

Public-Private Partnership

An Interview with The Honorable Curt Skoog, Mayor, Overland Park, Kansas

EDITORS' NOTE Curt Skoog was elected Mayor of Overland Park in November 2021. Prior to that, he was elected to the City Council in 2005, and was reelected in April 2009, 2013 and 2017. Skoog served as City Council President in January 2021. He has been an active member of the community, serving as an elected representative on the Shawnee Mission School District South Area Advisory Board, Co-President of the Shawnee Mission South PTSA, Co-Host of the Shawnee Mission School District Foundation Annual Breakfast, and as a board member of the Kenilworth Homes Association. Since his election in 2005, Skoog has been one of the City of Overland Park's appointed members to the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) Board of Directors where he recently completed a term as board Chair. MARC is a nonprofit association of city and county governments and the metropolitan transportation planning organization for the bi-state Kansas City region serving nine counties and 119 cities. He also was a past Co-Chair of the Creating Sustainable Places Consortium Coordinating Committee that developed policies for redeveloping transportation corridors across the region. Professionally, he



The Hon. Curt Skoog

is the Branch Manager for the Institute of Building Technology and Safety. Skoog is a graduate of the Kansas Chamber of Commerce Leadership Kansas Program, The Greater Kansas City Area Chamber of Commerce Centurions Leadership Program and the University of Kansas School of Business.

What interested you in public service and in running for Mayor?

Growing up in Topeka, Kansas, I saw the impact my parent's public service had on the community, from serving in the State Legislature to parent teacher organizations and finishing their service with the renovation and dedication of the Richie House, an historical home that was part of the Underground Railroad. My parents demonstrated to me that a community leader can make a real difference. In 2005, I ran for Overland Park City Council because there was a need for new leadership in my aging part of the city. Over 16 years, I worked with the community and made a real difference, just as I learned from my parents. Following my election as Mayor of Overland Park in 2021, I am working to bring the community together to make a real difference once again.

Will you highlight the key priorities for your administration?

Overland Park must build its future success on the great foundation left by our predecessors. The Overland Park community as a whole will look to the future during the upcoming Comprehensive Plan update. This update will create a roadmap for the city to follow and will be based on extensive public discussions. We will develop a broad consensus on how housing needs, infrastructure, development, and redevelopment will be addressed. In addition, Overland Park's long-term economic success will be based on attracting and retaining a talented workforce. We must continue to support our high-quality public schools and enable businesses to create workplaces that attract the talent they need to be successful in Overland Park.

How important is it for you to engage the community in your efforts?

Community engagement is key to being a successful Mayor and in operating a modern city government. Local government must be based on dialogue, and not dictate. The primary purpose for updating the city comprehensive plan is to create an atmosphere and process that welcomes all points of view from all corners of the city, especially from those who have not participated in the past.

What do you see as the keys to effective leadership in government?

To me, local government leadership today is primarily the task of building consensus. Decisions do not get much more personal than the actions that cities take. These actions affect your home, your neighborhood, your job, your schools, and your options for relaxation. So, a good leader must be open to discovering and communicating today's reality, not yesterdays. This must include the positives and the challenges within a community.

What do you tell people about the strength and attributes of Overland Park?

For decades, Overland Park leaders have demonstrated a willingness to be innovative and forward-thinking. Elected officials have long established meaningful relationships with our business community through public-private partnerships resulting in a diverse economy with quality jobs. As a result, our nationally-recognized community continues to experience growth and attract new residents due to our exceptional public schools, safe neighborhoods and other amenities that contribute to a high quality of life for residents of all ages. ●



Downtown Overland Park Clocktower at sunrise