providing city services that impact the lives of children who need additional resources. If children's needs are met, they are much more likely to be successful in their education.

First, we should work to establish links/connections between the Board of Education of the City of St. Louis and the Board of Aldermen. While the school board and the BOA remain separate entities, there's no reason members of both can't work together on ad hoc committees or special projects.

Next, we need to actively form coalitions. On many issues, the SLPS board and the BOA share interests. Both want more municipal funding from the state, both want more services for children and both want enthusiastic community participation.

We must ensure that we respect boundaries. Nothing is gained by people fighting for turf in each other's domain. There's plenty of room for us all to work to improve the lives of children and families in our city.

And finally, we need to partner with local organizations, businesses, and city departments to remove barriers to education for students, teachers and families.

Jennifer Florida

As Alderwoman, I would promote St. Louis Public Schools, improve connection to community and the center of resources for children and their families. St. Louis Public Schools offer quality education. They are accredited. They are key to the community. My children graduated from SLPS. My grandson attends Mann Elementary. We need to make sure the children have everything they need so that they may focus on school and their family members and thrive,

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?

Daniela Velazquez

Our city needs to take a holistic approach to crime. Crime is often the result of needs of the community that are not being met.

To address crime, we must look at the root causes of what keeps a community unsafe: poverty, loss of economic opportunity, lack of social support systems and basic services, and minimal access to mental health services. I support investing in community-based, trauma-informed violence prevention programs and other programs that provide access to stability in housing, healthcare and other services designed to help people thrive.

Specifically in the new 6th Ward, a large portion of the crimes are related to personal property, (e.g., vehicle theft and theft of property from a vehicle). It's important that we work with the community to provide educational resources and reminders to keep personal property protected by implementing practices such as a nighttime routine of making sure your vehicle is locked and keys are secured. As an alderperson, I will continue to work to connect my ward's neighborhood associations with each other – something I've already started doing during my campaign. Some of these neighborhoods have never worked together before. By doing so, they can both share information about public safety issues and respond as a community to needs across the ward.

Jennifer Florida

We address intra community violence and harm with expanded resources(Domestic Violence Intervention, Cure Violence, Crisis Team) educating and intervening thru the church, school,community organizations..

Question 7

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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?

Daniela Velazquez

I believe the people know what's best for their communities and that directly applies to local control of policing. In fact, the people themselves voted to take back control over SLMPD when they voted for it in 2013. The current proposals in the state legislature are not from our local representatives.

The City of St. Louis should retain control of its police department, in addition to other local issues such as a minimum wage and reproductive rights. Local control makes it easier for the city to serve the people, share data and improve relationships with the community.

State control over the police department is a relic from the Civil War, when the state of Missouri seized the SLMPD. In fact, Kansas City is one of few municipal police departments controlled by the state in the U.S. If it were a best practice, it would be happening everywhere. And it's not – because it's politically motivated and is rooted in racism. I will fight to retain local control and honor the will of the people.

Jennifer Florida

I support local control.

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?

Daniela Velazquez

When I worked at the ACLU of Missouri, one of our top priorities was transparency and accountability for police departments. I believe a transparent and open government – and that includes the police department – is at the foundation of building trust with the community, as well key to providing effective and efficient city services.

I support the Division of Civilian Oversight and a Civilian Oversight Board that works the way its creation was intended: to independently review the actions of the police department. As alderperson, I will support a transparent review of police and jail conduct.

Policing data should be publicly available. Police records are public records. It should be easy for anyone to make a request to see them. We also need increased transparency when it comes to officer discipline.

SLMPD employees should also be held accountable for discriminatory and hateful posts against communities on social media or in group messages.

More broadly, I will push for developing and supporting policing that is data-driven and community-focused. Transparency grows trust, and that's what we need.

Jennifer Florida

Accountability and communication improve by strengthening the relationship/ tether between residents and SLMPD. Police and Community work together with a common goal of service and safety. By Recruiting, Retaining, training, retooling we implement a 21st Century model of safety.

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.)

Daniela Velazquez

I enthusiastically support expanding Universal Basic Income and I would seek to grow the reach of BB 116 by including families of all the children in our city who would greatly benefit from this additional resource. No child should be purposefully excluded from this valuable resource. Additionally, I would also aim to include low-income families that still face financial hardships, though not necessarily due to the negative effects of COVID 19. COVID affected millions of people in a number of different ways and their inclusion in BB 116 could mean improved living conditions for thousands of families throughout the city of Saint Louis.

I would also like to see it expanded to include individuals who may not have a permanent address (i.e. the unhoused community) and an intentional effort made to set up multiple publically accessible locations where those individuals can walk in and apply for UBI. UBI could change lives, especially those of the unhoused population of our city.

Jennifer Florida

I love the idea of Universal Basic Income. I would love to explore the idea of UBC. How do we fund UBC, when our City employees are underpaid?

Question 10

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

Daniela Velazquez

To help the unhoused, we must start by working to prevent homelessness. To do this, I support a Tenants' Bill of Rights that includes eviction protection and right to counsel for housing-related matters. We must also work together as a community to create truly affordable housing in the City of St. Louis, where those who make minimum wage can still live with dignity and have an opportunity to thrive. I also support expanding Universal Basic Income (UBI) in the City so we can keep people in their homes before they become homeless.

We must invest in efforts to eliminate homelessness by better funding the continuum of care, a collaborative community effort to provide different services to stop homelessness.

For those who are homeless, we must work transparently and collaboratively to provide emergency services and shelter to those on the streets. No one should freeze to death in our city because a warm bed wasn't available. I believe we must provide a safety net ecosystem where the City works closely with organizations and unhoused advocates to keep people who may fall between the cracks of the system alive...and safe.

We must also recognize that the unhoused are human beings and deserving of dignity by adopting an Unhoused Bill of Rights.

Jennifer Florida

I support a Housing 1st Initiative. I support the federal grant allocation and Affordable Housing allocation for homelessness. I will work with not for profits to do intake and improve access to social services, transitional housing. I would also encourage a regional approach to working on the issue of the unhoused.

Question 11

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

Daniela Velazquez

Last April, the city passed Proposition 1, a bond issue that fills the gap to unlock matching ARPA funds. Those funds are specifically earmarked for infrastructure and would be put to good use to restore areas that were affected by flooding and make overall infrastructure improvements to our storm drain systems and roads that are needed to prevent a similar tragedy from happening in the future.

Jennifer Florida

I would fund infrastructure deferred maintenance by allocating Capital Funds to address the deferred maintenance of roads and infrastructure. I successfully leveraged Capital Funds to secure DNR watershed quality grants for grant funded green alleys. This stretches our money with a green

infrastructure solution. I would encourage the City to aggressively pursue grants to leverage our Capital as a matching fund and prioritize on a needs basis. Securing funding for flooded areas should be a priority.

Question 12

What are some of your biggest priorities for ARPA spending?

Daniela Velazquez

The biggest priorities for ARPA spending should be on those most impacted by COVID 19 and the recession that has followed. This includes small businesses, most impacted industries, and households forced into economic hardship. It is vitally important that these funds reach these people first.

We can also use our ARPA funds to be more proactive about climate change and environmental justice work by investing in both water and sewer infrastructure that will help prevent the impact of natural disasters like the flooding of this past summer.

Finally, we can use the funds to strengthen our broadband infrastructure, ensuring that all St. Louis residents can have fast, reliable, dependable access to high-quality internet to help bridge the digital divide that many of our communities currently face.

Jennifer Florida

One of our greatest assets is City Water. The plant is antiquated and the lead pipes are many. I would like to see ARPA invested to sustain our high water quality.+ I would like to invest ARPA in Home repair and insulation for low/ mod income and seniors.

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?

Daniela Velazquez

I support prioritizing projects that focus on developing regional transportation, such as a North-South MetroLink, establishing a Bus Rapid Transit option and creating residential development projects near public transit.

As a Board, we should pair our planning of public transit with investments in affordable housing, walkable neighborhoods, greenways and other holistic initiatives that promote community development.

Jennifer Florida

I support Rapid Bus Transit, Corporate sponsored assistance for transit and our Mayor's plan to expand transit.

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?

Daniela Velazquez

We should enforce increased fines and penalties for illegal dumping and increased penalties for corporations creating toxic emissions.

The city should also explore ways to work with community organizations to support and develop urban agriculture as well as support and bolster the efforts of the USDA agricultural pilot program to make sure it is successful and scalable across the city.

I would also explore creating tax credits for locally owned grocery stores that choose to open in a food desert and supporting efforts to create these credits on a statewide basis.

Jennifer Florida

We have and will continue to address lead poisoning through a lead grant to mitigate lead poisoning by remediating lead from homes. I support a comprehensive plan to eliminate food deserts. I support the Trash Task Force(Jag Grant) to deal with illegal dumping. We need to continue to evaluate our air quality and potential threats.

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?

Daniela Velazquez

As an alderperson, I will continue to find ways to support the efforts – and funding – of the Reproductive Equity Fund and legislation that promotes access to healthcare, sex education, contraception and prenatal care to reduce the rates of mortality for pregnant people. I will also fight for the full implementation and funding for this.

I will continue to support fully funding public health for our city – including the efforts of the City of St. Louis' Department of Health to address STIs and provide care for our residents. Access to healthcare, contraception and prenatal care all are key to preventing maternal mortality – an issue that affects us greatly in the city and the state and has a generational impact on families and children.

Jennifer Florida

I support connecting people with FQHC providers for comprehensive care; including transportation assistance.

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?

Daniela Velazquez

As I have talked to constituents of the new 6th ward, I have heard concerns about rampant rent increases and landlords who aren't properly maintaining their properties to a livable standard. As alderperson, I would advocate for a Tenant's Bill of Rights to protect renters and work with organizations to educate renters about their rights – so people don't have to move from their current homes.

To expand access to affordable housing, I would also explore ways to expand UBI for the rent-burdened. In the long term, we must re-evaluate and reform how we distribute TIFs and other incentives at the cost of those who need our help. Community Benefits Agreements are a key way to ensure big developments that receive public subsidies work in conjunction with the communities and be truly affordable developments.

I also support establishing citywide practices for the planning and use of TIFs and creating a scorecard for equitable development before contracts are signed and plans are built. We must make sure our investments create affordable housing in the city.

Finally, we should continue to fund the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and closely monitor our progress in St. Louis to assess how we're doing as a city to make sure we have affordable housing for those in need.

Jennifer Florida

I would advocate for the city to create and implement an affordable housing plan along transit corridors and educate renters on their rights.

Question 17

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

Daniela Velazquez

I enthusiastically support the demand for a citywide reparations process.

I believe the city is long overdue in making amends for its history of state-sanctioned discrimination against its Black residents. I am glad that a St. Louis City Reparations Commission was created because it will take an unflinching, intentional process to closely examine how racism has not only impacted St. Louis' Black community, but how institutionalized racism has negatively affected the city's overall growth and development. We will not be able to achieve racial equity without honestly reconciling the past.

As a country, as a state, as a city, we are at a crossroads of racial reckoning, so when thinking about a citywide reparations process, I think a question any reparations process should ask is this: How do we repair the harm – physical, psychological, economic – caused to Black lives by slavery, Jim Crow, redlining, police misconduct and other offshoots of systemic racism?

Reparations is not a new concept in this country. We've used reparations to redress the atrocities committed against six indigenous communities (the Ottawas of Michigan, the Chippewas of Wisconsin, the Seminoles of Florida, the Sioux of South Dakota, the Klamaths of Oregon, and the Alaska Natives), and as an apology for interning Japanese Americans during World War II. Yet the descendants of Africans enslaved on U.S. soil have been absent from the history of reparative action. The City of St. Louis has the opportunity (and the responsibility) to take the lead on correcting this wrong.

There are those who would argue laws (read: affirmative action) have done enough to help Black Americans get a leg up. But these laws will never fully close the gaps – especially the economic ones – that exist. There is nothing to hand down from generation to generation because of the devastation of disinvestment, discrimination and segregation.

So, not only do I support the demand for city-wide reparations, but I look forward to reviewing, and ultimately supporting, the recommendations that will come from the reparations committee, so we can finally tackle the last vestiges of this country's original sin and make our city whole.

Jennifer Florida

I am interested in hearing more about this process.

Question 18

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

Daniela Velazquez

It's possible for public-private partnership to work but we must always prioritize our city's greatest resource: our people.

We know that there have been serious issues of corruption and lack of transparency in previous attempts to privatize public assets. We can't allow these deals to happen behind closed doors with the people who would most financially benefit as the brokers.

Any major decisions to privatize city assets must happen with complete transparency, robust analysis and community engagement to determine whether privatization truly benefits the people.

Jennifer Florida

I do not support privatization of our city assets. Privatization could jeopardize the public's health and safety.

Question 19

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

Daniela Velazquez

I support reinstating the Board of Freeholders process in the City of St. Louis to explore what reunification could look like.

It is no secret that because of the fragmentation of the region, we end up competing with ourselves and lose economic opportunities to other cities in the U.S. I fully support the mayor's initiative to examine closely where we can align with St. Louis County to avoid duplication of services and save money in both the city and county. Finding ways to work together is a good start to fostering more unity across the region.

As an alderperson, I am committed to working with other members of the Board and elected officials across the region in building a stronger, more collaborative region that benefits us all.

Jennifer Florida

I support a robust public engagement process to begin a conversation around the City going back into the county. I see the value in our being a part of the greater region. We have 100 municipalities and a merger requires our understanding and valuing the many as a whole.