

San Marcos Chamber of Commerce Candidate Questionnaire 2026

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Candidate for City Council Place 6

1. Tell us about the experience, strengths and leadership style you would bring to City Council, and what you would most like to accomplish during your term?

Owning and operating a small business taught me to listen to what a client actually needs, respect a budget, and deliver the project we agreed on. My work is with land and water flow, adapting to a rising heat index and deeper droughts. A council member who has handled those constraints firsthand is an asset.

I raised four children in San Marcos, and they are now choosing to come back here to raise their families and start businesses. As a young single mother working multiple jobs while finishing school, I know the hardship of making ends meet and how much family and community support matters.

What I most want to accomplish is a budget that reflects what this community needs: strength, sustainability, and the trust of hardworking families. My past service shows I listen, and then I do the work.

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?

One of the clearest opportunities is trimming our overuse of out-of-town consultants and surveys whose results may never be used. We spent \$80,000 on a new city logo when talented staff across our departments could have produced one, funded through HOT dollars, with bonus money to the winning department keeping that spending in house. I'd apply the same scrutiny to contracts like the \$775,000 conceptual design for a leased downtown City Hall.

Consultants are sometimes necessary. When they are, they should be local, understand our challenges firsthand, and be contractually obligated to train our staff to take the project over at the right point, so we build internal capacity instead of dependence.

We should also expedite community-adopted plans. Residents get exhausted when they are asked to engage, get invested in a survey or a plan, and then watch nothing happen for years.

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?

I'd invest in venues for families and children, starting with a children's museum: fun, safe, and built to cultivate early STEAM interest.

Family-friendly venues attract a broader network of employers, because top talent prioritizes quality of life and employers follow the talent. Cities that invest this way tend to have lower crime and safer neighborhoods. Parks, accessible youth activities and museums signal sound municipal funding and planning, investors read family-centered cities as stable and low-risk, families drive consistent revenue for local retail and services, and companies want to partner with local, family-oriented institutions.

I'd also like the city, the university, and our nonprofits to explore whether the San Marcos Springs and our unique environment could qualify as a World Heritage Site. That designation would draw visitors who come for exactly what we are working to protect.

4. What do you see as the biggest challenges facing local businesses today? What can the City do to help existing businesses succeed and attract new employers and investment? *137 words*

The biggest challenge is cost: financing a start-up or expansion, landing the upfront small business loan or investor, and finding the right niche in a college town.

During my time on council, we helped create the COSM's in-house economic development team, which now offers business expertise in local business retention and expansion, connects owners to local, state and federal grants to offset financial constraints and streamlines permitting so businesses save time. Small businesses matter because a large share of their revenue stays local, unlike national chains that send profits out of state. We should also allow more neighborhood-scale retail, which strengthens neighborhood connections and commerce. Complete, active neighborhoods, ones that work for young professionals through retirement age, with simple amenities within walking distance, are attractive to employers as well as people that want to retire in place.

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?

Mobility. More options for reaching daily needs cuts traffic and air pollution and lowers the cost of large road projects. Sitting in the center of the congested I-35 corridor, we should be building partnerships for interurban shuttles, rapid bus transit, or rail and integrating on-demand micro-transit with public transit and paratransit.

How we pay for it matters just as much. Development should pay for itself. High-density projects should negotiate road cost-sharing at the planning stage, instead of the bill arriving as a \$450 million road bond carried by existing residents. Deferring new impact fees so developers can file plats under the old rates moves that cost in exactly the wrong direction. Residents on fixed budgets should not be subsidizing growth.

As San Marcos's CARTS chair for six years, we negotiated becoming direct recipients of federal transit dollars and opened talks with TXST on integrated service, it's time to move forward.

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?

We have worked on our land development code for over a decade to allow more diverse housing and green infrastructure projects, we should encourage those options. As denser housing is approved, we need transit policy in place to serve it and also tools to stabilize adjacent property taxes so longtime neighbors are not taxed out of their homes, which itself drives displacement.

Large investors and development firms are buying up sizable tracts to build single-family "affordable" rentals for our service industry professionals, which pushes potential homeowners further from building their own equity. I'd rather integrate accessory dwelling units, duplex through fourplex units, and cottage courts into new development and redevelopment areas.

Rent-by-the-room does not create affordable housing for anyone. It does create opportunities for Texas State to buy additional property off the tax roll: Sanctuary Lofts and The Vistas together took roughly \$151 million in taxable value off our rolls.

7. Residents and businesses do not always agree on issues before City Council. How would you listen to competing viewpoints, weigh the broader impact of a decision, and determine what is best for San Marcos as a whole?

City Council is elected to represent all residents and all small businesses in San Marcos, and that is a responsibility.

I look for projects that protect and enhance our local culture, quality of life, and our river while supporting a sustainable economy. On large projects, I come prepared with alternatives or amendments that mitigate the potential harms while keeping the business innovations that could be a genuine economic or employment asset.

I'd get in front of issues with transparency: town halls held in the neighborhoods and among the populations that would bear the burdens or reap the benefits of a proposed development, not only at City Hall. And every development decision gets checked against the Comprehensive Master Plan this community built together. When we depart from that plan, residents deserve to hear why and have their voices heard and concerns addressed.

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?

The SMART Terminal. I was part of the council that originally approved it, based on a good working relationship with the developer, a project that would bring in rail for transporting materials, and tenants committed to sustainable, affordable building materials. Annexation meant environmental controls and tax base revenue, and regulated development meant less impact on surrounding neighborhoods.

The project did not come to fruition, in part because the developer never delivered the rail. The development is now nearly triple its original size and heavy industrial, and later elected officials did not restrict uses detrimental to the river, the neighbors, or our water sources, including data centers.

The lesson is to tighten every agreement, because you cannot control how and what a future council will amend. And when the risk factors are too high to mitigate, the right answer should just be no.

9. Texas State University is one of our community's greatest economic assets. What is one new or expanded partnership between the City and Texas State that you would like to see, and how would you help make it happen?

I'd like Texas State to be a committed partner in funding our emergency response departments. The university is exempt from property taxes and drainage fees, so the City of San Marcos provides fire and police service without compensation. With a university population of over 40,000 students in a town of 90,000, building the tax base to cover that is a serious challenge.

A safe San Marcos should matter enough to the university to cost-share in these areas, so the city can fully fund the safety services students and residents both depend on and still provide the amenities that serve existing residents and future investors.

I'd also like to see how integrating the city and university bus systems could better serve the whole community, students included. I'd open a formal cost-share conversation at the staff level, with clear numbers on what the city currently absorbs, and bring an agreement to council.

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?

Right decision: the ban on AI data centers. We do not have the water in Central Texas to support high-use industrial development. Economic development should be a reflection of our community's values, our river, and our limited resources.

Handled differently: deferring new impact fees for six months so developers can get plats filed under the old rates. Development should pay for itself. When it doesn't, the cost lands on existing residents, many on fixed budgets, through utility rates and bond packages. I'd have let the new fees take effect on schedule.

I also would not have supported the recent vote for rent-by-the-room at Hutchison and Comanche. That was a strong location for dense housing that serves everyone, particularly if our goal is a diversified downtown economy.

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?

I'd rewrite our economic incentive policy so that every incentive is measured against community values, environmental constraints, and our cultural history. We are part of a 12,000-year continuously inhabited community, possibly the oldest in North America. That should lead conversations about economic investment and long-term sustainability, not come up at the end of them.

In practice, incentives would weight toward local businesses and employers that fit our water and land constraints, with clear claw backs when commitments are not met.

The unintended consequence I'd watch for is a chilling effect: an employer we would actually want deciding San Marcos is too complicated and choosing a neighboring city with a simpler package. I'd guard against that by making the criteria published, predictable, and quick to move through, so a good project knows early where it stands instead of negotiating in the dark.

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 agree with the Chamber's guiding principles, and I'd add one clarification I'd want to keep talking about. Where the principles call for infrastructure that keeps pace with growth, I read that to mean growth paying its own way through impact fees and cost-sharing negotiated at the planning stage, rather than through bond packages and utility rates carried by existing residents. I don't consider that a disagreement so much as a question of who pays and when, and I'd welcome that conversation with Chamber members.