

City of San Marcos Councilmember Candidate Questionnaire 2024

Maraya Dunn

1. **Please describe your experience, areas of expertise and leadership style and how you feel they make/will make you an effective Councilmember in San Marcos.**

As a small business owner in downtown San Marcos, I have gained firsthand experience navigating the challenges and opportunities that come with running a business in our vibrant community. My role requires me to wear many hats—whether it’s managing day-to-day operations, developing strategic plans, or fostering relationships with customers and local stakeholders. This multifaceted experience has honed my ability to lead with agility, creativity, and resilience.

I have made a commitment to both my business and the broader community. I understand the importance of making informed decisions that balance fiscal responsibility with the need for growth and innovation. My experience has taught me the value of collaboration, as well as the importance of listening to diverse perspectives to find solutions that benefit the entire community.

In terms of leadership style, I am collaborative and results-driven. I believe in empowering others, building consensus, and leading by example. My approach is grounded in transparency, open communication, and a deep respect for the people I work with and serve. I am not afraid to roll up my sleeves and get involved in the details when necessary, but I also understand the importance of stepping back to see the bigger picture.

2. **What do you see as the biggest challenges our local businesses face? What can you do as a Councilmember to help overcome them?**

Local businesses in San Marcos face significant challenges due to bureaucratic hurdles and excessive red tape that can deter new ventures and hinder existing ones. These obstacles slow down the permitting process and create unnecessary delays, making it difficult for entrepreneurs to succeed.

As a council member, I would work to streamline these processes, making it easier and faster for businesses to get up and running. My focus would be on eliminating barriers, ensuring a transparent and efficient permitting system, and providing consistent support to businesses of all sizes, whether new or legacy.

Additionally, I would advocate for better access to resources that help small businesses stay competitive and grow, such as financial support, training, and networking opportunities. My goal is to create a business-friendly environment in San Marcos where businesses can thrive and contribute to our community's economic vitality. I am committed to promoting economic prosperity, supporting small businesses, and ensuring that San Marcos remains a place where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

3. **How will you balance citywide discussions and bridge the gap between private citizens and the business community when they are at odds on issues that impact the business/economic environment or other vital issues that affect San Marcos?**

If elected to council, I will prioritize open communication and collaboration to balance citywide decisions, ensuring that both private citizens and the business community have their voices heard. By actively engaging with all stakeholders, I will work to find common ground and develop solutions that address the concerns of residents while also fostering a healthy business environment. My approach will focus on transparency, inclusivity, and fairness, ensuring that the needs of our community are met without compromising the economic vitality of San Marcos. By bridging any gaps between these groups, I will support policies that reflect the best interests of the entire city, promoting growth and prosperity for everyone.

4. **What can the City do to encourage existing business growth and new business attraction?**

To encourage existing business growth and attract new businesses, the City can eliminate bureaucratic hurdles and reduce red tape, making it easier for entrepreneurs to establish and expand their ventures. Streamlining processes and ensuring transparency will create a more business-friendly environment. Additionally, the City should ensure that businesses of all sizes have equal access to resources, including financial support, training, and networking opportunities, to help them prosper and remain competitive. By attracting businesses that offer good-paying jobs that raise the median income, we can enhance economic stability and improve the quality of life for all residents. Creating a supportive environment that fosters growth and sustainability will make San Marcos an attractive place for both new and existing businesses to thrive.

5. **If elected, what will you do to further/strengthen the relationship between the City of San Marcos and Texas State University?**

When elected, I will actively work to a stronger partnership between the City of San Marcos and Texas State University by promoting open communication and

collaborative initiatives. I will support joint efforts that benefit both the university and the broader community, such as expanding internship programs, creating opportunities for local businesses to engage with students and faculty, and working together on sustainability projects to protect our river and environment. Additionally, I will prioritize affordable housing solutions that cater to both students and residents while advocating for infrastructure improvements that benefit the entire community. By fostering regular dialogue between city officials, university leadership, and student organizations, we can ensure that the goals of both the city and the university align, contributing to mutual growth and success. We need to establish a true transparent partnership with Texas State.

6. **What improvements do you believe are needed for adequate transportation infrastructure in San Marcos?**

We need ADA sidewalks that connects one side of San Marcos to the other and well-lit unimpeded areas throughout the community that promote a safer environment. Add more streamlined bus routes to cater to all San Marcos residents. Our differently abled citizens are limited by our current transportation options. That must change.

7. **A major issue facing the region is housing availability, lack of workforce housing, and housing affordability and diversity. If elected what actions would you take to create more housing choices in San Marcos?**

As a renter, I understand firsthand how challenging and expensive it is to buy a home in our community. Additionally, my mother, who is on a fixed income, struggles to find affordable housing options that meet her needs. If elected, I would prioritize increasing the availability of diverse housing options, particularly for those on low and fixed incomes. This includes advocating for the development of more affordable and workforce housing, as well as incentivizing builders to create a wider range of housing types that cater to different income levels. I would also support policies that make homeownership more accessible to first-time buyers and work to ensure that everyone in San Marcos has access to safe, affordable housing. My goal is to advocate for a more inclusive and equitable housing market that reflects the diverse needs of our community.

8. **If you received a \$1 million grant to use for the city any way you wanted, what would you do with it and why?**

If I received a \$1 million grant for the city, I would invest in enhancing downtown lighting to improve safety, walkability, and the overall appeal of our vibrant downtown. Well-lit public spaces create a more welcoming environment, encouraging both residents and visitors to spend more time downtown, supporting local businesses

and boosting the economy. Infrastructure like lighting provides immediate benefits to all businesses, regardless of tenure, and enhances the safety and experience for everyone.

Also, I would like to use the other half to fund a legacy program for businesses with over 10 years in operation. This program would provide grants that would allow tenured businesses to keep their doors open by providing the means for emergency situations that would affect their day-to-day operations. For example, if a local business floods and needs flooring and plumbing repair, this grant would provide the assistance needed.

9. **Please review the San Marcos Chamber’s “Government Relations & Advocacy Guiding Principles” document. Do you agree with all of these statements? Please describe below any statements you do not agree with.**

I fully support and agree with the guiding principles outlined in the San Marcos, Texas Chamber of Commerce Government Relations & Advocacy document for 2025.

10. **Any additional information you would like members of the San Marcos Area Chamber of Commerce to know?**

Being a small business owner, I understand stability is the key for success for all business’s especially small businesses. This, too, allows me to have plenty of personal experiences with people of this community especially in the downtown area. I have also served on various boards such as Planning and Zoning, the Main Street Advisory Board, and the board for Sights and Sounds of Christmas. This has given me a bit of experience collaborating with others in similar roles. I am a woman of my word; my word is bond. My commitment to this community and its businesses, coupled with my experience and leadership, will guide me as I continue to advocate for the prosperity and growth of San Marcos.