

# OMAR ISN'T AFRAID OF THE TOUGH QUESTIONS.



## BRANCH HERALD CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

☒ Omar Roman Answered

☐ Isabel Romero

## DALLAS MORNING NEWS CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

☒ Omar Roman Answered

☐ Isabel Romero

## LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

☒ Omar Roman Answered

☐ Isabel Romero

## BRANCH HERALD CANDIDATE INTERVIEW

☒ Omar Roman Showed Up

☐ Isabel Romero

## READ OMAR'S ANSWERS FROM THE CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRES BELOW

### BRANCH HERALD CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

**Length of residency in the City of Farmers Branch:** 6 years

**Why do you want to be a Farmers Branch City Councilmember?** Motivated by my desire to make a difference in my neighbor's lives and improve their quality of life, my city involvement sharply increased which led to an interest in running for office. I was successful in my run for City Council D1 in 2022. I've worked hard to deliver results for our city, with my District at the forefront of my decision-making, but I am not done. There are still many more important initiatives that I am focused on implementing for my District.

**How many Farmers Branch City Council meetings have you attended or watched online in the last year?** As a sitting City Council Member, I have attended all of them, including special-called meetings and workshops.

**Outside of regularly scheduled meetings and work sessions, how many hours per month do you think a Farmers Branch Councilmember should commit to the job?** 40 hours during light months (November and December) up to 100 hours during heavy months (June, July, August, and September).

**Have you served on any City of Farmers Branch boards or commissions? If so, which ones?** Yes; Historical Preservation and Restoration Board (received Mayor's Award of Excellence in Leadership).

**What other civic responsibilities have you undertaken?**

**What other offices have you run for? When?** Succeeded in winning my election in 2022 for City Council D1 in Farmers Branch.

**What community organizations do you belong to?** Early College High School PTA, Citizens on Patrol, and Lifetime Member of The Friends of the Historical Park.

**What city leadership programs have you participated in?** Citizens Police Academy, Citizens on Patrol Academy, and Citizens Fire Academy.

**How has current Farmers Branch City Council leadership influenced your decision to run for city council?** N/A

**Name one specific new project or initiative you would like to see begun during your term. What actions are needed to implement it?** Other than the items that I have already requested and have been added to the city's list of future agenda items, I would like to spearhead the creation of a City Leadership Academy – program designed to inform residents about the different city departments, and how they interact with each other and City Council to service our residents. This deeper understanding of our city's operations will foster a more unified approach when addressing resident concerns. This also has the potential to better prepare residents to serve on boards and commissions or City Council.

This initiative would initially require the support of our City Council. Thereafter, it would require staff to develop a schedule, solicit applications for participation, and create presentations that showcase their department.

**What makes you the most qualified candidate in your race – and why?** My education, experience, relationships, and successful track record make me the most qualified candidate.

**Education:** Top graduate from the country's elite program in Personal Financial Planning. My strong work ethic and high standards helped me with this prestigious achievement.

**Experience:** As a Certified Financial Planner™ Practitioner, I've worked with families to help manage their personal finances, and I've similarly worked on City Council to help manage our budget, which has led to two historical budget cuts (2023-2025 fiscal years) focused on being more efficient and eliminating waste. Serving on City Council for 3 years has allowed me to understand the maneuvering necessary to advance important initiatives and achieve positive outcomes for my constituency; something that you can only learn from direct experience in city leadership roles.

**Relationships:** I've maintained strong relationships with community leaders and constituents in my District to maintain a pulse on my resident's needs. I've worked to build relationships with local, state, and national representatives that I can rely on when our city needs an advocate to address issues that fall outside of our Council's authority. Examples include support with the Trinity River Authority construction site issue, Shale Mountain, and, most recently, funding for Mercer and Squire Park.

**Successful track record:** During my time on City Council, I've worked tooth and nail to serve my District. I've successfully fought and gained significant momentum in passing initiatives that enhance the quality of life in my District. Examples include the Minor Home Repair Program, Squire Park initial funding, re-imagined attainable housing solutions, cleaner and safer neighborhoods, Multicultural Event (Gateway to the Globe), enhanced services for Mercer Crossing residents, interactive project dashboard, and more.

**What do you think about the demo/rebuild program and the city's renaissance programs?** The demo/rebuild program effectively incentivizes families to demolish old housing stock and construct new homes in its place. Regarding the renaissance program, we are responsibly pivoting by taking a community-first approach that puts resident input at the forefront of future development discussions.

**What can you, as a Council Member, do to improve the availability of affordable housing in Farmers Branch?** We need to continue to allow residents to lead the discussion on affordable housing, since they are the ones that ideally should occupy and will live near these homes. Depending on the area, continued partnership with Builders of Hope is instrumental in assuring any new housing initiatives don't consequently displace residents in our city.

**How successful are the city's current programs to address its aging infrastructure? What would you change? Please elaborate.** Our annual budget allocation includes funds to address our aging infrastructure, so we have responsibly addressed the aging infrastructure in small bites over time. Recently, we have approved an audit that will help the Council prioritize street repairs, one that I am a strong advocate for is Bee Street. Additionally, as more information becomes available regarding our responsibilities per the Lead Copper Rule Revisions (LCRR) and potential federal funding, we will have to quickly decide how to address our aging pipes that transport our water.

**What is the single biggest challenge facing our city today?** Responsible growth. As the urbanization of Dallas expands into our city, we will continue to experience demands for growth and it is incumbent upon our Council to determine how we will manage the growth. It is important to preserve what makes Farmers Branch special – a small, close-knit community with top notch city services – while also capitalizing on growth opportunities.

**What are Farmers Branch's most valuable amenities or benefits that you will work to maintain or expand?** Our city's tagline is "City in a Park" and with that comes the responsibility of ensuring that our parks are among the best in the metroplex. Recently, during the Strategic Retreat, we discussed whether we still want to be known as the "City in a Park," and we unanimously reaffirmed that tagline. Therefore, I would like to ensure that Mercer and Squire Park, located in or on the border of District 1, are built/rebuilt in a manner consistent with our reputation of being the "City in a Park."

## LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

### **QUALIFICATIONS: What qualifies you to serve on the City Council?**

- Experience: As a Certified Financial Planner™ and City Councilmember, I've helped families manage finances and led two historic budget cuts (2023-2025), improving efficiency.
- Relationships: I've built strong connections with local, state, and national leaders to advocate for our city on key issues like Shale Mountain and Mercer/Squire Park funding.
- Track Record: I've successfully championed initiatives like the Minor Home Repair Program, attainable housing solutions, neighborhood safety, and the Gateway to the Globe multicultural event.

**BUDGET: How do you propose to manage budgetary challenges with the need to provide the expected level of service?** I will continue to review the budget line by line with the Finance Director and City Manager to ensure efficiency, as I have done each year while in office. We will continue to track service usage to guide our budget decisions, prioritizing what benefits residents most. By monitoring trends, we can further invest in high-value services or reallocate resources as needed to meet community needs while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

**PUBLIC SAFETY STAFFING: What changes, if any, would you support to attract and retain quality public safety personnel?** I support maintaining competitive pay and benefits to attract and retain quality public safety personnel. Additionally, I would advocate for an overhire alignment, where we hire more public safety personnel than we need to ensure we stay fully staffed despite high turnover industry rates, keeping our community safe and well-served. I also support ensuring that our first responders have the adequate mental health resources available for themselves and their families.

**MANAGING GROWTH: Do you want more emphasis on future development and, if so, what types (housing, retail, commercial, etc.)?** Yes, I believe we should place more emphasis on future development, especially on the west side of my district, where there is a need for a grocery store and retail development on vacant lots that are prime for growth. Regarding housing, it's important to continue our partnership with Builders of Hope, a non-profit organization focused on building attainable and workforce housing for Farmers Branch residents, ensuring we meet the needs of all income levels.

**CHALLENGE/OPPORTUNITY: What is the city's greatest challenge and opportunity over the next few years?** The city's greatest challenge is managing growth and development while maintaining a high quality of life for all residents. As we continue to expand, especially with the influx of new residents, we must ensure our infrastructure, public services, and neighborhoods can support this growth. Our greatest opportunity lies in investing in older neighborhoods (Valwood Park) and capitalizing on development potential, particularly in the west side of my district (Mercer Crossing), to create a more vibrant, well-rounded community.

## DALLAS MORNING NEWS CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

### **Highlights of your civic involvement/accomplishment:**

I have been a member of several PTAs in my district, including those at Vivian Field, Farmers Branch Elementary, and Early College High School. My involvement allows me to stay connected and remain informed about the issues affecting families. Additionally, I served as the liaison for Metrocrest Services and the former Farmers Branch Chamber of Commerce, fostering relationships with key stakeholders to better understand and address the needs of both our business community and disadvantaged residents.

In response to concerns from Mercer Crossing residents, I successfully advocated for an additional weekly trash pickup, aligning their service schedule with the rest of the city. I also spearheaded the transfer of

publicly used infrastructure from private HOA ownership to city management. Furthermore, I have worked diligently to hold our developer partners accountable for completing all outstanding infrastructure projects. Beyond these efforts, I have been instrumental in launching new initiatives and policy changes that enhance the quality of life for our residents. I led the creation of the annual "Gateway to the Globe" Multicultural Celebration, fostering inclusivity and cultural appreciation within our community. I played a key role in reducing property taxes for two consecutive years, significantly lowering crime rates, cleaning up neighborhoods, and enhancing traffic enforcement measures. Additionally, I supported an increase in the senior and disabled homestead exemption and successfully reduced the retirement pension eligibility for first responders and city staff from 25 to 20 years.

In the eastern part of my district, I worked to reimagine the attainable housing program in Valwood Park, ensuring that resident feedback - initially disregarded - is at the forefront of our discussions. I also successfully advocated for funding improvements at Squire Park and launched the Minor Home Repair Program.

**Previous public offices sought or held:**

Farmers Branch City Council District 1 – won this election in 2022.

Length of residency in your city, and if applicable, your council district:

Have lived in the City and District since 2019.

**How much funding have you raised for your campaign to date and who are your top contributors?**

As of the submission of this survey, \$1,000 has been raised, and I am my biggest contributor.

**Have you ever been arrested on any misdemeanor or felony charge or otherwise involved in any criminal judicial proceeding? If so, please explain and include the outcome of the case.** No.

**Have you ever been involved in any civil lawsuits or declared personal or professional bankruptcy? If so, please explain and include the outcome of the lawsuit or bankruptcy filing.** No.

**Why are you running, and what do you hope to accomplish?**

I am running because there are still several key issues I am committed to addressing in my district. These include overflow street parking in neighborhoods, securing additional funding and completing Mercer Park, obtaining additional funding and completing improvements at Squire Park, implementing anti-displacement housing strategies in Valwood Park, attracting amenities such as a grocery store and businesses to Mercer Crossing, additional speed enforcement in residential neighborhoods, and enhancing street lighting in neighborhoods.

**Other than the people, what is the single greatest asset of your district/city? How would you promote and preserve it?**

The single greatest asset of our city, beyond its people, is the rich culture and diversity that define our community. Farmers Branch is home to a vibrant mix of backgrounds, traditions, and perspectives, which strengthen our city and make it a more dynamic and inclusive place to live.

I have been actively promoting and preserving this cultural diversity through initiatives like "Gateway to the Globe," an event I spearheaded to showcase the many cultures that make up our city. This event brings residents together to experience diverse food, music, and traditions, fostering a sense of unity and belonging.

Moving forward, I hope to expand on this effort by finding additional ways to celebrate and embrace our diversity. This includes integrating culture into our existing programming and ensuring city policies reflect inclusivity. Most importantly, I want every resident to feel welcomed and valued, knowing that Farmers Branch is a place where they truly belong.

**What is the greatest need of your district/city? How would you act to provide for that need?**

The greatest need for my district is reinvestment in the eastern part and economic development in the western part. These areas represent two very different but equally important challenges – one requiring revitalization and modernization, and the other needing infrastructure and commercial growth.

The eastern part of my district is the oldest area in the city and requires strategic reinvestment to maintain and enhance its character while improving quality of life. I have already taken steps in this direction as

indicated in my other responses. Moving forward, I will continue pushing for infrastructure improvements, public safety enhancements, and incentives for homeowners to reinvest in the area.

The western part of my district, which is the newest community, requires continued economic development to create a more complete and sustainable community. One of my key priorities is attracting amenities like a grocery store and other businesses to Mercer Crossing, ensuring residents have access to essential services close to home. I will continue to work with developers and business leaders to bring in commercial investments that align with residents' needs while preserving the area's quality of life.

By balancing reinvestment in the east with smart economic growth in the west, I am committed to ensuring that every part of my district thrives and remains a great place to live, work, and raise a family. Law enforcement is a critical function of local government. What is the greatest public safety concern in your city, and how would you recommend it be addressed?

As our city continues to experience significant growth, the greatest public safety concern is ensuring that our law enforcement staffing keeps pace with our increasing population and density. A well-staffed police force is essential for maintaining response times, proactive policing, and community engagement, all of which contribute to a safe and secure environment.

To address this, we must closely monitor the resident-to-officer ratio and proactively adjust staffing levels to meet our city's evolving needs. One key strategy is adopting an overhire alignment model, which allows us to maintain full staffing even amid industry-wide turnover challenges. By hiring ahead of expected vacancies, we can reduce gaps in coverage, minimize strain on existing officers, and ensure seamless continuity of service.

**What is your view of the current property tax rate in your city? What steps would you take or support to address homeowners' tax burden?**

I believe our current property tax rate provides great value compared to what other cities offer for a similar rate. However, I also recognize the importance of continuously evaluating our budget to ensure that we are maximizing efficiency and minimizing the tax burden on homeowners.

Each year that I have been in office, I have worked closely with the City Manager and Finance Director to review the budget in detail, line by line, identifying areas where we can cut costs without compromising the quality of services. This approach has allowed us to challenge the way things have always been done, eliminate inefficiencies, and uncover opportunities for savings, all of which have directly contributed to two consecutive tax rate reductions – the largest in 40 years and then the largest in 41 years. As the financial planner on the Council, I will continue to advocate for responsible fiscal management, ensuring that we are spending taxpayer dollars wisely while maintaining the high level of services our residents expect.

**How should the city address the need for housing across income levels, and how can you contribute to the solution?**

The city should take a balanced and strategic approach to housing that ensures opportunities exist across all income levels while maintaining the character of our neighborhoods.

For higher-income neighborhoods, we should continue investing in the Demo-Rebuild Program, which has proven to be an effective tool for incentivizing reinvestment. This program encourages property owners to redevelop aging homes, enhancing property values and maintaining the desirability of these neighborhoods. For lower-income neighborhoods, it is important to preserve attainability while fostering reinvestment. Our continued partnership with Builders of Hope is essential, as they specialize in constructing high-quality homes at attainable prices in older neighborhoods without displacing existing residents. Their approach helps mitigate the negative effects of gentrification while ensuring that longtime residents can remain in the community and benefit from neighborhood improvements.

I will continue to advocate for smart housing policies that encourage reinvestment while preserving affordability. By supporting public-private partnerships, responsible zoning policies, and targeted reinvestment efforts, we can ensure that Farmers Branch remains a city where residents of all income levels have access to quality housing.



**What are the most significant transportation issues your city and/or district face? What steps would you support to address those concerns?**

One of the most significant transportation issues our city faces is misalignment between DART and the City regarding how transit funds are being utilized. Farmers Branch, like many other DART member cities, contributes a substantial amount of funding to the system. However, DART's management of these funds is in question.

Recognizing this issue, our city joined others in passing a resolution to reduce the amount of funding allocated to DART. While DART plays a crucial role in serving our most vulnerable populations, we must have a serious conversation about ensuring that the services we pay for are delivered efficiently, effectively, and equitably.

**Moving forward, I support two potential paths:**

1. Working with DART leadership to improve service alignment, ensuring our investment is more efficiently managed and results in better transit options, coverage, and reliability for Farmers Branch residents.
2. Exploring alternative transportation solutions, including partnerships with private transit providers or on-demand ride services, to replace the services that DART is providing but at a more reasonable cost. Ultimately, my priority is to ensure that residents have reliable, accessible, and cost-effective transportation options that meet their needs, whether that comes from reforming DART's approach or identifying better-suited transit alternatives for our community.

**Should suburbs be primarily competitors or collaborators with Dallas? What problems or projects demand regional cooperation?**

Suburbs like Farmers Branch should be collaborators, not competitors, with Dallas. As a neighboring city, we experience the direct impact of urbanization and growth overflow from Dallas, making regional cooperation essential for addressing shared challenges.

One issue requiring collaboration is homelessness. We have seen homeless encampments forming at the Farmers Branch-Dallas border, particularly at key entry points to our city. Addressing this requires a joint effort between both cities and other entities, ensuring that resources, outreach programs, and enforcement strategies align to provide humane and effective solutions.

Another issue is unruly businesses along the city borders, which have negatively impacted Farmers Branch residents. These businesses often operate in ways that disturb neighborhoods, and because they are within Dallas city limits, direct enforcement is challenging. In fact, I have already worked with Dallas City Councilmembers to find solutions, and I will continue advocating for policies that promote responsible business practices and protect the quality of life for our residents.

By working together, we can leverage shared resources, align policies, and create a stronger, more connected metroplex that benefits both Farmers Branch and Dallas.

**How should your city plan for the next stage of its life cycle?**

Farmers Branch is already actively planning for the next stage of its life cycle by taking a strategic and forward-thinking approach to governance. One key initiative is the evaluation of our mission, vision, and core values – an exercise that I specifically requested to ensure that our city's direction aligns with the evolving needs of our residents.

Additionally, we hold an annual all-day strategic retreat where we, as a council, engage in in-depth discussions about the future of our city and individual districts. This retreat allows us to set priorities, address emerging challenges, and align our long-term goals with the expectations of our community.

For District 1, my vision is directly shaped by resident feedback. I believe that listening to and engaging with the people I represent is the best way to ensure that our policies reflect the real needs of the community. Whether it's reinvestment in our older neighborhoods, managing growth in our newer developments, or maintaining high-quality city services, I am committed to advancing a vision that preserves what makes Farmers Branch unique while preparing for a prosperous future.

## SAAVETX QUESTIONNAIRE

### **South Asians are the fastest growing minority population in Texas. What is your experience working with diverse communities?**

As the only person of color on the Farmers Branch City Council, I bring a unique and personal perspective to representing diverse communities. I proudly represent Mercer Crossing, a neighborhood that is predominantly South Asian, and I understand the importance of ensuring that all voices, especially those from rapidly growing communities like the South Asian population in Texas, are heard and respected. Being part of a diverse community (Hispanic) myself, I recognize that cultural nuances matter, and that different communities often have unique needs that deserve thoughtful consideration in policymaking. That's why I've been intentional about creating inclusive spaces, including spearheading the city's first-ever Multicultural Event—an initiative aimed at celebrating the rich cultural heritage that makes Farmers Branch so vibrant. For me, it's not just about representation; it's about making sure every community has a seat at the table when decisions are made.

### **What kind of outreach will you have for South Asians?**

Outreach to the South Asian community is personal to me—these are my neighbors. I've made it a priority to connect in meaningful ways, whether by hosting a Holi celebration or attending Diwali and other cultural events to spend time with the community and better understand their traditions. These experiences have not only deepened my appreciation for South Asian culture but have also helped me build genuine friendships. Many of my neighbors and I now regularly exchange dishes from our own cultures—it's a small but powerful way of building bridges and fostering a true sense of community. My approach to outreach is rooted in relationships, respect, and showing up, not just during election season, but year-round.

### **How do you plan to address issues of discrimination and hate crimes against South Asians, and what steps will you take to ensure the safety and well-being of our community?**

Addressing discrimination and hate crimes is a top priority for me. I'm currently spearheading an anti-discrimination policy for our city to ensure that all residents, including our South Asian community, are protected and treated with dignity. I've also led an initiative to limit hate speech during citizen comments in our City Council Chambers—because no one should feel targeted or unsafe in a public space meant for civic engagement. I will continue to stand up and fight for everyone in our city to ensure we are not discriminated against or made victims of hate. Your safety, well-being, and right to live without fear are non-negotiable.

### **What policies or initiatives do you propose to promote economic development and support small businesses, including those owned by South Asians?**

To promote economic development and support small businesses, including those owned by South Asians, I believe we need to invest in what's already working. In Farmers Branch, the most successful businesses have been small, culturally rich establishments that offer unique experiences. That's why I support targeted financial incentives for diverse small businesses and propose expanding access to resources with the Chamber of Commerce like technical assistance, mentorship, and affordable commercial space. These efforts will help ensure long-term success and keep our local economy vibrant, inclusive, and reflective of the communities it serves.

*Learn more & get involved:*

**VOTEOMARROMAN.COM • 214.632.8093**

*Paid for by the Omar Roman Campaign*