

Anna Velazquez

Candidate for: Soledad Mayor

Email: nnvelazquez@yahoo.com

Occupation: District Director

Years in the Area: 50

Education: I have a Bachelor of Science Degree in Criminology from CSU Fresno

HOUSING POLICY

What is your position on affordable housing? Please be specific with regards to policies you support or oppose

I support affordable housing. The City of Soledad is currently at build out and has an active application with LAFCO approval for annexation of 647 acres of land (Miramonte) that will produce 2,500 new homes. This development produces the same housing types (single-family) that is currently unaffordable and unattainable for Soledad residents. It is imperative the city initiate conversations with a variety of for profit and non-profit housing developers to assess the financial feasibility of mixed housing types that include single-family, high density residential, townhomes, ADUs and Tiny Homes. The current housing stock in the City of Soledad is comprised of single-family housing (3 or 4 bdrm units). There is a limited supply of mix housing types and the city has not developed an affordable housing project in the past 15 years.

To accomplish development of affordable housing that is truly affordable, local governments must work with County, State and Federal officials to review and remove the current barriers that have prevented the construction of affordable housing. The City of Soledad has the second highest rate of over-crowding in Monterey County. The unsheltered homeless population in the city has increased in the past 5 years. We currently have people living ... *response exceeded 200 words.*

Do you support modifying city policies or regulations to make it easier and cheaper to build housing? If so, what specific policy changes do you support?

Yes, we must review our zoning laws to eliminate existing barriers that make it more expensive to develop affordable housing. We must revise our inclusionary ordinance to ensure they support the production of more affordable units. The city has a 20% requirement and this has insufficient to address the housing crisis. Additionally, the units needed for lower incomes households are not prioritized as developers deem them cost prohibitive. The affordable housing agreements must include language to hold developers accountable to build market rate and affordable units concurrently. We must also re-examine our existing housing policies to avoid environmental justice issues and incentivize construction of higher density housing. We must think outside of the box and leverage public and private funds to produce affordable housing that meets the needs of our residents.

Do you support requiring that “inclusionary housing” units be made permanently affordable, even upon resale? If not, please explain.

Yes, this will help preserve the affordable housing stock for a longer period of time and ensure more families benefit from the incentives afforded by the inclusionary ordinance.

Do you support requiring developers of hospitality, commercial and industrial projects that significantly increase demand for already scarce housing resources to pay housing impact fees to finance workforce housing or to build such housing themselves?

Yes! Monterey County has several examples within the agriculture industry that have produced housing for their domestic farmworkers. The timeline for housing construction is shorter than that of affordable housing infused with state or federal dollars.

How should local governments finance affordable housing?

By leveraging state or federal dollars and accessing existing financial mechanism available to local government such as, state revolving fund loans, assessment districts and special taxes. Some mechanisms may require voter approval and extensive community outreach, awareness and education.

Throughout Monterey County, local governments have approved ~21,000 single family homes that haven't been built, and another ~13,000 are proposed. The median home price in Monterey County is ~\$850,000. Do you support adding more single family homes to the unbuilt pipeline or zoning for more affordable apartments, condominiums, and townhouses?

I support zoning for more affordable apartments, condos and townhouses in order to ensure construction of units included in the cities housing elements are developed within expected timeframes and are financially feasible for developers and affordable to families.

What other housing policies do you support or oppose?

Creation of a regional Local Housing Trust Fund program dedicated to the creation, preservation and rehabilitation of affordable housing.

WATER POLICY

What specific proposals do you support to ensure your community can meet its water demands without increasing the overdraft of the County's groundwater aquifers or violating the SWRCB's Cease and Desist Order regarding taking water from the Carmel River?

Proposals that focus on water conservation, recycling and recharging and include all levels of government, local, state and federal. This includes working with key water stakeholders and Groundwater Sustainability Agencies.

For Peninsula Candidates:

Do you support expansion of Pure Water Monterey as an alternative to building the desalination plant approved by the CPUC in 2018 but now stalled before the Coastal Commission? Why or why not? On what estimate of water demand is your position based, the estimate made by MPWMD or by Cal-Am? If you support the Cal-Am desalination project, how large should it be? Who should pay for the excess capacity from the desalination project until demand materializes for its water, Cal-Am shareholders, business ratepayers, or residential ratepayers?

No response from candidate.

GROWTH POLICIES

Do you support the creation of “urban growth boundaries” or expansion of the existing boundary as a way to prevent urban sprawl, and to insure that future growth is compact, efficient, and protective of the environment? If not, what measures would you support to prevent urban sprawl? If yes, will you sponsor an urban growth boundary in the upcoming year, and make it one of your top three priorities?

I support smart growth that includes the preservation of natural lands yet allows for expansion for construction of housing that meets the needs of the people and creates a stronger local economy and more diverse communities.

Poorly planned, non-infill commercial developments and hotels create more trips and additional vehicle miles traveled on already overcrowded roads and highways. Both residents and visitors pay the price of delay and increased pollution. What specific traffic congestion relief solutions do you support?

Incentivizing Public Transit that is more frequent, affordable and reliable. I support Monterey-Salinas Transit SURF project in the Monterey Peninsula. The Busway and Bus Rapid Transit will create a bus only route parallel to highway 1 with increased connectivity and reliability. The project will include zero-emissions buses. This can serve as a model to expand to South Monterey County.

TRANSPORTATION POLICIES

Do you support roundabouts on Highway 68 and other roads? What other transportation policies or practices have you seen that local governments should incorporate?

I support roundabouts as they help to decrease pollution and provide a continuous flow of traffic that decreases congestion. I could support a limited amount of roundabouts on Highway 68.

CANDIDATE PRIORITIES

If you are elected, what will be your top three priorities?

Affordable housing for working families and young professionals, reliable and affordable public transportation options for South County residents, expansion of commercial and retail businesses while supporting small business owners.

What land use policies would you champion for the community?

I support land use policies that are less restrictive and include increased flexibility to allow for construction of housing including multifamily and low-income in order to increase supply, access and address the affordability crisis while also protecting the environment and farmland.

CANDIDATE QUALIFICATIONS

What accomplishments in your career or public service are you most proud of?

I am proud that during my public service career I have always placed the interest of the community first. I have been able to bring a greater transparency to local government in all of its functions, from city budgets, public safety, public works, planning, housing, recreation, community development and created increased opportunities for civic engagement so residents can feel heard and know they matter.

I have supported and promoted accountability of elected officials to create policy that supports the needs of the people they serve. I have established policies that are fair and equitable and represent the interest and needs of the community. I've supported policies that create systems of civic engagement that build healthy communities and strengthen community policing, housing, recreation and economic development efforts.

Experience

I have over 20 years of experience in local government—including four years as a City Council member and many more in her current position as District Director for a State Senator. My career in public service, includes 17-years with the City of Salinas where I held the position of Community Development Analyst in the Housing and Community Development Department and Neighborhood Services Coordinator in the office of the City Manager.

I brings a breadth of experience and her expertise includes administration of federal grants and the crafting and knowledge of local and state policies especially in the area of affordable housing. Additionally, I possesses strong personnel and project management skills which have proven to be foundational in building civic and regional partnerships and providing fiscal sustainability for the delivery of programs and services. I was first elected to the Soledad City Council in November 2016. During this time, I fought to establish future affordable housing units, initiated the establishment of a

Youth Council and secured funding for training and development, advocated for the first-ever inclusive park where children of all abilities can play together, established on-going quarterly meetings between the Soledad City Council and the Governing Board of the ... *response exceeded 200 words.*