

2025 Municipal Candidate Questionnaire

This questionnaire is for candidates running in Municipal Elections, please complete questionnaire below. Submit a completed electronic copy by Thursday, February 27, 2025, to be considered for endorsement in the 2025 Municipal Elections.

Email *

elizabethvillafranca@gmail.com

General Information

Candidate Name *

Elizabeth Villafranca

1. District/Office Sought *

Farmers Branch City Council, District 4

2. Are you a current member of Stonewall Democrats of Dallas? *

Yes

No

3. Please share any experience that illustrates your understanding of and interest in the needs of the LGBTQ+ community in your District/Role sought.

As a candidate for Farmers Branch City Council, I believe that every resident deserves to feel safe, respected, and valued in our community. My approach to leadership is centered on listening to all voices, ensuring equitable access to city resources, and fostering an inclusive environment where everyone can thrive.

While engaging with community members, I have heard from LGBTQ+ residents who seek greater representation, safety, and opportunities to participate fully in civic life. Whether it's advocating for inclusive policies, supporting local businesses owned by diverse individuals, or ensuring city services are accessible to all, I am committed to creating a Farmers Branch where every person—regardless of background—feels a true sense of belonging.

Moving forward, I will continue to listen, learn, and collaborate with all residents to build a stronger, more unified community for all.

4. As an organization affiliated with the Texas Democratic Party, Stonewall Democrats of Dallas * will only endorse candidates who affirm an affiliation with the platform and policies of the Texas Democratic Party. Do you make such an affirmation? What is your previous voting history (please explain any changes in party affiliation)?

I am committed to serving all residents of Farmers Branch with fairness, inclusivity, and integrity. While local elections are nonpartisan, I strongly support policies that promote equality, fairness, and opportunity for all, including those outlined in the Texas Democratic Party platform.

Regarding my voting history, I have always prioritized candidates and policies that align with my values of community engagement, economic opportunity, and social equity. My focus is on ensuring that local government works for everyone, regardless of background, political affiliation, or identity.

5. Please list some of your qualifications and experiences pertinent to the office you are seeking:

I bring a combination of community involvement, leadership experience, and a deep commitment to the residents of Farmers Branch. Some refer to me as "the one who stood up to Tim O'Hare". My qualifications include:

Community Engagement: I have actively participated in local initiatives, working to improve city services, support small businesses, and enhance neighborhood safety.

Leadership Experience: I have served in leadership roles within community organizations, collaborating with residents and stakeholders to address key concerns.

Advocacy for Local Issues: I have worked to ensure that Farmers Branch remains a welcoming, thriving, and fiscally responsible city by engaging with city policies and advocating for smart growth and development.

Business and Financial Acumen: My experience as a local business owner has given me a strong understanding of budgeting, economic development, and responsible fiscal management.

Commitment to Transparency and Accountability: I believe in open communication with residents and ensuring that government decisions reflect the needs and interests of the people.

I am running for City Council to ensure that Farmers Branch continues to be a great place to live, work, and raise a family. I am ready to bring my experience and dedication to serve our community effectively.

6. Once you are elected, what are some of your priorities and plans specific to your office's responsibilities?

As a member of the Farmers Branch City Council, my priorities will focus on:

Responsible Growth and Development – Ensuring that Farmers Branch grows in a way that preserves our city's charm while attracting businesses and amenities that benefit residents. I will advocate for smart development that balances economic growth with community needs. We also need to focus on attracting younger families to our wonderful community.

Public Safety and Infrastructure – Supporting our first responders and ensuring our police and fire departments have the resources needed to keep our community safe. Additionally, I will work to maintain and improve streets, parks, and public spaces.

Fiscal Responsibility – Ensuring that taxpayer dollars are used efficiently and effectively, maintaining a balanced budget while investing in critical city services and infrastructure.

Community Engagement and Transparency – Strengthening communication between city leadership and residents by promoting transparency, accessibility, and open dialogue. I will work to ensure that residents feel heard and involved in city decisions.

Quality of Life Improvements – Expanding green spaces, enhancing recreational programs, and supporting initiatives that make Farmers Branch a vibrant, family-friendly community.

Small Business and Economic Development – Supporting local businesses and fostering an environment where entrepreneurs can thrive, creating jobs and opportunities within our community.

My goal is to ensure that Farmers Branch remains a welcoming, safe, and prosperous place for all residents. I am committed to listening to the concerns of our community and working collaboratively to create meaningful solutions.

Housing

This section addresses housing and homelessness within the LGBTQ+ community.

7. On a scale of 1-10, 1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest, please rate your city’s response to housing affordability and briefly explain your rating.

I rate the city's response to housing affordability a 6. Farmers Branch has made efforts to encourage development, but there is still work to be done to ensure that housing remains affordable for all residents, including working families, seniors, and young professionals. Rising property values and increasing rent costs have made it challenging for some to remain in our city. It's a shame that many of our own teachers from the ISD are unable to afford to live in the city in which they work.

Currently, there are 20 properties owned by the City. Builders of Hope would like to purchase them to build affordable housing for Veterans, single mothers and others who are unable to purchase homes without some assistance.

Thanks to Andy Sommerman, we were able to participate in a program that will allow ten families and possible more to move into a brand new home at no cost to them.

These initiatives are important to ensure that residents from all socio economic backgrounds can afford to live in Farmers Branch as homeowners.

8. Please list a specific policy/ordinance you would like to introduce or repeal to address the housing supply issue

One specific policy I would like to introduce is an Incentive Program for Workforce and Affordable Housing that encourages developers to include a percentage of affordable units in new multi-family developments. This could be achieved through density bonuses, reduced permitting fees, or tax incentives for projects that dedicate units to middle- and lower-income families, seniors, and essential workers. The fact that the majority of teachers in our school district cannot afford to live in Farmers Branch is worrisome and I know that we can find creative ways to make Farmers Branch a thriving community for all who would like to live here.

If there is a restrictive ordinance that unnecessarily limits housing diversity, I would review and consider repealing or amending it to promote smart, sustainable development that benefits all residents.

9. What’s the biggest threat to LGBTQ+ folks with respect to housing security and what are your plans to address housing insecurity within this community specifically?

One of the biggest threats to LGBTQ+ individuals and others in terms of housing security is discrimination in rental and housing markets, which can lead to higher rates of housing instability and homelessness, especially among LGBTQ+ youth and seniors. Despite legal protections, many still face barriers in securing safe, affordable housing due to bias from landlords.

To address this, I would support policies that strengthen fair housing protections and ensure that landlords, property managers comply with anti-discrimination laws.

10. What specific ordinances or policies would you suggest or support to address housing inequality and rental pricing, such as a ban on algorithmic rent control?

To address housing inequality and rising rental prices, I would support policies that increase housing supply, protect tenants from price gouging, and promote fair housing practices. Some specific ordinances or policies I would advocate for include a ban on algorithmic rent pricing, incentives for affordable housing development, strengthening tenant protections.

Public Safety (Includes Fire, 911, School safety, and all safety departments)

This section addresses Public Safety within the LGBTQ+ community

11. On a scale of 1-10, 1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest, please rate your city’s delivery of public safety services to the community and briefly explain your rating. *

I would rate Farmers Branch’s public safety services at an 8.

Our city has a dedicated police and fire department that work hard to ensure the safety of our residents. Response times are amazing, and there have been efforts to engage with the community through neighborhood policing and outreach programs including the Citizen Police and Citizen Fire Academies and Citizens on Patrol. We have regular Coffee with a Cop events, though not well attended or attended by the same few people, allow an open door for all. Our Police and Fire Chiefs are fantastic. I don’t know where we are with our mental health crisis response, but feel that is something that can possibly be strengthened.

12. Please list one public safety policy you support and why and one public safety policy you oppose and why. *

I support community-based policing because it fosters stronger relationships between law enforcement and residents. When officers engage with the community through outreach, education, and proactive policing rather than just reactive responses, it builds trust and improves public safety outcomes. I have personally attended and participated in events including "Tacos With the Cops" and it's wonderful to have the community and, in particular, young people, come out and be around law enforcement. Our Chief does a wonderful job of engaging the community in a positive way.

Policy I Oppose:

I oppose the use of red-light cameras, because they can be predatory, disproportionately impact low-income individuals, and have not consistently demonstrated a significant improvement in traffic safety.

13. Please address how you would work with public safety officials across all appropriate levels of government to ensure LGBTQ+ people feel safe, secure, and respected within your respective jurisdiction. *

Inclusivity training for all public safety officers, building trust through engagement, and advocating for legislation that protects vulnerable populations is important.

14. Have there been any recent incidents involving LGBTQ+ hate or violence in your city, if so how do you plan to address this? If not, what can other cities learn in order to reduce these occurrences? *

I am not aware of any recent incidents involving LGBTQ+ hate or violence, but I believe that constant education, hate crime awareness, and community engagement are important in ensuring that occurrences like these are far and few between. We must pass ordinances that stop citizens from harassing and bullying our city council. One particular resident comes to mind, and it's baffling to me how this person is allowed to continue to mistreat our residents. She has actually told a friend that she is going to "pray the gay out of her". This is unacceptable on so many levels and should not be tolerated.

15. If you are not a member of a historically marginalized group, what is your understanding of the needs of these groups with respect to public safety? *

As a Mexican-American, and especially as a resident of Farmers Branch, I am intimately familiar with the needs of all marginalized groups. My family moved to Farmers Branch when they were trying to remove Hispanics from the city. I spoke to hundreds of residents about their rights and tried to build a bridge between law enforcement and residents. Families were afraid to send their children to school and the police were looked at with suspicion. Crimes were not being reported out of fear and it was truly a difficult time in the history of our city. It's important for law enforcement to maintain positive relationships in marginalized communities.

Environmental

This section addresses Environmental protections within marginalized communities.

16. Please list a specific policy/ordinance that you would suggest or support to advance making your city more climate resilient. *

Expanding green spaces & tree canopy, improving stormwater management, energy-efficient building standards, waste reduction & recycling expansion that would include composting.

17. What are your plans to address environmental injustices for marginalized communities within your city? *

Farmers Branch is the City in a Park. I would continue to focus on green spaces, work to make public transport and walkability/bikeability more accessible. Currently there are not dedicated bike lanes and I think connecting the DART station to Dallas College Brookhaven Campus with dedicated bike lanes would completely change the culture of the city. I have a bicycle, actually it's a tricycle (don't judge me) and I don't ride it on busy streets because I'm afraid I will get hit by a car. Many people are not able to drive due to finances or lack of drivers license. This would allow residents to get around the city in a safe and environmentally friendly way. Moving the community garden to a more central area would also invite residents from other parts of the city to participate in the community garden.

Communications

This section addresses Communication Methods between elected officials and marginalized communities.

18. How do you plan to work with allies and organizations across all appropriate levels of government to present a cohesive message of unified support for the LGBTQ+ community? *

As a city council member, I would actively collaborate with local, state, and national organizations that advocate for LGBTQ+ rights to ensure a unified message of support and inclusion in Farmers Branch. My approach would include strong partnerships, promoting inclusive policies, community engagement and certainly speaking out against discriminatory practices.

19. How do you plan to work with allies and organizations across all appropriate levels of government to present a cohesive message of unified support for the LGBTQ+ community? *

As a council member, I would advocate for inclusivity on boards, and work toward making all of our residents feel valued and respected.

20. Will you commit to being an active partner and supporter of Stonewall Democrats of Dallas? *

Yes

No

Local Governance

This section addresses the attack on Local Governance from the State Legislature.

21. Do you believe the State Legislature has engaged or will engage in government overreach? *
Briefly explain your answer.

The State Legislature has definitely engaged in government overreach and I fear that things will begin to get worse. I'm in Austin as I write, preparing to meet with our elected officials. The school voucher program that the Governor is advocating for is the perfect example of overreach.

22. Please list one specific policy/ordinance that you feel would best advance LGBTQ+ rights on a local level *

A local nondiscrimination ordinance would be something to consider in our city for all residents. No resident should be allowed to insult, demean, or intimidate anyone because of their sexual orientation or color.

23. What is your opinion of local police department cooperating with ICE? *

The City of Farmers Branch was part of the 287g program back in the day of the horrible things that happened in our city. Local police are not immigration officers nor should they be expected to be.

All Candidates

All candidates will need to answer the following questions.

24. Is there anything in your past or background that has not been covered by the previous questions that might – without careful explanation - cause our organization to reconsider or withdraw our endorsement of you?

No.

25. I'm seeking an endorsement from the Stonewall Democrats of Dallas for the 2025 Municipal election. (Please type name) *

Elizabeth Villafranca

This form was created inside of Stonewall Democrats of Dallas.

