

CHAMBER FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS – MELISSA YOUSSEF

1 - Do you think the city should be pro-active and begin installing water, sewer, fiber etc for the infrastructure down La Posta Road for future business park mixed use development? Yes/No and Why?

Yes, funding basic infrastructure for a light industrial park is a wise investment. With a private developer currently interested in just such a venture on La Posta Road, now is a great time for the city to act. Far too many local startups achieve success, only to have to relocate to other cities because there's no local affordable space for them to grow. A business park on La Posta Road would provide necessary and affordable space. Keeping businesses here means keeping jobs here. A win for residents and the city's budget, which would benefit from the additional sales tax revenue.

2-Do you think the city needs to begin construction on a parking garage at the transit center? Yes/No and Why?

No, not at this time. BID will soon complete a "Downtown Vision" Plan, providing valuable data re: what our future downtown will look like, traffic, parking, etc... In addition, the city will perform a formal parking study by 2023. Informal studies have suggested that 40-60% of parking places are available on any given day, supporting the idea that Durango has a "walking problem, not a parking problem". BID's Vision Plan and the upcoming parking study will help us evaluate plans/trends for change and growth, including whether or not, and if so, when, a parking garage will be needed.

3-What can the city do to encourage development of workforce housing?

We should be prepared to tap into the Colorado Stimulus Plan. Lots of money will be available in the Economic Recovery Package. We should work fast to identify city-owned surplus land that could be donated for affordable and sustainable housing projects that can be ready to launch right away. We need to actively encourage complementary public/private partnerships, seek matching funds and grant money, perhaps utilize tax credits, and leverage the Urban Renewal Authority. We should also revisit the Fair Share Policy and Transfer Fee Program, and/or consider dedicated funding sources - like the reauthorization of the 2005 sales tax.

4-What is your vision for Durango Mesa Park?

The world class bike park will be amazing, but the Durango Mesa Plan, embraced by a wide group of stakeholders in 2018, most notably the Katz Family, has a MUCH larger vision, which I endorse - a full-scale outdoor enthusiast's multi-purpose recreational park for locals, with hiking paths, equestrian trails, an amphitheater for music festivals,

venues for art fairs and cultural events, and a beautiful expanse of open space. Relocating the fairgrounds to Mesa Park is also part of the plan. Mesa Park will attract visitors from all over the region, which will boost the economy city-wide.

5-What would be the best use of the current fairgrounds if/when relocated to Durango Mesa Park?

This centrally located, easily accessed parcel of land, right on the trolley line, would be a great location for a convention/conference/event center, designed to be flexible enough to repurpose for many uses. Durango's largest hotel conference rooms can only host approximately 200 people, so we are long overdue for this type of amenity. Durango's tourist-driven economy suffers during the 'off' season. With a convention/conference/event center we could attract large groups year-round, which would hugely benefit the entire local economy. If available space remains, let's expand the Rec Center!

6-What can the city do to help retain businesses and help business startups?

As stated in #1, we can fund infrastructure for a light industrial park. We should also continue to fund the excellent organizations whose mission is to retain businesses and help business startups. La Plata Economic Development Alliance is dedicated to creating, retaining, attracting quality businesses and diversifying our economy. SCAPE, the Southwest Colorado Accelerator Program for Entrepreneurs, educates, mentors and provides access to funding for startups and early-stage businesses. We also have partnerships with the Durango Chamber (hugely positive force in driving the success of local businesses), and the Small Business Development Center (training to maximize potential of local entrepreneurs).

7-Please include a (home page) link to your candidate webpage

<http://www.melissayoussef.com/>