

Below are answers provided by City Council Candidates for the November 3, 2009 election. The responses are being printed in the exact form received by MPA. MPA does not endorse candidates. As answers are received by each candidate, they will be posted.

**Ward 3**

**Karin Uhlich (D), Incumbent**  
**Ben Buehler-Garcia (R)**  
**Mary DeCamp (G)**

**Ward 5**

**Shaun McClusky (R)**  
**Richard Fimbres (D)**

**Ward 6**

**Nina Trasoff (D), Incumbent**  
**Steve Kozachik (R)**

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**1) Although MPA is opposed to Proposition 200, we fully support the tenets of the initiative which are based off of the 2006 Sustainability Plan. If approved by the voters, what steps would you take to implement the policy? If it fails, what steps would you take to ensure that the Sustainability Plan is carried through?**

**Ben Buehler-Garcia (R):**

Because I believe that the safety of Tucsonans must be a top priority regardless of the economic conditions my answer to both questions is the same. Whether Prop 200 passes or not, it is the responsibility of the council to prioritize such that the thresholds called for are achieved.

I don't think I have heard anyone argue against public safety or the thresholds, but the sticking point comes down to funding.

My approach is to first look at what must be done to grow the overall revenue base of the city. This includes;

Growing the Pie

- Aggressive annexation targeted at areas that will generate net revenue enhancement over costs for city services.
- Proactive approach to protecting/retaining existing small businesses as well as inducing major retailers. We DO have a timing advantage in our population threshold relative to large national retailers (many retailers only begin to consider markets after the metro population surpasses the 1 million mark)

Examining internal efficiencies to achieve cost savings such as;

- Converting additional departments to "Enterprise Depts." such as Development services or TCC (privatize)
- Returning to the table with the County and other area governments to explore regionalization in areas such as public transportation and water.
- Examining and taking decisive action in areas where deficit gaps may be closed through better cost recovery for services such as parks, etc.
- Examine short turn funding patches such as sales/leasebacks to plugs short turn holes while "growing the pie" takes effect.

LAST – increasing taxes

**Mary DeCamp (G):**

If elected, I will call for an audit of the Police, Fire, & Safety departments to determine where 64% of our discretionary funding is going whether or not Proposition 200 passes. We need to investigate if there are redundancies in the equipment, positions, support services, facilities, armaments, and technologies between the departments and across levels of government (city, county, state, tribal, & federal).

If Prop. 200 fails, I would call for the full implementation of community-based policing where elected neighborhood officials interact regularly and over extended time periods with the supervisory staff for safety officers. Neighbors would be more active in watching their neighborhoods and reporting suspicious activities or areas of concern pro-actively. This approach would build community, conserve resources, and provide more effective crime reduction practices; additionally, it would be more fiscally responsible because it would activate currently dormant community resources without burdening the city's budget. I'd call for more bicycle & beat cops on walking patrols throughout neighborhoods because studies have shown that these methods invite greater participation by residents.

**Steve Kozachik (R):**

The answer to the two part question is essentially the same. I am committed to following through on what the current council and mayor said they would do in 2006. That is, bring our police and firefighter levels up to the minimums cited in the Plan (and Proposition) by the dates set out in both. The Plan gave a 10 year window. We're half way into that window – the Proposition takes us through the last 5 years.

By Charter the city is obliged to support Public Safety, Transportation and Open Space/Parks. The Plan/Proposition sets the standards which the M&C, in a coordinated effort with Police and Fire declared we should target. From a budgetary standpoint, we will set aside the target #'s for year 1 – and build the budget with those costs set aside as fixed. Consider it in the same vein as the way we are now proscribed from spending Special Revenue Funds, Internal Service Funds, Fiduciary Funds, etc. We know the target. Fix the cost associated with that target, set it aside and move ahead from there with funding decisions related to the rest of the budget.

The broader answer is that we will not be able to meet our budgetary obligations over the long run through considering cuts as the only means available to us. The city budget is now described by rating agencies as being 'structurally imbalanced.' The only long term answer to that is to grow the pie; that is, incentivize private sector growth in our local economy to feed the kitty and thereby provide funding for all of the legitimate services for which the city is obligated.

**Shaun McClusky (R):**

I believe that whether Proposition 200 passes or not, implementation of the 2006 Sustainability Plan in regards to law enforcement is key to the future of Tucson. The budget issues being raised by opponents of Prop 200 have more to do with the current City Council's lack of financial responsibility than with the cost of additional fire and police services. The first year cost of Prop 200 is estimated at \$2.5 million. The City Council just gave the old downtown fire station to the Museum Of Contemporary Art (MOCA) on a \$1 per year lease and while promising to provide \$3 million in tenant improvements to the facility. Simply stopping this deal would pay for the first year of Prop 200. And the MOCA deal is only one example of the many areas where this council is choosing to support a very limited social agenda ahead of the greater needs of Tucson. As City Councilman, I would push to support the tenets of the Sustainability Plan and put those needs ahead of the special interests currently dominating our city government.

**2) MPA's mission is to "improve the quality of life and economic vitality of metropolitan Pima County." What policies will you introduce and work to implement with the Council over the next four years to improve the business climate in Tucson?**

**Ben Buehler-Garcia (R):**

This is somewhat of a "catch all" question that incorporates issues from the next two questions.

An often-overlooked issue in economic development is "attitude". Attitude comes from the top down. A recognition of the simple fact that business drives the revenue and the jobs that support everything else we want to achieve in our community. In many cities the default position is "How can I help you achieve your goals?" not "What barriers to your success can we find in the land use code or the sign code or permitting process."

Imagine a new business coming into the city and asking the question "How long will it take me to get a building permit?" and the response they get is "When do you want to cut the ribbon and let's work back from there."

The relationship from TREO or Chamber of Commerce to the Finance division (licensing) through the Development Services process needs to be seamless.

The key is to have leadership that understands business and economic development. I have twenty years working in the trenches with business – I don't have to "develop" relationships of understanding and most importantly TRUST. The endorsement of my campaign by business organizations speaks to this fact.

**Mary DeCamp (G):**

I will promote locally-owned businesses and encourage the adoption of a local currency. That would boost the circulation of currency within our community; giving tax breaks and incentives to big box corporations just encourages a system that drains local profits and sends them to bank accounts outside our area. We need to nurture local entrepreneurs and support mom & pop operations where the quality of life for owners and employees is more satisfying and mutually reinforcing instead of supporting industries that exploit the working class.

**Steve Kozachik (R):**

I have already begun. In the past 4 weeks, I have held meetings with city officials from the department head level on down – bringing to the table with them a varied group of local business leaders for the sole purpose of sharing the concerns each side has with respect to improving the business climate in Tucson. In 2000, the City of Phoenix was named by Governing Magazine "The best run city in America." The C.O.P. mission statement contains a series of core values by which they manage their city. The first is to treat constituents with a 'customer service' attitude. The second is to develop a sense of team work within city departments, and between the city and the broader community. Neither of those values is in place either within the C.O.T. bureaucracy, or between the city and the business community. The meetings I have already held exposed several areas that we can immediately address to improve the climate between the public and private sector in Tucson. Those include streamlining the request/approval process for businesses trying to get permits through Development Services – assign a single inspector or agent to service a given client throughout the process. Further, I will work to immediately roll back the recently imposed bed tax increase. I will push to initiate a Safe Harbor Ordinance that will keep businesses open until construction causes them to have to close their doors. I will scrutinize the manner in which real estate 'deals' are constructed to insure both a level playing field for all and an appropriate return to the city for the assets under its control. And, I will continue the dialogue I have already begun between staff and business leaders to

foster a new and healthy rapport between we as public servants and the leaders of the economic engine of our community.

**Shaun McClusky (R):**

We need to dramatically overhaul the Land Use Code, permitting process and cut the red tape, to make opening and operating businesses here in Tucson easier and more efficient. We also need to work with the various department heads down at City Hall to create an environment where we put customer service first, ahead of convenience or apathy. City Council, however, is not just a position--it's a platform. Our City Council needs to stand up for Tucson not only here at home, but also at the State level. We need to push the State Assembly to enact tax cuts to make Arizona friendlier to manufacturing--particularly for the green energy and technology businesses of the future. Arizona, and particularly Tucson, is in desperate need of high-paying, sustainable jobs. And unless we take action now, this next wave in our country's economic development will pass us by the same way the technology economy has. We will end up with more \$10 / hour call-center jobs and fast-food restaurants, but without the vital industries necessary to create wealth and prosperity.

**3) Between the Claremont/McKenna study and the recent Forbes Magazine report, Tucson does not fare well in terms of cost to conduct business and the regulations placed on businesses. Where do you think the problems lie and what steps will you take to alleviate those burdens/roadblocks?**

**Ben Buehler-Garcia (R):**

Again, this comes back to what I believe is a fundamental lack of understanding of the kind of environment that business needs to succeed. The role of government is to create a receptive environment such that business is willing to take the investment risk and then government should stay out of the way as much as possible.

Too often the default setting has been to raise fees and taxes – and either wittingly (bed tax) or unwittingly (land use code) reinforcing impediments to business. This has had the predictable effect of driving business out of the city limits, further aggravating the situation.

Elected officials must exhibit the political courage to bring common sense back to decision-making – particularly in the urban core. Should we drive away a unique boutique style business simply because they are short two or three parking spaces? Why was a restaurant prevented from opening in a building that previously housed...a restaurant?

Some of these issues must be attacked at the state level. However, a significant part of the problem is the \$60 - \$80 million in state shared revenues we miss out on because of our high level of unincorporated areas compared to Maricopa county. If we addressed this issue maybe we wouldn't have to have such high local taxes.

Once upon a time in Tucson there was a "One Stop Shop" approach to evaluating building projects. Plans were submitted in advance and then ONE meeting was held between the builder/architect and representatives of all related city departments. Details were worked out and one city official was authorized to give final approval/disapproval at the end of the meeting. At the end of this one stop process the builder could then proceed in confidence that there would be no further changes or last minute requirements.

We absolutely have to address the Land Use Code more aggressively.

**Mary DeCamp (G):**

Zoning codes and fee schedules need to be revisited and a change in the regulatory attitude must be adopted. City officials in charge of permits and scheduling must be more supportive and responsive to the needs of their customers.

**Steve Kozachik (R):**

You will correctly hear a discussion about the Land Use Code, Sign Code, Certificates of Occupancy, over regulation and excessive fees. Those are all symptoms of what I see as two fundamental areas that drive us to those impediments. One is a M&C who defaults to an ideological predisposition to funding too many community issues through the public sector. The second is a M&C who pay heed to small activist groups whose own disposition is NIMBY. There must be a community dialogue that finds middle ground solutions to each of those. To the first, we are a compassionate city. In my own experience in building a school for HIV/AIDS orphans in Africa, I found the business community eager and willing to step up to the plate to help fund programs to touch the needy. I found that same thing to be true when filling a U-Haul truck to drive relief supplies to Baton Rouge after Hurricane Katrina. We will find the same to be true when we engage the private sector in helping to fund programs for the needy here in Tucson (witness the speed with which the private sector funded the 4<sup>th</sup> of July fireworks.) That will cut down on the cost of government, and reduce the incorrect need for taxes and fees that burden business. In addition, we need to broaden the scope of who has seats at the table when discussing what are legitimate 'neighborhood' issues, so that local businesses and others than the current, small and vocal minority of homeowners are heard. To limit what we as community leaders hear to the present limited group misses important contrary input that may well drive policy decisions towards those that are more 'business friendly' than what we now see occurring.

**Shaun McClusky (R):**

See my answer above for the major part of this problem. But another facet of this issue which I barely touched on above is the culture of our City Government. When it comes to business development and planning, our city has developed a culture of "no". We need to emphasize to our city employees the fact that they work for us--the taxpayers. Each and every person who lives, shops or visits Tucson is their employer--and should be treated as such. Every permit application, business license request or zoning question must be treated as both vital and time critical by the employees of our city.

**4) According to the TREO Blueprint, our community does not have the skill sets or the workforce development necessary to meet the jobs and the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. One of the recommendations is to "increase regional workforce readiness." How will you work with TREO and the business community to make the necessary workforce improvements?**

**Ben Buehler-Garcia (R):**

As an economic development professional, I worked in developing Tucson's Cluster Group Concepts and continue to use the "toolbox" approach in designing community plans.

It is very important to distinguish between job creation and job training. While having a ready trained workforce supports recruitment and retention/expansion, job training DOES NOT create jobs. It does no good to train people for jobs that do not exist.

Effective communication between the “job creators” (business) and regional training resources is essential in order to provide both “on demand” training as well as proper forecasting of the skills sets necessary for companies to remain competitive and ahead of the workforce readiness curve.

This means business engagement not only in developing curriculum but also direct investment through mentoring, apprenticeship and job shadowing opportunities. I also believe that the private sector must make a higher financial investment in certain categories of technical training in order to alleviate the burden on the public sector. If a business is benefiting from receiving skilled employees then they should invest in those programs.

Underpinning this entire discussion is the critical need for our entire community to improve the effectiveness of our K-12 system to include life skills training. This is the foundation for everything else.

We also must not overlook the value of developing jobs in the trades that provide excellent wages but do not necessarily require college diplomas. Vocational training and apprenticeship programs (Builders, unions, etc)

**Mary DeCamp (G):**

Rather than attract more businesses to Tucson, we should nurture and develop homegrown industries that focus on sustainable measures. We need to develop solar technologies, raise our own food, transition to non-petroleum based modes of transportation, develop water-wise businesses (compostable toilets, water catchment systems, xeriscaping), and mentor tradespeople.

**Steve Kozachik (R):**

Your question identifies the solution. That is, include the business community in the dialogue as to what skills are needed in the marketplace. In my recent discussions with PCIC staff, we had a lengthy conversation on this exact topic. They are doing a wonderful job through Job Path of training workers for jobs that actually exist in the community. Far too often though, trade schools, and academic settings provide training, and yet when graduates try to follow through after their training is completed, they find no market for their skills. Bring the buyer to the table up front and produce the product in which they're interested. In addition, offer tax incentives to employers for costs associated with training programs they fund internally, especially for lower level workers who traditionally represent turn-over prone employees. If one perceives his/her job as being a 'dead end' he/she is left with less incentive to stay on the job. Employers who offer training to entry level workers for jobs up the ladder within the organization will benefit from a more productive worker, and a lower turn over rate – and the community benefits from the increased earning capacity of the workforce as it filters out into the wider economy.

**Shaun McClusky (R):**

First, I'm not a big believer in TREO. Their role is one that can and should be taken on by the Mayor, City Council and their staffs--as it is in many other cities. However, this does raise a good point. We need to create a dialogue between the University of Arizona, Pima Community College, our local school districts, and business leaders throughout the community and the United States to focus on teaching our young people the skills that will directly lead to their employment in high-paying fields. One of the best examples of this is Austin, Texas where business leaders such as Michael Dell were able to work in partnership with the University of Texas and the City of Austin to focus on developing their regions' high-tech industry nearly twenty years ago. By *going to business leaders and asking what they need* in terms of workforce development and training, the University and City were able to create programs which spurred the development of an enormously successful tech economy.

**5) MPA has identified mixed-use development as a sound community planning solution yet our land use code is designed for suburban development and discourages mixed use developments. What steps will you take to recommend the necessary changes and do you think the Arizona Daily Star's charge to complete the task in 18 months is realistic?**

**Ben Buehler-Garcia (R):**

I believe that my background in businesses leads me to pursue a different posture than the incumbent – a results oriented approach rather than a process oriented approach. I recently heard that it might take up to 5 years to complete the Land Use Code revisions. Unacceptable – our business sector will have regulated into anemia in 5 years.

My approach is to ask city staff “What do you need to get this done in 12 – 18 months?” and then go about finding the resources to make that happen. We must have measurable goals and benchmarks for success and then hold staff accountable to those deadlines.

There are a number of Tucsonans who have left city government who have both the familiarity and skills to get this done on time. Why don't we engage them in the process – on a contract basis if we have to?

We talk a good game but don't step up when the opportunities present themselves. A perfect example is the One West project at Speedway/Stone. That initiative was allowed to devolve into to a debate with the neighborhood association over the appropriate percentage of affordable housing. At the end of the day what did we get? A vacant weed strewn lot.

Much is made of Portland's example of urban growth boundaries. But often conveniently overlooked in the discussion is the fact that the Portland system also provides guarantees that allows development to proceed with little obstruction in those areas designated for infill.

The Grant Road widening provides excellent opportunities to test and drive a new mixed-use strategy. The city should pursue early acquisition and parcel assemblage of orphaned properties that can then be aggressively marketed for true mixed use along high transit corridors. Some of these “new” areas could even be marketed as small business incubator spaces.

**Mary DeCamp (G):**

Re-write the land use codes to encourage urban villages, or smaller self-sustaining communities within our city. Each urban center would be anchored around food and service providers that are pedestrian accessible and linked by public transit systems (buses, pedicabs, light rail, trolley, etc).

**Steve Kozachik (R):**

In reverse order – when the leadership of a community adopts an attitude that it has “completed” any task, it is a prime candidate for stagnation. Innovative thought is stifled. So, the Star's charge to complete the task of redrawing our LUC in 18 months misses the point that as a community evolves its values and needs change. We develop and change over time – we do not conclude.

Throughout the course of this campaign I have met with a wealth of citizens who are heavily invested in seeing Tucson prosper. They bring to the table expertise in areas of hydrology, community development, waste management, environmental concerns, transportation planning and more. The sad fact is that most of those with whom I've met feel that the input they have given to city officials has not been seriously considered in the process of establishing policy. That must change. Seats at the table must include those just mentioned, along with leaders from the business community who

struggle to survive in the miasma of codes, regulations and process that characterizes 'doing business' with the city. Those voices need to be heard, and given due weight when deciding which steps we can take immediately to encourage responsible and environmentally sound development, and which steps may take a bit longer to implement. We cannot continue to push away from the table those who both want to be involved, and who bring significant expertise to the conversation. We also must recognize that regulations that address development in downtown Tucson bear little or not similarity to those that should inform development in suburban parts of our town. Any revisions to the LUC must address that reality.

**Shaun McClusky (R):**

Mixed use development and infill is highly preferable to the current Land Use Code which promotes urban sprawl and unsustainable outward development. We need to still maintain the character and integrity of our neighborhoods, but we must face the simple fact that Tucson has, and will continue, to grow. Mixed use and infill development reduces environmental impacts, reduces the cost of city services and can help promote the development of our downtown area. The code must be re-written to take into account all the challenges Tucson now faces. Doing so in 18 months may be difficult--but I agree that it is necessary. A good example to look to here is Portland, Oregon.

Portland was able to create a thriving and economically vibrant downtown largely through the use of innovative land use codes which applied, initially, only to it's downtown area. These code changes allowed developers and business owners to quickly and cheaply re-zone downtown properties for whatever uses they deemed necessary (for instance allowing someone to take an old commercial warehouse and instantly re-zone and renovate it for use as a residential apartment building.)

**6) What propelled you to run for office?**

**Ben Buehler-Garcia (R):**

Heartbreak. Tucson too often reminds me of a child that can get "A's" in school but keeps bringing home C's. I recognize the great potential of this city and am angered that we have been allowed to drift away from that.

My concerns focus around the inattention to the very issues that are being raised in this forum and my campaign platform reflects that concern; Public Safety, Prosperity, and bringing back a senses of Pride in our community.

I have dedicated my entire life to service in this community, both as a professional and as a volunteer. As a criminal justice major with over twenty years experience in community and economic development I have precisely the skill sets that I believe Tucson needs and I see elected office as merely an extension of my service to community.

I never aspired to public office and I believe that gives me an advantage in making decisions that are best for the community not what are best for re-election.

**Mary DeCamp (G):**

I see mounting global challenges – planetary warming causing climate change, a collapsing federal economy, and a fraying social fabric – and I do not hear either major political party stepping forward with bold plans to address these concerns. I come from very humble roots, but I have spent a lifetime pursuing education and developing a systems-approach to analyzing and addressing problems. I believe I have the skill set and temperament to be a responsible and competent public servant.

**Steve Kozachik (R):**

The desire to bring prudent fiscal decision making to the table, the desire to regenerate the local business community, and the desire to play a role in seeing Tucson prosper in a way that it has not over the past several years. This M&C was presented an opportunity, in an up market when the incumbents took office – they have created a mess which will take a change in mindset to dig out of.

**Shaun McClusky (R):**

Since I've been in Tucson, I've watched our city burn through tens of millions of dollars for Rio Nuevo with little tangible result. I've seen crime, graffiti and litter spread through our neighborhoods and choke our streets. I've watched as our City Council has given away millions of dollars in prime downtown real estate--with no return. Enough is enough. I decided to run for office because our city, the city I love so much, is headed down the wrong track and no one seems willing to put on the brakes.

**7) What is the biggest problem Tucson faces today?****Ben Buehler-Garcia (R):**

This question is difficult because there are so many challenges – especially in Ward III.

But the one common theme that I kept coming back to in my decision to seek office is that for too long Tucson has been held hostage and suffered from a lack of politically courageous leadership.

I have worked with city employees who truly want to innovate and move Tucson forward but are rendered motionless by fear of getting political reprisal.

We must recognize the realities of our growth and move aggressively to correct too many years of inaction.

**Mary DeCamp (G):**

The biggest problem facing Tucson today is the lack of interaction among various factions. Too quickly are our citizens drawn into “us/them” paradigms that cripple the chances of finding common ground and creatively collaborating on public policy.

I would address this by working with neighborhoods to develop living libraries where individuals instead of books could be checked out. I'd develop a program where the banker can check out the rapper and the tagger can question the cop and the Latina maid can query the heiress. We forget that whether we ascribe to evolution, creationism, or some hybrid version of where life originates, that humans are intimately tied to our planet and responsible for our environment and for caring for each other while we walk the earth together.

**Steve Kozachik (R):**

Fiscal mismanagement / poor decisions that have put our entire revitalization effort – whether Rio Nuevo or our community at large – at risk.

**Shaun McClusky (R):**

At the moment, the biggest problem we face is the proposed downtown hotel that the current city council wants to build so badly. The numbers just don't add up. If this hotel were financially feasible, there would be hotel chains lining up to build it for us. But there are not. Sheraton is willing to come in and manage the hotel we build; of course they are--when all the risk for construction and operating costs will be borne by the taxpayers of Tucson. Would they be willing to build the hotel on their own dime? They are not. Because, as the project now stands, it has almost no chance of achieving financial success. Members of the current City Council will say that the hotel is being supported by the State Legislature--*but that's because we haven't given them a better alternative.* We need to start by coming up with the plans for a fully modern convention center and arena, then develop an aggressive management plan to fully utilize the proposed facility. At that point, we can begin shopping that plan around to the major hotel chains and likely find someone willing to take on the construction of the hotel at their own expense.