

Mayoral Candidate Questions

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As an individual seeking an elected seat to represent our community, how will you help to shape a positive, growth-oriented narrative for Hastings?

To shape a positive, growth-oriented narrative for Hastings, I will focus on several key areas: **Community Engagement:** I believe in the power of community involvement. I will actively engage with residents, businesses, and community organizations to understand their needs, concerns, and aspirations. By fostering open communication and collaboration, we can collectively shape a vision for Hastings that reflects the values and desires of its diverse population. **Economic Development:** I will work to attract new businesses and industries to Hastings while also supporting the growth and success of existing ones. This will involve advocating for policies and initiatives that create a favorable business environment, such as streamlined permitting processes, access to resources for entrepreneurs, and infrastructure improvements. **Education and Workforce Development:** Investing in education and workforce development is essential for long-term growth and prosperity. I will support initiatives aimed at improving educational outcomes, providing training opportunities for workers, and fostering partnerships between schools, businesses, and community organizations to ensure that our workforce is prepared for the jobs of the future. **Sustainable Development:** It's important to pursue growth in a sustainable manner that preserves the unique character and natural beauty of Hastings. I will prioritize environmentally friendly practices and initiatives that promote conservation, renewable energy, and responsible land use planning. **Infrastructure Investment:** Adequate infrastructure is critical for supporting growth and improving quality of life. I will advocate for investments in transportation, utilities, and public facilities that enhance connectivity, accessibility, and overall livability in Hastings. **Promotion and Marketing:** I will work to promote Hastings as a vibrant and attractive place to live, work, and visit. This may involve marketing campaigns, community events, and partnerships with regional organizations to showcase the unique assets and opportunities that Hastings has to offer. By focusing on these priorities and collaborating with stakeholders, I am confident that we can shape a positive, growth-oriented narrative for Hastings that positions it for long-term success and prosperity.



As an elected leader, how do you feel you can impact the talent availability in our community?

As an elected leader, I recognize the significant role that talent availability plays in the success and vitality of our community. Here are several ways I believe I can impact talent availability:

Education and Workforce Development: I will work to strengthen our education system by advocating for resources and programs that prepare students for the demands of the 21st-century workforce. This includes supporting initiatives that provide access to quality education from early childhood through higher education and vocational training.

Partnerships with Businesses and Institutions: I will foster partnerships between local businesses, educational institutions, and workforce development organizations to ensure that training programs align with industry needs. By facilitating collaboration, we can better anticipate and address talent gaps in key sectors of our economy.

Attracting and Retaining Talent: I will work to create a community that attracts and retains talented individuals by promoting a high quality of life, diverse cultural opportunities, and a supportive environment for entrepreneurship and innovation. This includes investing in amenities such as parks, recreation facilities, and cultural institutions that enhance our community's appeal.

Support for Small Businesses and Entrepreneurship: Small businesses are often significant drivers of job creation and economic growth. I will advocate for policies and programs that support small business development, such as access to capital, mentorship, and technical assistance, to encourage entrepreneurship and create opportunities for local talent.

Inclusive Economic Growth: I will prioritize inclusive economic growth that provides opportunities for all members of our community, including underrepresented groups and marginalized populations. By addressing barriers to employment and creating pathways to success for everyone, we can tap into a broader pool of talent and ensure that our community thrives.

Overall, my goal as an elected leader will be to create an environment where talent can flourish, businesses can thrive, and our community can prosper. By focusing on education, collaboration, and inclusive economic development, I am confident that we can attract and retain the skilled workforce needed to drive Hastings forward.

With regard to a balance between lower taxes and investment in our community, how do you prioritize making realistic choices?

Balancing lower taxes with investment in our community requires careful consideration and prioritization of our resources to ensure that we meet the needs of our residents while maintaining fiscal responsibility. Here's how I would approach making realistic choices in this regard:

Needs Assessment: The first step is to conduct a thorough assessment of the needs and priorities of our community. This involves gathering input from residents, businesses, community organizations, and other stakeholders to understand their concerns and aspirations. By identifying areas where investment is most critical, we can prioritize spending in a way that maximizes the impact on our community.

Efficiency and Accountability: I believe in the importance of efficient and accountable government. This means identifying opportunities to streamline operations, eliminate waste, and improve the effectiveness of public services. By optimizing our use of resources, we can minimize the burden on taxpayers while still meeting the needs of our community.

Revenue Generation: While lowering taxes is important for promoting economic growth and affordability, it's also essential to explore alternative sources of revenue to fund necessary investments. This might include pursuing grants, partnerships with the private sector, or targeted fees and charges for specific services. By diversifying our revenue streams, we can reduce reliance on property taxes and other traditional sources of funding.

Long-Term Planning: It's crucial to take a long-term view when making budgetary decisions. This involves considering the potential impact of current investments on future generations and ensuring that we maintain a sustainable financial position over time. By prioritizing investments that yield long-term benefits and avoiding short-sighted decisions, we can build a stronger and more resilient community for the future.

Balanced Approach: Ultimately, achieving a balance between lower taxes and investment in our community requires a balanced approach that takes into account the competing demands and priorities of our residents. This may involve making difficult trade-offs and compromises, but it's essential to strive for fairness and equity in our decision-making process.

In comparing Hastings to peer communities, how do you feel we can have a more "business friendly" climate?

To foster a more "business-friendly" climate in Hastings compared to peer communities, several strategies can be pursued:

Streamlined Regulations and Permitting: Simplifying and streamlining regulatory processes and permitting requirements can make it easier and more efficient for businesses to start and operate in Hastings. This could involve reducing



bureaucratic hurdles, speeding up approval processes, and providing clear guidance to entrepreneurs and business owners. **Accessible Resources and Support:** Providing businesses with access to resources and support services can help them navigate challenges and achieve success. This may include offering business development assistance, access to financing options, mentorship programs, and networking opportunities. By supporting the growth and development of local businesses, we can create a more supportive environment for entrepreneurship and economic expansion. **Infrastructure Investment:** Investing in infrastructure such as transportation networks, utilities, and broadband connectivity is essential for supporting business operations and attracting investment. Improving infrastructure can enhance connectivity, reduce costs, and increase the attractiveness of Hastings as a location for businesses to establish or expand their operations. **Business-Friendly Policies:** Implementing policies that are conducive to business growth and investment can help create a more favorable business climate. This might include tax incentives for businesses, zoning policies that accommodate diverse business needs, and initiatives to attract specific industries or sectors that align with the strengths of Hastings. **Promotion and Marketing:** Actively promoting Hastings as a business-friendly destination can attract investment and economic activity to the community. This could involve marketing campaigns, participation in industry events and trade shows, and leveraging digital platforms to showcase the advantages and opportunities available in Hastings. **Collaboration and Partnerships:** Collaborating with local businesses, economic development organizations, educational institutions, and government agencies can help identify opportunities and address challenges facing the business community. By working together, we can leverage collective expertise and resources to create a more supportive environment for businesses to thrive. By implementing these strategies and prioritizing efforts to create a more business-friendly climate, Hastings can distinguish itself from peer communities and position itself as an attractive destination for businesses, entrepreneurs, and investors.

Describe your thoughts about the relationship between the position of the Mayor and the City Council. Also, between the City Council and the position of City Administrator and Assistant City Administrator?

Mayor and City Council: Collaborative Leadership: The Mayor and the City Council should work collaboratively to set the vision and direction for the city. While the Mayor often serves as the public face of the city and provides leadership in policy-making and community engagement, the City Council plays a crucial role in representing the interests



of residents and making decisions on behalf of the community. Checks and Balances: The City Council serves as a check on the power of the Mayor, ensuring that decisions are made in the best interest of the community and that the Mayor's authority is exercised responsibly. Through debate, deliberation, and the legislative process, the City Council provides oversight and accountability to the Mayor's office. Communication and Transparency: Open communication and transparency between the Mayor and the City Council are vital for building trust and fostering effective governance. Regular meetings, briefings, and opportunities for public input allow for meaningful dialogue and collaboration between elected officials. City Council and City Administrator/Assistant City Administrator: Policy and Administration: The City Council is responsible for setting policy direction and making legislative decisions, while the City Administrator and Assistant City Administrator are responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations of the city and implementing the policies set forth by the City Council. Professional Expertise: The City Administrator and Assistant City Administrator bring professional expertise and administrative experience to their roles, providing guidance and support to the City Council in navigating complex issues and managing municipal affairs. Collaborative Partnership: Collaboration between the City Council and the City Administrator and Assistant City Administrator is essential for effective governance. Clear communication, mutual respect, and a shared commitment to the goals and priorities of the city help facilitate productive working relationships between elected officials and professional staff. Overall, the relationships between the Mayor, City Council, City Administrator, and Assistant City Administrator should be characterized by collaboration, communication, and mutual respect, with each party working together to serve the best interests of the community and promote the well-being of Hastings.

