



Application for City Council District 2 Vacancy

Important Information to Know:

Deadline to submit application is **November 21, 2025**, by **5PM**.

Interviews and possible appointment will be held **December 2, 2025**, at **6PM (Mandatory Attendance)**

Applications can only be submitted to cityclerk@cityofmerced.gov or at the Clerk's Office, 678 W. 18th St., First Floor

Merced City Charter Section 403C – “A vacancy in the office of a City Council Member, from whatever cause arising, shall be filled by appointment by the City Council from qualified electors in the City, and the appointee shall hold office until the first Tuesday following the next general municipal election and until his/her successor is elected and qualified.”



Application for City Council District 2 Vacancy

Profile

Yang Pao Thao
First Name Middle Last Name
Initial

Vantage Financial Alliance National Marketing Director
Employer Job Title

[REDACTED]
Email Address

[REDACTED] _____
Primary Phone Alternate Phone

Are you 18 years of age or older? (Required)

Yes No

Question applies to City Council

Do you live in the City of Merced? (Required)

Yes No

[REDACTED] _____
Street Address Suite or Apt

Merced CA 95341
City State Postal Code

Question applies to City Council

Are you a registered voter in the City of Merced? (Required)

Yes No

Communication

The City of Merced uses email as a preferred method of communication regarding your application. Is this acceptable to you?

Yes No

If you selected no, please identify how you would like to be contacted:

Interests & Experiences

Tell us about yourself, and why you are applying for the City Council District 2 Seat:

What would you bring in the way of perspective or experience to the City Council?

What is your understanding of the roles and responsibilities of a representative of

Council District 2?

What do you perceive to be the primary issues facing District 2 and issues for the whole city?

Any other comments you would like to add that may assist the City Council in their decision?

Interests & Experiences

1. Tell us about yourself, and why you are applying for the City Council District 2 Seat:

I was born in Laos and came to the United States in 1991 when I was seven years old. My family made Merced our home, and I have lived in District 2 for nearly my entire life. I attended Merced schools and later earned a Bachelor of Science in Community Health from Fresno State. After college, I returned home because this community raised me, and I wanted to build my life here.

Over the past twenty years, I have worked in public service, nonprofit leadership, and financial services. During the H1N1 emergency response, I educated residents, health educators, and nurses on prevention and vaccination practices, and helped prepare emergency evacuation and mass-care sites. Later, in the Small Claims Court system, I guided residents through filing requirements, evidence preparation, and court procedures.

I have also managed nonprofit programs that support families and youth through budgeting, cultural preservation, mentorship, and community outreach. In the financial sector, I train and mentor agents and help families strengthen their financial stability.

For the past two years, I have served on the Merced Planning Commission, reviewing zoning amendments, subdivisions, conditional use permits, and development proposals. This experience strengthened my ability to evaluate staff reports, consider neighborhood impacts, and make decisions aligned with city policy and long-term planning goals.

I am applying for the District 2 seat because this district shaped who I am. Many of the oldest neighborhoods—particularly those south of Childs Avenue and west of MLK—are long overdue for reinvestment in lighting, sidewalks, alleys, and drainage. I want to help modernize how repairs are prioritized so areas with aging infrastructure and high foot traffic are addressed more efficiently. District 2 deserves a dependable voice that understands its history and its needs.

My role, if appointed, is to serve District 2 while also supporting policies that move the entire City of Merced forward. Strong districts create a strong city, and both responsibilities go hand in hand.

2. What would you bring in the way of perspective or experience to the City Council?

I bring the perspective of someone who grew up in District 2 and understands the daily challenges facing families in the historic core of the district, especially in the neighborhoods near Childs Avenue, V Street, and MLK. These areas reflect both the struggles and the potential of our community.

My career has been rooted in service. During the H1N1 response, I worked in public health supporting emergency preparedness and community education. In Small Claims Court, I helped residents navigate complex legal procedures. These roles strengthened my communication skills and my ability to guide people through government systems.

As a nonprofit program manager, I oversaw budgets, coordinated volunteers, prepared grant reports, and supported youth and family programs. In the financial sector, I train and support agents, lead workshops, and help families plan long-term financial strategies.

My Planning Commission experience is one of my biggest strengths. I have reviewed residential and commercial proposals and balanced resident concerns with staff recommendations. This experience has prepared me to evaluate development, infrastructure impacts, and zoning decisions with fairness and practicality.

I also support balanced and responsible housing growth. My vision includes more affordable and mixed-density housing options that fit the character of the neighborhoods along Childs, Canal Street, and MLK, while ensuring infrastructure improvements keep pace with development.

Together, my public service background, community involvement, and Planning Commission experience give me a grounded, thoughtful perspective I will bring to the City Council.

3. What is your understanding of the roles and responsibilities of a representative of Council District 2?

A council representative must balance district needs with citywide responsibilities, ensuring that policies support both the residents they represent and the long-term health of the entire City of Merced. A representative must listen to residents, respond to concerns, and ensure community voices guide city decisions.

The role requires reviewing budgets, development proposals, capital improvement plans, and policy updates with a focus on safety, infrastructure, fiscal responsibility, and long-term impacts. A councilmember must communicate clearly, work collaboratively with staff and fellow councilmembers, and ask informed questions. They should evaluate each issue on its merits, using facts, staff analysis, and community input.

My Planning Commission service has prepared me to read and interpret staff reports, zoning proposals, and infrastructure impacts. I understand how land-use decisions affect neighborhoods along Childs, Canal, MLK, and V Street, where many of the district's infrastructure and safety concerns require close attention.

If appointed, my first 90 days would focus on walking the neighborhoods in the central part of the district, meeting with residents and city staff, reviewing ongoing infrastructure projects, and identifying urgent priorities.

4. What do you perceive to be the primary issues facing District 2 and issues for the whole city?

Much of the aging infrastructure and reinvestment needs in District 2 are concentrated in the central neighborhoods south of Childs Avenue and west of MLK. These areas face several longstanding challenges:

- Public safety issues — including speeding, insufficient lighting, and inconsistent visibility at key intersections

- Illegal dumping and blight — especially in older alleyways near Canal Street, T Street, and the MLK corridor
- Aging infrastructure — drainage problems, sidewalk gaps, poor pavement, and alleys that have not been modernized in decades
- Limited youth programs and safe community spaces
- Underinvestment in parks and small strip parks, including areas surrounding McNamara Park and the Childs corridor

Another priority for me is the condition of our neighborhood parks. In these older neighborhoods, families rely on several small strip parks for daily play and outdoor activity. I would like to work with the City to establish a scheduled maintenance cycle to ensure these parks remain clean, safe, and welcoming. Regular upkeep strengthens community pride, supports youth, and improves quality of life.

I also want to work with City staff and engineering to help create safe cycling corridors that connect the neighborhood streets of District 2 to the larger bicycle and pedestrian network in Central and North Merced. Families should have safe, reliable routes for recreation, school commuting, and accessing community amenities. Better cycling connections will strengthen safety, mobility, and neighborhood connectivity.

Citywide, Merced faces broader issues that directly affect District 2:

- Access to affordable housing and responsible growth
- Supporting local businesses and job creation
- Long-term planning for traffic, streets, and infrastructure
- Maintaining strong levels of public safety staffing
- Building trust and communication between residents and the City

My approach to the budget is to prioritize essential services first—public safety, clean neighborhoods, and infrastructure maintenance. I also believe in transparency and support providing residents with simple and accessible information about how city funds are allocated.

District 2 must be included in Merced's long-term planning, and the city must reinvest in its oldest neighborhoods to ensure equitable growth.

5. Any other comments you would like to add that may assist the City Council in their decision?

My connection to District 2 is lifelong. I grew up in the neighborhoods south of Childs Avenue and west of MLK, and these communities shaped who I am. I understand the challenges and strengths of this area because I lived them firsthand.

I bring experience in public service, nonprofit management, financial literacy, and land-use decision-making. I will approach the budget responsibly, support essential services, and advocate for reinvestment in the district's aging neighborhoods. I also believe strongly in transparency—residents should easily understand how their tax dollars are used.

If appointed, I will work collaboratively with residents, city staff, and the council. I am ready to serve with integrity, respect, and a commitment to improving the quality of life for every resident of District 2 and strengthening the city as a whole.

I am prepared to begin this work on day one.