

City of San Marcos Mayoral Candidate Questionnaire 2026

*Please provide questionnaire responses by September 4, 2026 via email to chamber@sanmarcostexas.com.
(Please keep responses to each question to 150 words maximum.)*

Your Name: Amanda Rodriguez
Candidate for Mayor, City of San Marcos

1. Tell us about the experience, strengths and leadership style you would bring to the role of Mayor. What would you most like to accomplish during your term?

From our public schools to graduating from Texas State University, San Marcos is the community that raised me. Prior to serving on Council, I spent five years working in the Texas Legislature as a Legislative Director and five years serving as Board President of Centro Cultural Hispano de San Marcos. Like the people I serve, I have faced trials and triumphs that shaped my commitment to meaningful results. These experiences taught me the importance of proactive governance, collaboration, and finding common ground with every stakeholder.

Our city is booming, and we must manage this growth responsibly to keep attracting residents and businesses while prioritizing those who already live and operate here. My top priority is tackling affordability for residents and small businesses struggling with skyrocketing costs of living. I will focus on investing in infrastructure, supporting robust housing options and wraparound services, and protecting our natural resources.

2. San Marcos continues to grow, but the City also faces difficult budget decisions. Where do you think the greatest opportunities are to control costs, improve efficiency, or better prioritize spending while maintaining quality city services?

San Marcos is blessed with our bountiful natural resources, but our greatest asset is our people. I am committed to ensuring we have the infrastructure in place so our residents can reach opportunities, jobs, and training resources. Infrastructure and housing investments support our local workforce and allow them to learn, grow, and work in San Marcos rather than leaving for a major metroplex. I also see opportunities to reduce spending by eliminating duplicative bureaucracy and cutting red tape to support small businesses who are finding themselves having to abide by state standards and redundant city policies. I've also opposed and urged the city to reassess vendor contracts where we are not receiving the best market deal or spending is misaligned with resident priorities. I know how hard San Marcos residents work to make an honest living and that's why I will always be a prudent steward of our tax dollars.

3. If the City received a one-time \$10 million grant with no restrictions, what would be your top priority for investing those funds and why?

While \$10 million is a significant amount, it can quickly become a line item on a major city project. I would use these funds for homeless navigation and eviction prevention services. So much of our spending now is reactive and ineffective in addressing homelessness. Navigators can connect homeless residents with resources, healthcare, job training, and housing to help them get off the streets and back on their feet. Eviction prevention helps tenants keep up with rent payments and saves landlords from going to court. Funding these services is often a challenge, but I believe a proactive approach and reimagining what public safety truly means for our community will save us money in the long run and pay dividends. I also believe \$10 million can go very far in a city like ours. When results are realized, I believe the philanthropic sector will step in to continue funding the program.

4. What do you see as the biggest challenges facing local businesses today? As Mayor, how would you help create a climate where existing businesses can succeed and San Marcos can attract new employers and investment?

While serving on our Main Street committee and Downtown TIRZ Board, I have listened to how our small business owners are navigating soaring costs, the challenges of starting and growing a new business, and falling consumer confidence. On the TIRZ Board, I've worked to revitalize downtown by allowing Business

Improvement Grants (BIG) to be used for interior enhancements and allocating increased funds into the BIG. The City can further support small businesses by eliminating duplicative red tape and promoting regulatory consistency. For example, businesses who sell liquor must follow TABC rules while also going through the City's arduous Alcohol Conditional Use Permit process. I also believe wise investments in sidewalks, green space, and other hygiene factors are key to attracting new job creators and promoting quality of life.

5. Growth continues throughout San Marcos, but infrastructure does not always keep pace. What infrastructure investment should be the City's highest priority over the next five years? How would the City pay for it?

One of the top resident demands has been a connected sidewalk network. Over the next five years, the City should prioritize infrastructure that improves connectivity while also strengthening the systems that support our growth. This includes our water, wastewater, and electric utility systems, as well as investments in transportation considering these systems are interconnected. Optimizing our infrastructure requires each of these systems to be robust and harmonize to support sustained growth.

We must be proactive; if we wait to build infrastructure we won't be able to support or attract continued growth and investment. Projects should be funded through a combination of local, state, and federal resources, and exploring private partnerships where possible.

6. Housing affordability and availability continue to be challenges in San Marcos. What actions would you support to increase housing choices while balancing infrastructure, neighborhood and community concerns?

Recently, I passed amendments to modernize our Land Development Code, allowing housing developers flexibility to maximize available space and expand mixed-use and multi-family housing. I want the City to continue reassessing our ordinances to identify and remove barriers to responsible, high-quality housing that is affordable across all income levels. I also support incentivizing developments that align with the Vision SMTX Comprehensive Plan and are a good fit for our community.

While San Marcos has tools at our disposal to address housing affordability and availability, we must understand that we are not insulated from the national housing crisis. Inflation, tariffs, workforce shortages, and high interest rates all have local impacts. Our residents are counting on us to do everything we can to make housing more attainable, including continuing to work with our state and federal counterparts to keep San Marcos a community where people can afford to live, work, and thrive.

7. The Mayor is often called upon to bring people together when residents, businesses and Councilmembers have differing views. How would you help build consensus while ensuring that different perspectives are heard and decisions move forward?

I believe in proactive governance and am not afraid to do what is right, even when it is hard or not politically popular. On Council, I have always holistically evaluated all factors. I believe in listening first, with an open mind, to understand the concerns of all sides. I believe in good-faith negotiation, considering what matters most to each side and identifying where there is room for compromise.

So much of what government does is pick winners and losers, but I prefer to bring people together to strive for win-win solutions through thoughtful compromise, while never compromising on our values. Even when we disagree, my door remains open, and I look forward to tackling the next issue where we can come together. I understand how critical it is to act in a timely fashion. We must lead with action, not reaction, requiring collaboration, open-mindedness, and good-faith negotiation.

8. Tell us about a position you held strongly but later changed your mind about. What caused you to reconsider your viewpoint, and what did you learn from that experience?

Previously, I didn't have a clear view or understanding of what economic development meant. I believed it only meant handouts favoring massive corporations at the expense of the everyday person. Essentially, a bad deal with no strings attached that somehow we were all paying for. Now, I have a much deeper understanding of

what economic development can truly look like and how it can be an engine for our city. I know there are good actors who are also good neighbors and job creators in San Marcos. Economic development should lift up small businesses, create good jobs, and build strong communities. When done right, it is mutually beneficial to both industry and community. I've also learned that campaigning and governing are two completely different things. I love that this is a non-partisan office and one that allows me to work with people from all backgrounds and beliefs. There is no room for political tribalism if you want to achieve what is necessary and deliver real results.

9. The Mayor serves as an important ambassador for San Marcos and works with Texas State University, Hays County, state leaders and regional partners. What relationship or partnerships would you prioritize to help move San Marcos forward?

As an alumna of Texas State University and lifelong San Marcos resident, I will ensure our partnerships are mutually beneficial and share fairly in costs and rewards. I will continue fostering the Core Four Partnership while supporting workforce training, talent pipeline, small business support, public safety, and transit partnerships with the University.

I spent five years in the Texas House, working on the state budget over two bienniums. I've built rapport with key lawmakers on both sides of the aisle and will leverage those relationships to advance our city's appropriations requests and advocate for local control. Through organizations like the Texas Municipal League and Local Progress, I've built relationships with officials across our state and nation and exchanged ideas for making our city more efficient. I understand how to work with state and federal counterparts to bring our tax dollars back to San Marcos. Finally, I will increase investment in our grant department to aggressively pursue these dollars.

10. What is one decision made by the current or a previous City Council that you believe was the right decision, and one you would have handled differently? Why?

A decision I continue to stand behind is considering data centers an impermissible use within the City. Other cities, in all 50 states, are following our lead. Rural communities are learning they have little to no protections from a data center sharing a fence with them. We were able to use what local control remained to protect our community. The evidence is clear that data centers only create jobs during construction, after that they become a drain on the resources communities depend on and a public nuisance. The community spoke out clearly in no uncertain terms. Forcing economic development that does not fit with the expressed desires of our constituents risks damaging public sentiment towards economic development overall.

An area where I took a different approach than previous councils was to modernize our Land Development Code to support zoning flexibility and diversified options for community and housing development.

11. If you had the authority to rewrite one City ordinance tomorrow, what would it be, why would you change it, and what unintended consequences would you anticipate?

While it may not be popular, I believe that San Marcos' approach to the Alcohol Conditional Use Permit (CUP) process in the city is overly onerous, costly, a poor use of city and staff resources, while also creating unnecessary legal exposure. I wholeheartedly agree that our community needs protections around the sale of alcohol. Those protections exist through state and federal regulations. This is just one example of inefficiency. We have a responsibility to evaluate whether our policies are effective, sustainable, and the best means of achieving their intended outcomes.

The current CUP process requires significant staff time and resources to administer, enforce, and regulate a patchwork system that duplicates efforts already undertaken by the Texas Alcohol and Beverage Commission. We should refocus those resources where they can have the greatest impact and maximize our talent.

Our Council meets frequently and has the agility to address unintended consequences as they arise.

12. Please review the San Marcos Chamber's "[Government Relations & Advocacy Guiding Principles](#)" document. Do you agree with all of these statements? Please describe any statements you do not agree with.

Yes, I look forward to collaborating on our shared priorities.

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