



YOUR business is OUR business!

150 East Lohman ** Las Cruces NM 88001 ** 575.524.1969 ** dmoore@lascruces.org

GREATER LAS CRUCES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

ELECTION 2023

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LAS CRUCES MAYORAL & COUNCIL CANDIDATES

To inform our membership & business community, we invite you to complete this questionnaire below. Your completed questionnaire, along with your resume, will be emailed to our list serve, along with posting on our website (lascruces.org). **Please submit this completed questionnaire & photo to dmoore@lascruces.org no later than Thursday, October 19th.**

DISCLAIMER: The Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce does not endorse candidates, but provides our members materials & resources to make informed decisions. Additionally, we provide general election information on the municipal elections & encourage voter participation.



CANDIDATE NAME (as it appears on ballot):Kasandra A. Gandara

PHONE:575 640-6344 EMAIL:kasandra4LasCruces@gmail.com

Election/Candidate Website: kasandraforlascruces.com

Please circle or highlight the position of which you are a qualified candidate:

Mayor

Councilor District 1

Councilor District 2

Councilor District 4

Referencing the first 7 questions, we encourage you to present your "Plan of Action" in these areas.

1. Please identify the leadership qualities & experiences you will bring to this position. .

I am a hard worker, creative and innovative leader. I use adaptive leadership principles and social work ethics in everything that I do. I have been mayor pro tem since 2019 and city councilor for D1 since 2015. I understand the Charter, open meeting act, and municipal government. I have been instrumental in establishing a strategic plan for the city that touches on economic development, quality of life, and fiscal responsibility. Several programs, such as LIGHT, a crisis mobile crisis unit, directly impacts public safety; Lift Up, addresses poverty; and Mano y Mano workforce reintegration program. I am also proud of my work to assist in developing an Economic Development Department that has focused on a fast-track policy program to include landing our first fortune 500 company and four more companies in the queue. I am also proud that we have implemented our first phase to improve our LC Innovation and Industrial Park to have flights come out of our city into Albuquerque.

I have a vision to implement a Healthy Las Cruces Framework that will focus on three areas. The three factors consist of economic prosperity for all, Quality of Life programming and implementing sustainability practices. Economic prosperity for all would be to focus on diversifying our economy to include the film/arts technology/aerospace and the medical field (to name a few). I would utilize the already established policy review committees to introduce plans for each of these areas and work to build consensus with other councilors to develop strong policies. One such policy would be to institute a Health and Human services offices to help stand up services and programs timelier.

I would work on a plan with local hospitals and chambers to recruit doctors to our city. Currently, we are conducting a SWOT analysis with our health care industry to better understand the issues and work together to solve them. I would continue with this process and listen to our subject matter experts and help where needed. I will continue to work on scaling our anti-poverty program-Lift Up. This will be crucial to bring workforce programming to distressed communities. I would continue to work on improving our parks and trails to make Las Cruces more attractive and provide more entertainment venues for our community by partnering with Visit Las Cruces.

Ensuring all voices are heard & considered can be daunting, what is your plan to actively engage citizens & businesses in the decision-making process for city policies & projects, while maintaining civility and decorum between all interested parties?

I have a 100 day plan when elected to develop a communication plan for our constituents so that they hear and see the mayor more regularly. I would like to reinstitute evening work sessions in each district highlighting city owned buildings and issues important to businesses and the people of our city. I would also like to establish a task force that includes the business community to not only build trust but to hear from them the issues first hand.

2. Economic & business development, along with talent/workforce preparation, in Las Cruces is key to our continued growth & sustainability. Please give us your definition of "business friendly" & describe your economic development plan, including entrepreneurship.

Business friendly to me means providing good customer service in an expeditious way that provides the customer everything thing they need to implement the plan either to open and or to scale out their business. I think it is taking care and consideration of the business owner's time and resources and providing warm hand offs so there is never any question what is needed.

My plan would be to continue to utilize our Elevate Las Cruces Comprehensive plan to diversify our economy in the area of aerospace, technology, film and the medical industry. More specifically I would execute the scaling out of Phase 2 of the airport rehabilitation of runway and terminal to see flights out of Phoenix or larger city, continue to work with the Chambers, MVEDA to land manufacturing companies and then work to build entrepreneurial opportunities by utilizing our tools like Size Up, LEDA, MRA, TIDD, etc. I would also like for the city to continue its efforts to focus time and energy on building up our CTE program with the schools by making internships and funding available. To be clear this is not to take the place of the private sector but to compliment what they are doing already. This would help increase our pipeline of employment opportunities to several industries.

- 3. Addressing homelessness is a complex issue. What strategies do you propose to provide support and resources for individuals experiencing homelessness while also addressing the concerns of residents and business owners? I would continue to scale out programming such as our LIGHT program to include two more teams to address crisis on the streets and in individual homes. I believe working to have more housing in the spectrum of housing types is necessary. For example, we do not have a emergency and or transitional unit of homes to address the population that needs this type of housing. I also believe we need permanent supportive housing. Much of this would need to be advocated at a state and federal level to leverage funding that is available. I believe with my already established relationships with many key legislators including the governor, I would make me the best candidate to see this to fruition.**

- 4. Over the past few years, we have experienced a tremendous growth in residential & commercial building. We often hear concerns over the amount of time it takes for permitting, inspection, etc. in order to reach occupancy. It has also been stated that many of the City's policies actually increase the cost of building, which unfortunately, is passed on to the consumer. What is your plan to balance the policies of the City with a timely process from beginning to occupancy?
I would continue to improve our one stop and consigner programming, to include utilizing the platform already purchased to inform contractors electronically of where they are at in the process. I would also like to establish a monthly meeting, to start with the homebuilders and realtors to hear firsthand the issues and strategies to resolve the issues they have with our city manager and staff.**

- 5. Ensuring the safety of our residents and businesses is paramount. What strategies do you propose to address and reduce crime in Las Cruces, while also building trust between law enforcement and the community?
First and foremost, many of the root causes to crime and public safety are poverty, mental health and addiction. I would scale out the already established program, LIGHT-our mobile crisis unit employed by paramedics and social workers to address people in crisis, so police do not have to respond to these calls. I would work to leverage the opioid settlement funding to bring a public facing short- and long-term substance abuse facility to this community.
In addition, I would continue to advocate for Law enforcement, (LE) to obtain CALEA certification. This is a gold standard in providing LE services. This is a lengthy and**

tedious process and yet very worthwhile to have for accountability, transparency and reduction of excessive use of force. I would also continue to provide our public safety officers with the resources and tools needed. This would include incentives for hiring lateral and new officers, additional academy training, an increase in the number of police aides and security in areas around our parks and city owned buildings. I would also like to continue to use large cameras in areas that are experiencing high crime. I would support the continued Build the Bridge program being offered currently which is an opportunity to build trust and inform the public about the variety of services offered.

In addition, I would like to change the speed limits in residential areas that include recreational areas where children and families frequent. I believe we should adopt Vision Zero plan, which will consist of developing a task force that would look at a plan of action that includes adopting strategies to make it safer for pedestrians, cyclists and overall road users. Strategies such as HAWK systems, more crosswalks, speed tables could be viable options to reduce deaths and serious injuries.

6. Affordable housing is a concern for many residents and businesses. What steps do you plan to take to promote and facilitate the development of income-aligned housing in Las Cruces through your role on the Las Cruces City Council? I would work with our local legislators and federal delegation to arrange a housing conference that also brings developers, private and public banks (lending institutions,) realtors and subject matter experts to devise a plan with input from each of these sectors on prioritizing the building of a variety of housing stock. With that I would leverage the already established Land Bank Trust Fund with other state and federal funding to capitalize on the projects needed. I would also continue to look at ways to bring other developers interested in building affordable housing by offering some type of incentive program, particularly around infill areas. We have some real potential to build a variety of housing stock to include the “missing middle” in city own property all the while building up that trust fund and investing it with other sources. *I also believe working with people to help build up or clean up their credit is essential,*

Optional “just for fun” questions

- If you could have any superpower for a day, what would it be and how would you use it to benefit the residents of Las Cruces? If MY super power would be to erase trauma from one’s memory bank, I would gladly do it! Trauma and how the body keeps score prevents so many of us from reaching our true potential. I truly believe it is the root cause of poverty, crime, substance abuse etc.
- If you had the chance to invite any historical figure, living or dead, to dinner in Las Cruces, who would it be and why? What would you talk about and where would you take them in our city?
- If you could choose a theme song to represent your vision for Las Cruces, what song would it be and why?

