



2023

BOARD OF ALDERMEN

VOTER GUIDE

WARD 7

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 7 2021
- WARDS 2011
- NEIGHBORHOODS
- BLOCKS
- PARCELS
- BUILDING (under March 2022)
- PARKS

WARD 7

Adopted on 12/27/2021

City of St. Louis - Planning & Urban Design Agency

KING OF ST. LOUIS
PLANNING & URBAN DESIGN
 2 1 1 5 7

Held by the Planning and Urban Design Agency for the City of St. Louis. The agency and its staff are not responsible for the accuracy or reliability of the information contained herein.

The information on this map was derived from a public source and is provided as a reference only. It is not intended to be used for any purpose other than the general information provided. The City of St. Louis does not warrant the accuracy or reliability of the information contained herein.

Map Printed 2/11/2022 by: 30
 WUP P&UD: 2021/02/11/2022

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 7 Candidates



Alisha Sonnier



J. P. Mitchom



Cedric Redmon

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.

Alisha Sonnier

Experiencing rebirth as an organizer through the Ferguson Uprising and serving as a member of the Board of Education for the city of Saint Louis have both been life changing and transformative for me. These service-focused leadership roles have allowed me to see our city as I never did before. I want to serve as the Seventh Ward Alderwoman because I understand what it's like to navigate this city with every barrier stacked against you. I have a decade of leadership experience and fierce advocacy as an organizer and as an elected official. While on the SLPS Board of Education, I have served on the TIF Commission, helped raise the District's minimum wage to \$15, and helped St. Louis to become second in the state in teacher pay. I also helped to organize a citywide campaign, Prop S, to allocate \$160 million dollars to upgrade our school buildings. Outside of the BOE, I've served as the Political Director for President Megan Green's most recent campaign.

I understand what a serious role this is and am the best prepared and qualified for it. When I speak of my visions and values, I have a history as an organizer and elected official of showing that I am who I say I am, and I do what I say I will do. I understand the responsibility of leadership, and I am ready to rise to the occasion and give to our community exactly what we deserve.

J. P. Mitchom and Cedric Redmon

Did not respond.

Question 2

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

Alisha Sonnier

The most important role of an alder is to pass policy that provides positive, tangible impacts on the lives of our people. Alders on the Board have a responsibility to the people that they represent, and the decisions they make are supposed to be rooted in the best interests of their constituents. This includes having difficult conversations with developers, business owners, and other elected officials to move forward under that common understanding. An alderperson's role includes ensuring the economic prosperity for their ward, including equitable development that doesn't displace residents and affordable housing. An alderperson is charged with ensuring that every constituent has access to the resources and support that they deserve and to which they are entitled to receive from the City. My goal is to be the representative that every Seventh Ward resident deserves, a representative who genuinely cares for them, understands city processes and policies, and who will help them and advocate for them.

J. P. Mitchom and Cedric Redmon

Did not respond.

Question 3

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

Alisha Sonnier

As alderwoman, I am committed to hosting monthly town halls for the Seventh Ward, in addition to attending each neighborhood association's monthly meetings or having a representative present. These monthly town halls will serve as a central place where I can hear feedback from anyone in the ward - resident, employee, or business owner - about what they are experiencing, what challenges they are facing, and what's working well and what isn't. I will also have conversations and receive input on all things that require a vote, such as development projects and policy changes. For each town hall, I hope to also have childcare and food available to meet the needs of our residents and allow all to participate. Finally, I plan to implement participatory budgeting, an engaged process that involves residents' direct input on how ward capital funds are spent each year.

J. P. Mitchom and Cedric Redmon

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)?

Alisha Sonnier

One thing our Board should do differently is eliminate aldermanic courtesy, which eliminates other alderpersons asking questions about pet projects and blindly agreeing to whatever decision that alderperson wants to make. This is how we get 30-year, 100% tax abatements for mega-millionaire developers at the expense of our city's children. This is irresponsible leadership and has become a courtesy that significantly costs our residents. The city needs a holistic process for development.

I am in favor of the Saint Louis Development Corporation developing an assessment tool for every developer in the city to use, outlining what incentives and abatements are available based on each geographic, the economic state of the area of interest, and the historic character of the project. As an alderperson, my job should be to inform my community of the proposals, the incentives available, and to facilitate conversations within our community to help identify what public benefits should be demanded in exchange for public subsidies being distributed.

J. P. Mitchom and Cedric Redmon

Did not respond.

Question 5

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

Alisha Sonnier

I think every alder should have a direct relationship with every school in their ward. If elected as alderwoman for the Seventh Ward, I will work to develop a relationship with every school principal in the ward, and I would welcome the opportunity to attend school events and other forms of engagement with scholars. I would also welcome principals helping me to ensure that their schools' families know what city resources are available to them and know that they can contact me if I can help in any way. I will attend graduation ceremonies and I will be there on the first day of school, as I do now as a school board member. I plan to host events at our schools, such as holiday dinners and our monthly ward town halls so that our community sees that schools are not just within communities but are a part of them.

As alderwoman, I would support expanding the Special School District to the city, expanding support to SLPS's childcare program, and allocating resources to expand community schools. I also support an expansion to the College Kids Children's Savings Account program.

J. P. Mitchom and Cedric Redmon

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?

Alisha Sonnier

I believe that poverty can be eradicated through policies such as the Guaranteed Basic Income program, which will support SLPS households by giving them an additional \$500 per month for 18 months. I also support diversion programs, like Cops & Clinicians, and favor policies that dispatch mental health professionals and social workers. Our Board should provide further resources to successful violence intervention programs such as Cure Violence. Finally, I will continue to fight for increased support for mental health & addiction treatment services, establishing at least two needle exchanges in every ward, and expanding community health training programs.

J. P. Mitchom and Cedric Redmon

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?

Alisha Sonnier

I am absolutely opposed to this bill and any other ordinance or policy that removes local control of our police department. The people who live here and our elected officials - the person's most qualified - should be the ones to make the decisions and to determine how we're policed. The state of Missouri and its statewide elected officials are the same people who refuse to pass common sense gun laws, who continue to fight tooth-and-nail to block Medicaid Expansion, and who do everything that they can further oppress us, and most of what we see coming out of Jefferson City is an attempt to control St. Louis and to strip away our rightful agency. I do not and will not support any measure like this.

J. P. Mitchom and Cedric Redmon

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?

Alisha Sonnier

Our City needs a Civilian Oversight Board with subpoena power and ability to review employee records for SLMPD officers who are investigated for misconduct. This is non-negotiable, as anything less means that the oversight board is unable to do its job. This board should be independent from the police department - this is the only way to ensure accountability.

J. P. Mitchom and Cedric Redmon

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.)

Alisha Sonnier

I support enacting whatever funding measures available to us to support a universal basic income to anyone unable to meet their basic needs regardless of if they are a parent or what educational institutions they enroll their children in. Eradicating poverty is a key element to eliminating crime and creating an equitable Saint Louis, if we are trying to build a society where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

J. P. Mitchom and Cedric Redmon

Did not respond.

Question 10

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

Alisha Sonnier

We should immediately allocate funding to all shelters presently operating in the city so that they may be fully funded and staffed to serve those in need of housing right now. Our city is full of so many large, vacant buildings that could easily be converted into transitional or temporary housing to serve the ever-increasing need. Why are we not allocating funding into projects that can not only serve as housing, but provide wraparound services such as job training, mental and substance use treatment, and educational support? We have so many resources already available to us, but we sit on them as we wait for the highest bidder to come around. We are the ones we have been waiting for, and when we have the building stock and funding needed to make transformative changes in how we confront homelessness in St. Louis, the equation becomes a matter of political will, not access to resources.

We should also create intentional encampments, with wraparound social services available, in each and every ward, so that the persons who choose to live a nomadic lifestyle have a warm, safe place to sleep without any government strings attached.

J. P. Mitchom and Cedric Redmon

Did not respond.

Question 11

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

Alisha Sonnier

Our ward capital fund was created in 1993 in direct response to the catastrophic flooding in both North and South City. I support any citywide infrastructure plan that would continue the concept of ward capital funds with the caveat that each alderman must use participatory budgeting to determine which ward-specific projects will be completed each year. This would also involve a holistic assessment of the city, our citywide needs, and how we can fund programs to address those needs accordingly.

J. P. Mitchom and Cedric Redmon

Did not respond.

Question 12

What are some of your biggest priorities for ARPA spending?

Alisha Sonnier

Even though ARPA funds are already allocated to specific programs, my biggest priorities for ARPA would include creating an investment fund that grows upon itself so that we can support Saint Louis for generations to come. This is similar to what we've set up for our city through the Rams settlement funds. We should create institutions now that will support our future as the city continues to evolve.

My other priorities would include using this fund to raise wages for city employees, including benefits such as dental and vision, childcare assistance, and down payment assistance for purchasing a home in the city. For the most part, I agree with how ARPA funding has been allocated by the Board and a lot of the programs created with ARPA dollars will be transformative for generations.

J. P. Mitchom and Cedric Redmon

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?

Alisha Sonnier

I am in support of using ARPA funds or the funds from the RAMS settlement to expand and make our public transit system more appealing, universally accessible, and to make transit time 60 minutes or less between any two points in Saint Louis. Privately owned vehicles should not be the only form of reliable transportation, this being the case only adds to inequities and makes our city inaccessible.

J. P. Mitchom and Cedric Redmon

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?

Alisha Sonnier

I support increased funding to the city's residential lead remediation program, which originally aimed to replace lead pipes and mitigate lead paint in individual homes but has remained largely unfunded for nearly a decade. There is a massive need for individual homes to receive support from the city to remove lead pipes and paint, and this is a crucial step to addressing health disparities here.

Food deserts are a very real problem in St. Louis, and that has contributed to food scarcity, poor nutrition, and generational health problems. I support community gardening programs that educate our residents on how food is grown, how they can grow their own food, and how communities can come together to lessen the impacts of climate change. I would also back establishing a farmers' market for each ward to improve access to affordable, fresh produce.

Global warming is inevitable and air conditions will continue to worsen as the planet gets drier. At this point, the best our communities can do is educate them on the impending disasters and how they can best protect themselves, as well as organize them to lobby our state capital and Congress to take larger actions against corporations that contribute much more pollution into the air, water, and earth than individuals.

J. P. Mitchom and Cedric Redmon

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?

Alisha Sonnier

Access to abortion is a human right, and the choice of abortion should be at the sole discretion of the individual. I support the continuation and expansion of the Restorative Justice Fund to support abortion access locally and for those who must travel to seek care.

I support establishing strict regulations, within the confines of Missouri state preemption laws, for crisis pregnancy centers (also known as "fake clinics") that spread misinformation and promote shame surrounding reproductive healthcare decisions.

I support building a local registry of mental and physical care providers that are LGBTQIA+ friendly and that offer gender-affirming care. Trans rights are human rights, and I oppose any policy and investments that affirm anything else. I support all public buildings having gender neutral restrooms in them and I also support fully funding and staffing the City's Department of Health to address the City's rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), which are among the highest in the nation.

J. P. Mitchom and Cedric Redmon

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?

Alisha Sonnier

I will fight for a Tenant Bill of Rights, to hold landlords accountable, and to make legal support available to residents who are in unsafe living conditions. I support the creation of an Unhoused Bill of Rights. We can support our unhoused neighbors without criminalizing them or attempting to ban their existence and I will push for inclusionary zoning policies to ensure residents are able to stay in their communities as housing prices increase.

J. P. Mitchom and Cedric Redmon

Did not respond.

Question 17

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

Alisha Sonnier

I support the demand for a citywide reparations process. Missouri was a slave state and fought to remain so. Even after we formally abolished slavery we redlined communities, we kept people of color from having access to ownership opportunities, from securing funding for their businesses, gave them underfunded and under-resourced education, invested in a predatory cash bail system and many other measures that have led to Black people being oppressed. In a capitalistic society accounting for this truth looks like intentional investment and allocation of resources to counteract the historical disinvestment.

J. P. Mitchom and Cedric Redmon

Did not respond.

Question 18

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

Alisha Sonnier

I do not support the privatization of city assets. Privatized assets do not provide any material benefit to our people and create barriers to transparency and accountability. History shows us that the privatization of assets and goods leads to people of color and those of lower economic status being disproportionately negatively impacted. We should do everything we can to keep public goods and public assets public.

J. P. Mitchom and Cedric Redmon

Did not respond.

Question 19

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

Alisha Sonnier

Substantial amount of service inefficiency that results from our lack of sharing of resources and lack of common planning, but any City/County merger that we pursue needs to be approached through an equity lens. We need to remain especially conscious of the need to maintain the political power of Black and brown residents of both the St. Louis City and St. Louis County and ensure that a merger does not result in decisions being imposed upon their communities. The county also needs to consolidate itself, merging the city with the county while it has as many different municipalities as it does is a recipe for disaster.

J. P. Mitchom and Cedric Redmon

Did not respond.