

## City of San Marcos Councilmember Candidate Questionnaire 2025

### Joshua Paselk – Candidate for Place 2

**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 landscaping, irrigation, and outdoor construction, I've spent decades managing growth firsthand. In many ways, I've been in the "growth management business" my entire career — balancing progress with protecting resources and making sure projects improve the communities they serve. I know what it takes to budget responsibly, hire and train employees, and navigate city regulations while delivering results for families, schools, and businesses. My work has always required collaboration — with customers, contractors, educators, and city staff — and that experience translates directly to city leadership. The most pressing challenge in San Marcos isn't just growth, it's learning how to work together again. My leadership style is collaborative and grounded in common sense. I will work across city government, Hays County, SMCISD, Texas State, and nonprofits to foster a culture where partnerships are the standard.

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

The first challenge businesses face today is simply finding employees. Potential workers don't just walk in the door anymore, and too often they enter the job market without the training or sense of value they need to succeed. In some ways, technology has created more separation from the physical workforce, leaving businesses struggling to connect with talent. The solution is stronger partnerships between businesses and our educators — SMCISD, Hays County schools, and Texas State — so we are working in lockstep to prepare students for real jobs and career paths here in San Marcos. By aligning our workforce pipeline, we can strengthen local businesses while ensuring that growth remains connected to our community values and resources.

**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?**

Balancing competing interests starts with respect and relationships. Right now, too many conversations happen in silos — businesses talk to businesses, residents talk to residents, and government makes decisions without enough collaboration. As a Councilmember, I will prioritize open forums that bring Hays County, SMCISD, Texas State, social services, businesses, and

residents together at the same table. Only by building trust across these groups can we preserve neighborhood character while guiding growth responsibly.

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

San Marcos can encourage business growth by showing that we are a city ready to move forward together. Too often, the regulatory process slows or even stifles the ability of small businesses to grow. Having leadership at the top that understands growth is here — and is prepared to manage it in a positive, balanced way — is critical. Just as important, we all must begin speaking the same language about growth. If residents, businesses, educators, and government approach it from conflicting perspectives, we'll stay divided. But if we align our goals and recognize that growth can be managed responsibly, we can create a culture where businesses feel supported, residents feel heard, and San Marcos thrives.

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

Texas State University is one of San Marcos' greatest assets, and right now the momentum in our community is closely tied to the partnership we build with the university. Having Texas State here gives our city credibility and influence that can unlock resources for our schools, businesses, and nonprofits. I know some longtime residents have felt that the city is overshadowed by the university, but with the new administration at Texas State, that concern no longer reflects reality. The leadership there is committed to collaboration, and we are already seeing results. In partnership with senior staff at SMCISD, student scores have risen across the board in the last two years. Educators are choosing a positive narrative, and they want to see their students thrive. City leadership must embrace this momentum and strengthen partnerships so the success of our students and families becomes the success of our city.

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

Let's be honest — we all wince when the train horn blares right in the middle of dinner or a school day. It's a reality in growing San Marcos, where train crossings often stop traffic and test our patience. Thankfully, the city is already acting: San Marcos is working to reinstate "quiet zones" at crossings by addressing deficiencies noted by the Federal Railroad Administration — including updating warning devices, medians, and signage — with completion expected by late summer 2025. To plan longer-term solutions, we'll need to tap into TxDOT's Project Tracker and master plans, and coordinate with the Railroad Commission and Union Pacific. As Councilmember, I'd lean into those partnerships to ensure San Marcos moves smoothly — not just on wheels, but also in spirit.

**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?**

San Marcos has already taken steps to expand affordability, from the Strategic Housing Action Plan to CDBG-funded programs that support home rehab, rental assistance, and demolition for unsafe structures. The city also partners in tax-credit housing projects and works with the Housing Authority to provide direct assistance. My stance is simple: these efforts are good, but they must be pushed forward with urgency. By adopting the full housing plan and aligning with Hays County, SMCISD, Texas State, nonprofits, and developers, we can ensure teachers, first responders, and working families can afford to stay in San Marcos while preserving our character and resources.

**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 given a \$1 million grant, I would invest it directly into strengthening small businesses — the backbone of San Marcos. Too many of our local shops, contractors, and service providers struggle with workforce shortages, rising costs, and regulatory hurdles. With targeted grant funds, we could expand access to small business loans, provide workforce training programs in partnership with SMCISD and Texas State, and create incubator or co-working spaces for local entrepreneurs. Supporting small businesses means supporting

families — because every thriving business creates local jobs, invests in our neighborhoods, and keeps our economy rooted here in San Marcos.

**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.**

To me, economics isn't just about business — it's about how people, businesses, governments, and communities work together to manage our shared resources and build opportunity. That's the kind of economics I'm interested in. I support the Chamber's guiding principles of job growth, housing, public safety, and water conservation, but I believe the foundation for achieving all of them is partnership. The city cannot recruit jobs without working with SMCISD and Texas State to train a workforce. We cannot preserve the San Marcos River without nonprofits and social services engaging the public in conservation. And we cannot foster public safety or inclusive growth without businesses, neighborhoods, and government speaking the same language about

our future. I see my role on City Council as a connector — someone who makes sure these conversations happen and keeps us focused on shared goals, not divisions.

**10. You may use this opportunity to provide any additional information you would like members of the San Marcos Area Chamber of Commerce to know.**

San Marcos is defined by its river, its culture, and its people. The challenges we face — growth, housing, water, and transportation — are real, but our greatest challenge is cultural. We must learn to work together again. As a father, business owner, and longtime resident, I believe in a future where Hays County, SMCISD, Texas State, nonprofits, and the City of San Marcos move in the same direction. My campaign is rooted in collaboration, common sense, and kindness. But I also want to challenge our community. The truth is, change doesn't start with government — it starts with us. Each of us must ask: What will it take for me to help make this change? Success comes when people know their why and embrace the how. The passion and tools we bring to the table are what drive results. As John C. Maxwell said, "A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way." That's the kind of leadership I want to bring to City Council — not just for today, but so my two sons and future generations can find opportunity, build careers, and raise families right here in San Marcos.

# # #