

Candidate Responses

Questions for the Candidates for City Council

(4 questions, 75 words each question)

1. What is your position on increasing impact fees? Explain.
2. The cost of street maintenance continues to increase while the funds for repairs from the Gross Receipts Tax are declining. How would you address this problem?
3. What factors do you think contribute to the quality of life in Las Cruces? What should be the City's financial responsibility?
4. What is your vision for Las Cruces in 2040?

City Council, District 3

Dolores Archuleta



1. Transportation is one of the three impact fees being considered. I am in support of this because as so many are aware, the City historically has difficulty with road infrastructure keeping up with the residential growth demands.

2. The City has 1/4% GRT dedicated to street maintenance which currently generates about \$6M per year. While GRT growth rates are declining, the total base GRT for street maintenance is enabling maintenance of our streets. As our City grows, so does the GRT collected to cover maintenance of related roadway expansion.

3. Factors: The multi-culture heritage, great weather, open space. It is the City's responsibility to financially provide for certain programs; however, because of lack of funding for programs, it may be necessary to charge a nominal fee for some programs. The challenge is to determine which programs provide the biggest return for the public investment. I support the City using performance based budgeting to determine how taxpayer money is spent on the programs we enjoy.

4. The estimated population will be about 145 thousand, so I see Las Cruces with a vibrant downtown, ample neighborhood parks, green spaces, a thriving economy, regional transportation and much improved infrastructure; continuing partnerships between the city, county, school board, as well as public-private and regional partnerships. For this to be a vibrant community we must think regionally. It is in how we manage and plan for growth now that will make the difference.

Olga Pedroza



1. It is important and reasonable to set impact fees. Without them, residents of older, established neighborhoods have to pay for the infrastructure needed to connect the new development to the City as well as the additional services new developments require. Fees can be tailored so that new structures in old neighborhoods, where infrastructure and services are already provided are charged less than building in new developments.

2. Currently, funds for street maintenance come also from state and federal funds. These sources should be gone after again. Impact fees, if they were enacted and collected, would free money now being spent for new infrastructure to be used for existing streets. Finally, given climate change and decreasing fossil fuel availability, continued effort to make streets more friendly to pedestrians and non-motorized use would also reduce the need for repairs.

3. Our climate, NMSU, and the diversity of our

residents all contribute to the quality of life in Las Cruces. The city should continue to plan for more community feeling in neighborhoods, accommodating things like community gardens and parks. We need better public transportation and better schools to attract new families and better prepare our young people for self-sufficiency and participation in civic affairs.

4. In 2040 Las Cruces will have walkable neighborhoods with grocery stores, schools, parks and businesses accessible to residents in their own neighborhoods. It will have solar energy receptors on houses and businesses, resulting in lower utility bills. It will have corridors to hiking and nature reserves. People will be able to get to their jobs on foot, on bikes, on motor scooters and on public transportation. Its schools will graduate significantly higher percentage of students.

City Council, District 5

Gil Jones



1. Changes to how we provide infrastructure for new growth are needed. Impact fees may be the answer. Before implementation, we must consider many variables. Excessive fees will unduly burden homebuyers and an underfunded system will not allow the completion of projects. Excessive commercial impact fees will discourage important

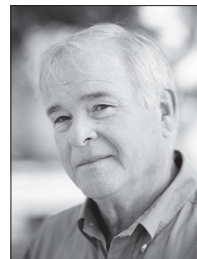
commercial development around neighborhoods, thus causing increases in traffic problems. Finally, we must recognize that impact fees will not address challenges inherited from older subdivisions.

2. All of our municipal services are being burdened by cost increases. This means difficult decisions must be made about where to cut expenses and how best to manage limited resources. This will require experience, innovation and leaders who are willing to make tough decisions. Unfortunately, we are a poor community experiencing difficult times. Therefore, it is inappropriate for our council to consider imposing higher taxes on the people of Las Cruces.

3. Exceptional geography, weather, and a unique diversity in terms of interests, age, ethnicity and other qualities contribute to our quality of life. We also benefit from a wonderful heritage. The city's responsibility is to be fiscally responsible, maximize services, and maintain infrastructure and amenities with limited resources. By doing so, our community will encourage employment opportunities, attract important services, and foster the confidence that the community will remain vibrant for years to come.

4. Our community will continue to highlight our unique qualities and embrace better practices as we move towards 2040. In 2040 we will see refined neighborhood designs, improved services and greater transportation opportunities. As we do today, our community will place great value in superior parks, additional bicycle paths and other important amenities. Furthermore, we will continue to understand the need to be good stewards of the land, mountains and the regional water supply.

Gill Sorg



1. Impact fees should reflect the real cost of new public infrastructure needed for development. Otherwise, current residents pay for these non-covered public costs, while their own neighborhoods go without maintenance and improvements. Development with more infrastructural impact, such as subdivisions built far from utility connections and existing roads, should have higher fees, while infill housing with low infrastructural impact should incur lower fees or none at all.

2. Las Cruces dedicates 1/4 of 1% of its GRT to street maintenance. Even so, the city is behind schedule on maintenance, and existing neighborhoods suffer. A thorough assessment of the backlog in maintenance should be conducted, and projects prioritized in a public process. Policies (like good transportation planning) that lower overall Vehicle Miles Traveled will help existing streets last longer.

3. Quality of life is measured by our physical wellbeing and mental happiness. Quality of life comes from good paying jobs and profitable businesses; good health care; safe neighborhoods; good educational opportunities; affordable housing, clean water and air. Recreational opportunities including sports, arts, music and festivals are important. Citizens have the decision-making power over how much they want to invest in quality of life; the councils job is to provide choice and opportunity.

4. I can envision a city with connecting walkable neighborhoods, mixed land uses, good traffic patterns and convenient public transportation. We need open space and parks, with bike/walk paths and habitat for preserving wildlife. All of this makes our city move livable and more attractive to quality businesses, and all of this is possible if we plan thoughtfully for the future.

City Council, District 6

Sharon Thomas



1. I support impact fees for roads. Currently, the City does not build roads. When developers subdivide a piece of property, they build the adjacent road. This process results in piecemeal road building. It took years to get Sonoma Ranch Blvd finished. If the City collects impact fees and builds the roads before

the development begins, we will have better connectivity and fewer maintenance problems.

2. One quarter of 1% of GRT is dedicated to street maintenance. This revenue was put in place 20 years ago, when the City already had a huge backlog of road repairs and maintenance issues. An emphasis on infill development, densifying existing neighborhoods, and providing better transit will revitalize our City, increase affordable housing, and reduce the Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) on our roads so that we can catch up on 30 years worth of backlog.

3. U.S. News and World Report named Albuquerque the number one best place to live in the U.S. Criteria were "affordable communities with strong economies and fun things to do." Major companies have chosen Albuquerque for the Rail Runner, extensive trail systems, and their many vibrant neighborhoods. In order to bring jobs to Las Cruces, the city must initiate policies that reach the same goals-- make housing affordable, strengthen neighborhoods, bring jobs, and develop community facilities.

4. If we want to avoid being another Phoenix or Las Vegas, we need to engage in serious, long range planning for the future. Successful cities attract progressive companies and high paying jobs by offering well-planned, connected infrastructure; multi-modal transportation options; investment in all their neighborhoods; development of a vibrant "heart" for their city; parks, open space, trails, museums, and other amenities; and energized residents willing to invest in the future of their city.

James W. Harbison

1. Impact fees are disproportional to low and fixed income home buyers. Since less than half of the U.S. cities use impact fees I would ask the Council what other options they considered. The CIAC has serious concerns about the City Council directed study and its land use assumptions. Additionally, I am concerned that the creation of a single service area does not satisfy the New Mexico Development Fees Act by establishing a fee-to-service...



2. First, we need to identify what are the causal factors leading to the reduction in Gross Receipts Tax and develop a plan to address those issues. Once those issues have been addressed it will be necessary to perform a gap analysis to determine the gap between the im-

proved GRT and the street maintenance costs. If the GRT is insufficient to maintain the streets additional State or Federal Transportation funding or grants should be pursued.

3. Public Safety is a foundation of quality of life and the City should be responsible for insuring the citizens are provided appropriate, police, fire, and emergency services. The City must manage the public infrastructure costs to minimize the financial impact on its citizens. There must be adequate parks, recreational and cultural facilities that are provided at no cost or minimal costs to the citizens and without adverse financial impact to the city.

4. A city that: Preserves its own clearly recognized unique character and identity which reflects its rich culture, history and tradition. Provides and encourages job growth opportunities in a wide variety of job settings, a multitude of recreational and cultural opportunities, and affordable living conditions for its new and multi-generational citizens. Actively works to attract and welcome new businesses, residents, and visitors. Provides appropriate public safety and protects individual property rights.

Questions for the Candidate for Municipal Court Judge

(2 questions, 150 words each question)

1. What experience do you believe a municipal judge needs? What does being a judge mean to you? Why would you make a good judge?
2. Are there any improvements needed in the Municipal Court? How would you, as a judge, address them?

James Locatelli



1. A good Municipal Court Judge should have a legal education, legal experience, and life experiences to enrich his knowledge of the people and community where he presides. I graduated from UNM Law School, and practiced law as a prosecutor, criminal defender and general practitioner. Prior to entering law school, I was raised in a blue-collar family and worked my way through high school and college. I have been married for 24 years, and raised a daughter in Las Cruces. These experiences taught me much, which I hope makes my decisions just as well as legal. Having been Municipal Judge for eight years, I am grateful to be allowed to continue being a judge and doing my best to insure constitutional rights are protected, trials are conducted lawfully, and that defendants, attorneys, prosecutors and police are held to high standards, as required by the Code of Judicial Conduct.

2. Under Presiding Judge Miller-Byrnes leadership, the Municipal Court has evolved into one of the most efficient Courts in New Mexico. In eight years, I am only aware of only a few cases being dismissed because of Court scheduling, a stark contrast to some other NM courts. Trial/hearing notices go out promptly. Our lines are processed promptly, and our dockets managed efficiently. Prisoners are either arraigned, or probable cause hearings for their cases are heard within 48 hours, as required by law. New facilities could improve the public's comfort, but that is a matter for the City Council to decide.