



## Del Mar 2024 City Council Election

### QUALITIES OF AN IDEAL CITY COUNCIL MEMBER

In the November election for Del Mar City Council, 3 of the 5 seats currently held by Dave Druker, Dan Quirk and Tracy Martinez, are up for re-election. Our City Council election is critical because decisions made by the City Council will have a huge and long lasting impact on our small community.

The California primary election is the official kickoff of the election season. For the next 8 months we will receive ads, mailers, telephone calls, see lawn signs, and hear candidates make speeches and promises. We will experience negative campaigning and candidates evading real issues. Hopefully, Del Mar's City Council candidates will avoid these antics and will abide by [the Del Mar Code of Fair Campaign Practices](#).

<https://www.delmar.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/3822/108--Del-Mar-Fair-Campaign-PDF>

*The Del Mar City Council is responsible for setting policies. The City Staff is responsible for executing on those policies. Over the past several years the City Council has dealt with important issues such as:*

- Affordable Housing
- Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)
- Managed Retreat and its new name "Strategic Relocation"
- Short Term Vacation Rentals
- Undergrounding of utility poles
- Rail safety and proposed undergrounding
- How to spend Measure Q's sales tax revenue
- Parking

The newly elected City Council members will continue to deal with these and other important issues that will significantly impact our community.

## What are essential qualities for our City Council members?

We all want City Council members who demonstrate leadership, experience, and character. We believe Del Mar deserves someone who does not merely "say the right things" but actually "does the right thing." Qualities that would serve Del Mar well are listed below. Also cited are examples to highlight each quality in play and how it would

have improved an outcome or how it could make a difference in future council decisions.

## Uphold Del Mar's Community Plan

Del Mar's Community Plan is our "Constitution." It has served us well over the past 48 years in protecting our community. It is critical that we elect City Council members who pledge to uphold our Community Plan.

## Critical and Pragmatic Thinker

Critical thinking does not allow a pre-conceived opinion to override any discussion or decision. It requires a City Council member to understand a topic from every perspective, evaluate information generated from observation and experience, and communicate with logic and sound reason. It requires considering short and long-term impacts of their decisions or failure to take action.

### **Example: Proposed Train Track Tunnel**

Billions of dollars are being proposed to move the train tracks and possibly place them UNDERGROUND through Del Mar. Understanding the economics, true ridership, viability, consequences, residents' concerns, and expecting an honest cost benefit analysis upfront from SANDAG is important in advocating what is best for Del Mar.

## Team Player

It is essential that a City Council member not be a champion of special interests or narrow philosophies. Too often those in political office seek to convince others of the value of their own ideas but it is their foremost job to listen to the positions of others and be open to working constructively and collaboratively, regardless of how one personally feels. The need is to **represent all residents and serve the whole community**.

### **Example: Short Term Rentals (STRs)**

For close to 10 years STRs have been a controversial topic. Banning and regulation proposals from past City Councils have led to countless staff hours, lawsuits and still no resolution. Throughout the years, respondents via red dot correspondence and at City Council meetings have been unhappy with City Council's disconnected proposals on the issue. Past City Councils approached STRs as almost non-negotiable. Instead, understanding and valuing both sides' concerns could have led to a palatable compromise and a resolution of the issues as happened in nearby cities. This could have saved Del Mar all the angst and much money.

There is current hope that, after too long a process, a compromise could be close.

## Protect Del Mar

Del Mar is under siege from several governmental agencies with issues such as:

- California mandating for affordable housing that could potentially impact the character of Del Mar
- California Coastal Commission continuing to push for a Managed Retreat policy, now known as "Strategic Relocation"

- NCTD (North County Transit District) attempting to build an unsightly fence along the bluff side rail tracks
- SANDAG considering rerouting the train tracks into a rail tunnel underneath our city and homes

### **Example: Affordable Housing: Long Term Impacts**

Del Mar is required by the state to provide opportunities for 175 NEW low to moderate income dwelling units. This number is likely based on an erroneous number of jobs in Del Mar set by SANDAG. However, SANDAG refuses to provide the basis for Del Mar's jobs number. Simple evidence supports Del Mar jobs are closer to ½ of SANDAG's number which would dramatically decrease the required number of new dwelling units in Del Mar.

In 2019, 5 years ago, the City Council chose NOT to oppose SANDAG's incorrect allocation. For 5 years we have spent countless staff hours and saddled our community with high density zoning to accommodate 175 units. Unless we challenge our allocation and jobs numbers, we will have to live with the long term impacts of multi-story dense housing developments throughout our community.

The hope is that current and future City Council members will pursue a challenge to SANDAG's allocation and jobs number.

## **Fiscal Responsibility**

We are a small town with limited financial resources. As stewards of taxpayer funds, our City Council must spend wisely and not waste funds on needless consultants, legal fees, or interminable studies. Further, our City Council needs to look at ways to be more cost efficient as well as ways to capture more revenue.

### **Example: Shores Park**

Shores Park should be a community jewel. Instead because of past City Councils, Shores Park represents the poor use of taxpayer's money spent on a series of studies, workshops, presentations, and a never-ending debate on how to re-imagine Shores Park. This project has been mismanaged since the beginning and nothing has changed in all the years.

### **Example: Short Term Rentals (STRs)**

#### **TOT:**

Despite residents clearly favoring reasonable regulation of STRs, past City Councils ignored residents' wishes and have dragged their feet on STR regulations for 7 years (since 2017). One consequence – it is estimated that Del Mar would collect on average \$100,000 per month in Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) from STRs. TOT from STRs has not been collected for 7 years resulting in the loss of millions of dollars of potential tax revenue. Compare our city to Solana Beach, Encinitas, Oceanside, and other cities who found resolutions long before Del Mar.

#### **LAWSUITS:**

The California Coastal Commission rejected the city's original STR policy. Residents filed a lawsuit as well to overturn the city policy that was essentially a ban of STRs. Past City Council decisions led to Del Mar spending 100s of thousands of dollars to

defend against these lawsuits. The result is the city lost in that litigation.

The community deserves a workable STR compromise and City Council who can deliver one.

## Integrity & Trustworthy

Avoid “surprises.” Residents must be able to trust that City Council will continue to advocate for their best interests and will avoid surprise agenda items appearing or reappearing. In the past couple of years, **active monitoring** by residents of City Council meetings has been necessary to discover any “unhappy surprise” agenda topics that require residents to spring into action to prepare to comment/oppose the proposed action in order to protect the community.

**Residents** have to continually be “on guard” and thoroughly review City Council agendas and staff reports to see if somehow, somewhere in some obtuse manner a proposal that residents thought had been unconditionally rejected by the City Council, somehow resurfaces in a City Staff proposal. Residents should be able to trust the City Staff and City Council in honoring their commitment and decisions previously made so that there are no surprise flip-flop items raised or votes taken.

### **Example: Managed Retreat (now known as “Strategic Relocation”)**

Remember Managed Retreat – the purposeful, coordinated, movement of people, buildings, roads etc. away from risks. For Del Mar, Managed Retreat/Strategic Relocation is the possibility that hundreds of houses from the Beach Colony would be removed in response to possible flooding caused by sea level rise.

When Managed Retreat/Strategic Relocation first came up a few years back, residents mobilized and convinced the City Council to exclude Managed Retreat/Strategic Relocation from Del Mar’s Climate Adaptation Plan. The City Council listened to residents and adopted a policy against Managed Retreat/Strategic Relocation.

Despite this, Managed Retreat/Strategic Relocation continues to pop up. Just last year the City Council adopted Managed Retreat/Strategic Relocation for the north commercial and north professional part of town. Residents did not catch this proposal and likely the City Council inadvertently adopted it. We now have an ordinance that violates a previously announced council policy and resident demands.

Surprised again with Managed Retreat/Strategic Relocation tucked into the October 2023 staff report for another part of town, the residents mobilized in time to catch the reinserted language and got the City Council to acknowledge the error and have Managed Retreat/Strategic Relocation removed from the staff proposal.

## Transparency

Setting aside preconceived ideas and personal likes/dislikes to put the residents first, being open to feedback and communicating clearly and honestly is key for full representation for all in Del Mar.

### **Example: Short Term Rentals (STRs):**

At the January 22, 2024 City Council meeting the City Staff report “blindsided” residents with a proposal that effectively would have banned 95% of STRs within 5 years. There was no prior discussion on this nor basis for such a proposal yet, somehow, it was included in proposed new STR regulations. Once again, residents, who did not feel heard or understood, had to quickly mobilize and request the removal of this virtual outright ban.

Councilmembers Martinez, Quirk, and Gaasterland listened to a strong majority of residents and their heartfelt messages and rejected this 5 year limit on a 3-2 vote. Druker and Worden supported the proposal for a 5 year limit.

Del Mar should expect fair representation from a broad point of views for an effective diversity of thought. With the multitude and variety of issues that could affect our city in the short and long term, our hope is that these qualities are found in our next candidates.



## Woodpecker’s Policy on Endorsing City Council Candidates

*The Woodpecker does not intend to throw a log on the election rhetoric fire as we have never endorsed any candidate and we don’t intend to do that in this election. However, we do believe it is important that our elected City Council members possess qualities that will best serve our wonderful community.*

Give us your feedback at [info@forwarddelmar.com](mailto:info@forwarddelmar.com)



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