

[View Candidate Responses for Mayor of Versailles Race](#)

- 1. What are some specific skills you can bring to improve the City of Versailles as Mayor? Please share a personal accomplishment to date. Why are you the best candidate for the position you seek?**

Lisa Johnson- I have a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and Human Resources Management from Miami University, Oxford, Ohio and earned a Masters of Public Policy and Administration from the UK Martin School of Public Policy and Administration. The Mayor is the primary Human Resources officer for the city. Making wise and thoughtful board appointments to Planning & Zoning, the Board of Architectural Review, and Economic Development is critical to shape the future of Versailles.

I have worked in the private sector for 23 years where I managed a \$10 million territory, led my team, and assisted with recruitment and training at the District, Regional and National levels. I am currently the Executive Director of a non-profit in Versailles.

Accomplishment: In 2011, I looked for an unmet need in our County and founded a 501c3, non-profit after school mentoring program providing homework help and hot meals to middle school youth. To date, the Mentors & Meals (M&Ms) program has reached 567 students and involved 970 volunteers from high school mentors to college interns and adult volunteers who have dedicated 34,862 hours of volunteer and community service. A rigorous program evaluation in December, 2016 proved that students who attend M&Ms had statistically significant improvement in grades.

Best Candidate for this job: I am a public servant NOT a career politician. My background proves I know how to engage the community to create positive outcomes for our citizens and I have a history of running both private and public organizations effectively. I will bring maturity, wisdom and organization to the office of Mayor by providing governance with accountability.

- 2. What is the biggest challenge, and biggest opportunity you see facing the City of Versailles?**

Lisa Johnson-

Challenge: Many small towns across America are dying due lack of attention and lack of vision. The challenge for Versailles is to find the right kind of career opportunities for our citizens. Professional jobs have a smaller footprint and a lesser environmental impact than manufacturing and provide higher wage and revenue base potential per square foot. We need to fill the open jobs in our current manufacturing segment as well as attract professional jobs to our community.

Opportunities: Revitalizing Versailles down town and the Lexington Road corridor through small-business development and urban planning. This would make Versailles a destination for locals and visitors alike and capitalize on the 150,000 people going through Versailles on the bourbon trail, to keep more tourism and dining dollars in our own town instead of losing them to Lexington. It is also important to re-purpose old strip malls before building new ones.

- 3. The updated 2018 Comprehensive Plan [Goals & Objectives](#) prioritize infill/redevelopment as a primary strategy to accommodate urban growth needs. What specific recommendations do you have to protect the character and context of existing neighborhoods while pursuing an infill/redevelopment strategy? Please share your ideas for infill and re-development within the Versailles Urban Service Boundary.**

[Lisa Johnson](#) -In 2011, my opponent was a member of the Comp Plan committee who removed landscape and beautification set back and viewshed language from the plan without public input.

As Versailles grows in a smart and sustainable way, as Mayor, I would be mindful of the Lexington Road Corridor and the impact of development on our agricultural and equine industries. Depending on the determination of the courts on the Edgewood annexation, the city will need to be careful to preserve aesthetics and also evaluate land utilization and citizen safety to include set backs and landscaping requirements to improve and enhance the impression any new development may have.

In 2001 there was a lot of time and thought put into a document called “Preserving Town & Country”. That 48 page document is as relevant now as it was then and it should be adopted into the 2018 Comprehensive Plan as an addendum.

- 4. Please share some of the ideas you have about enhancing Versailles’ downtown business district. How will you help attract businesses to re-locate to Versailles?**

[Lisa Johnson](#)- First, let me define the Downtown Business District as not only Main Street, but the streets which surround downtown and the Lexington Road Corridor which is the long entrance into the downtown area.

I would like to see Versailles emphasize “A, B and E”: Agriculture, Bourbon and Equine. These themes are both our history and our future. They should be embraced and celebrated throughout the city. We have 150,000 tourists driving through our downtown every year on their way along the bourbon trail and we need to find ways for them to spend their dining dollars in Versailles (and Midway).

Partner with our local authorities to find solutions to obstacles that might be facing building owners who might consider utilizing their unused or partially used 2nd and 3rd floor spaces for downtown housing above the shops.

In my work with the Downtown Planning and Advisory Committee, there are 4 Main Areas to focus on: Improving the look of the Lex Road Corridor into downtown; Incorporating Big Spring Park into downtown and bringing it back to life; Improving Signage and Street Art so people know where they are and where to park; And generating more ideas to help existing businesses while encouraging new small business growth. (Idea for Envision Versailles- work with UK’s Urban Planning department to gain ideas- without costing the taxpayer a cent).

5. **Are you in favor of further annexation of surrounding land outside the Versailles urban services boundary (USB)? If so, where and how would you change the boundary?**

Lisa Johnson- Regarding the “Edgewood Development”- I am in favor of using 70 acres already inside the Urban Services Boundary which could be rezoned from Retail to P1 to build a new hospital, if a new hospital finds it to be economically feasible to build here. The other 336 acres is currently under litigation and the courts will decide. Some of that area is part of an “agriculture preserve”, protecting neighboring farms from encroachment and the issues that are come with it.

It is my overall opinion that Versailles needs to re-purpose old shopping areas before building more strip malls.

It would also be a goal of mine, as Mayor, to ask our P&Z to reach out to property owners of the approximately 1,200-1,400 acres that are currently INSIDE the Urban Services Boundary and find out their interests for development before absorbing more acreage into the Urban Services area along Lexington Road.

There are already 400 homes slated for the Backer1 and 2 developments along US 60 at BG Parkway, 124 more in the development off US 33 next to Southside Elementary.

Finally, there are neighborhoods who clearly fall inside the Urban Services Boundary who are still considered “County” and can not vote for the mayor or city council members. It may be a good idea to revisit the risk vs benefit (or pros vs cons) of being inside city limits and inform neighborhoods who fit this description to consider being annexed into city limits.

6. **Do you support the study of a merger of the county government with one or more of the city governments?**

Lisa Johnson- YES- I support the study of merger between the City of Versailles and County, potentially leaving Midway as its own entity.

According to the Ky League of Cities, there are 7 different ways to merge a city and county. With my connections at the UK Martin School of Public Policy, I have already reached out to a professor who would be willing to dedicate an entire graduate level class to develop a Strategic or SWOT analysis- Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats-for merged government vs the current government. We could also reach out to MPA programs at U of L and Morehead. This way the City and County could quickly get the conversation started by hearing the “Pros” and “Cons and Benefits vs Costs. This idea would not cost a penny of taxpayer dollars. It is also a good way to utilize the excellent educational resources in our region to help us plan for the future.

7. **In your opinion, is Versailles city transportation and infrastructure adequate to support our community? If not, where would you like to see improvements made?**

Lisa Johnson- Versailles does not have any form of public transportation for our youth or our elderly. There are at least 4 or 5 after-school programs serving youth in our downtown area- Esperanza at Versailles Pres, Wednesday evening programs at Versailles Baptist and Crosspointe, the Mentors & Meals program four days/week, and LYFT tutoring come to mind. Many students cannot attend because they don't have a way to get home.

Our aging population has limited options to get to the Food Pantry, or to Kroger.

Transportation needs to be improved and this subject definitely merits further discussion.

8. **What are your plans for improving the environmental sustainability of our county? How would you support investments in more renewable alternative energy development?**

Lisa Johnson-

Research and adopt an Environmental Comprehensive Master Plan which commits to shrinking the community's carbon footprint by half and adopting state of the art environmental practices. These would include green buildings; a rebuilt, walkable, mixed-use downtown; green infrastructure to manage stormwater; and powering the town with renewable energy.

Visible green improvements include high-efficiency LED street lighting, hybrid electric municipal vehicles, plug-in stations at municipal parking lots, energy-efficiency audits and upgrades of municipal offices and services, and small subsidies for energy and water efficiency efforts and for tree planting by homeowners.

Encourage and recruit companies with green technology to come to Versailles such as Tech firms or corporations that higher paying jobs and have smaller negative footprint on the environment than large factories.

A superior pedestrian experience and a vibrant downtown, assisted by such design features as ample sidewalks; convenient, well-highlighted crosswalks; vehicle traffic at calm speeds; entertaining and enjoyable storefronts abutting or very close to the sidewalk; in particularly warm seasons having some shading.

To tie in with the county's need for transportation, consider an electric vehicle shuttle service (which would also involve the need to install charging stations). A rural community in California's agricultural center started a project like this to get farm workers to and from work and to important appointments. It could also be used to help our aging population get to the grocery or food pantry.

9. **Do you support or oppose the extension of Falling Springs Blvd. at or near U.S. 62?**

Lisa Johnson- I would like to understand the purpose of this by pass. If the concern is to reduce traffic through down town, there are ways to enforce ordinances which restrict semi-trucks and trailers through downtown from 6:00-8:00 a.m and 4-6 pm., the most congested times of day.

If the reason is to save 10 minutes commute to Frankfort, I disagree with a By Pass.

By Passes have been shown to increase vacancy rates in down town areas and to reduce economic vitality of small business shops. This is exactly what we do NOT want to occur in Versailles.

10. **Agriculture is an annual \$565 million-dollar industry that supports 1 in 3 jobs (specifically 2,783 jobs) in Woodford County. Woodford County farmland also anchors a burgeoning travel and agri-tourism industry. What are some ideas and specific policies that you have to strengthen the agriculture industry sector within the Versailles city limits?**

Lisa Johnson- Promote the Farm-to-Table movement and Agri Tourism which is very popular in Europe and is growing in our area right now.

Support our local Woodford County Farmer's Markets

As your Mayor, be a supportive spokesperson for the Ag community, Bourbon Industry and Equine businesses.

A common theme in many of the programs that have been sponsored in Woodford County include the fact that the agricultural cluster creates both a direct and indirect impact on the ability to attract and retain employees as well as the ability to attract visitors. As Mayor, I would want policies in place to protect our farmland, to ensure there is buffering between the ag cluster, neighborhoods and proposed industry, and I would work toward locating growth within the current urban services boundary before seeking to annex more land into the urban services area.