



YOUR business is OUR business!

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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 Friday, October 20th.**

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): _____ Tessa L. Abeyta _____

PHONE _____ (575) 644 4615 _____ EMAIL: _____ tessafortwo@gmail.com _____

Election/Candidate Website: _____

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 native New Mexican, a first generation Aggie graduate, a former small business owner, a mother of 3 amazing kiddos that attend public school in Las Cruces, and a children’s welfare advocate. I have been your Councilor in District 2 since 2020 where I have helped bring resources and policy changes back to our community. We have accomplished a lot together, including key investments in infrastructure, roads, parks, and community engagement. Through this work, I’ve been honored to have been elected by Mayors and Councilors from across the State President of the New Mexico Municipal League. I believe that I’m experienced for this role, because I am able to give Southern New Mexico the representation that it deserves.

2. 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?

As your current councilor, I have an open communication policy. We have done a lot of great things the last 4 years, from developing key infrastructure projects to planning more housing developments. These projects need time to finish. My vision for the next four years is to complete what we’ve started, bring high paying jobs to Las Cruces, continue to bring down our crime rate, and make this the best City to live in for all of us. I also have direct priorities for District 2 including the continuation of the revitalization of the El Paso Corridor, the implementation of the redesign of Tony Gomez Park and Frenger Park. I look forward to continuing to speak to businesses and residents through community meetings and town halls on how these projects impact them. I have made sure to reach out and engage with the Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce during my term, and be an active participant and listener to any concerns. I appreciate the connections I have made during the advocacy trips to Washington DC with the Chamber.

3. 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.

I am a former small business owner, and I know the challenges of developing and scaling a business. My goal is streamline processes and regulations for small businesses to succeed – we should instead invest funds into the City that help business owners navigate challenges that they may face. Small businesses are the backbone of our economy, and my goal is to support them to build, scale, and grow right here at home by giving certain incentives and recruiting a well-trained workforce. At the same time we need to look at the ties between workforce development and recruitment of larger industries. As a member of the Cities Economic Development PRC and as the Council liaison with MVEDA I see the opportunity of marketing in a regional capacity to help all of southern New Mexico thrive.

4. 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?

We have to grow responsibly as a City. This means developing housing as our population rises while ensuring there are transition programs in place for citizens who are struggling. Supportive services combined with transitional housing lead to more positive outcomes for those that are transitioning back into housing. The fact of the matter is that a high amount of Americans (not just Las Cruces) are only one emergency or paycheck away from becoming unhoused. By

helping small businesses and infrastructure scale and grow right here at home, we will be in a better position to offer high paying jobs throughout the City while still having resources for safety nets for those who are in danger of losing their homes. We also need to advocate for long term care

5. **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?**

Working with our City Manager and seeing how we can ensure consistent expectations within the inspection process and have appropriate . Sitting down with industry experts and looking at policies to see what could use updating, adapt for best industry standards, and streamline efficiency.

6. **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?**

I am proud to be endorsed by our first responders, both the Las Cruces Police Union and the Las Cruces Firefighter's Union have endorsed my campaign because I listen and work with them to get the resources they need to be successful and responsible. We will of course look at giving officers raises and adding more resources from the budget as needed, but we also need to take a community driven approach on this issue. I have plans to engage with citizens with community policing, PSA's for community members, and an open door policy with police officers and first responders so we can communicate what is working and what is not. We have to ensure when we look at officer retention we are doing so with four parts by addressing recruitment, retention, continuing education, and training.

7. **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?**

Affordable housing means that an individual or family can spend a comfortable amount of their income on housing and still make enough money to cover other costs and save for the future. I want every Las Crucean to be able to afford a house and live the American dream. In order to facilitate new home construction and fill the 5,600 unit gap, I want to bring infrastructure and technology jobs to the City, while working on zoning reform to help incentive infill opportunities.

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?**

I would like to have the superpower to read minds. The ability to listen to people and hear their true thoughts, concerns, and unfiltered opinions at all times would allow for greater ability to address root cause issues.

- **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?**

I think it would be interesting to invite the first members of the Women's Improvement Association of Las Cruces to see the city today. This association created in 1884 helped champion for a greater quality of life and other issues that we still see today. As a female elected leader I would love the opportunity to show how their advocacy translates into the community we see today. Of course they would want to see Pioneer Park, but I would make sure they saw New Mexico State University and the opportunities and education that our young adults have.

- **If you could choose a theme song to represent your vision for Las Cruces, what song would it be and why?**

- The Pointer Sisters Yes We Can.

I love this community and am proud to be raising my kids here. This song does not push past that we all come from different takes and perspectives that can be in conflict, but we can grow and succeed and build a better future. We are neighbors, friends, family and at our core we are one Las Cruces. With understanding, kindness, and thoughtful dialogue we can build a better tomorrow.

“ We have got to make this land a better land
Than the world in which we live
And we gotta help each man be a better man
With the kindness that we give”