

Maureen “Mo” Padden – City Council Candidate

Business Climate / Regulations Issues

1. Rate the regulatory climate for business in the City of Pensacola. Is it Good/Fair/Bad? Explain your answer.

Good. Starting a business is easy in Pensacola with low fees and taxation. Plenty of help in the area to start a small business with the assistance of UWF. Paperwork is not difficult. As for larger businesses, I think we need to support the ballot initiative on EDATE to encourage businesses (like Navy Federal) who has been a great addition to our community and the tax relief given to the company is far outweighed by the economic prosperity gained through taxes, spending, etc.

2. Please provide any examples of how regulations have affected the life of city residents in a positive or negative way.

1. Downtown parking program has not been a positive program. It was supposed to support improvements within the downtown area but it is not clear that it has provided any real money for improvements. Residents complain that the app is difficult to use and so it has become a deterrent for people to come downtown and use the businesses. Many have gotten tickets because of lack of clarity about the program and how to use the app. It provides barriers to those who are not facile with technology.
2. The lack of regulations and ordinances regarding panhandling and homelessness has affected the quality of life of residents and is continuing to grow in numbers. Residents are afraid to let their children walk dogs or ride their bikes in neighborhoods especially after dusk. Citizens are telling me as I walk doors they feel this is a crisis that is being ignored by city leaders and they are begging for someone to listen to their concerns.

3. Name the top 3 specific city ordinances/regulations you would like to see eliminated. Explain why they should be eliminated.

1. Downtown Parking Program should be eliminated and the parking on streets should be free again. I think time limiting the parking is fine. I believe the city should look to sell some property that may be vacant or unused to private parties to specifically develop paid parking garages (vertical in nature) that are tasteful and fit with the historic nature of the neighborhood. Returning street parking to being free for 2 hours would allow the poorer folks in our area (and elderly who are tech challenged or on fixed income) to enjoy the downtown
2. Ordinances dealing with Food trucks - we need to go back and overhaul this ordinance and figure out what right looks like. While I don't want to see a ton of food trucks downtown, we should allow some to be in focal spots that are chosen so our residents can eat in restaurants or get quick bites while enjoying the downtown area. They should rotate so no one monopolizes.

3. Tree ordinances: Needs to be updated to have stronger fines for cutting down live, old, viable trees that add to the beauty of our historic community. Many developers are just cutting down trees knowing they will only have to pay what is considered a small fee in comparison to their proceeds from sale. If the fee was dramatically increased this would be a better deterrent or the city could develop a program where developers could request to remove trees in order to build but if approved would have to plant new, more mature trees in the property and perhaps elsewhere in the city in desirable locations to give back to the community and in compensation.

4. Downtown Pensacola has grown and flourished over the past decade. What areas of the city would you like to see development focus next?

First and foremost, we need a good master plan for the city so we know what we are striving to be in the end state. I would like to see smart and tasteful growth to the West on Cervantes, West of Palafox and West Jackson St that respects our historic nature and doesn't out price community members. I would also like to see North Palafox between Cervantes and Fairfield developed with mixed residential and commercial. It should be beautified with a tree canopy as the entryway to the city. I would like to replace the cement barriers placed on Cervantes with beautiful trees to create a green canopy as well. I would also like to see the Technology Campus by the Civic Center repurposed and I would like to work with the County Commissioners to revitalize the Civic Center. Any flourishing community has a good civic center for the citizens to enjoy. I still remember being able to take my daughter to concerts in the past that will no longer come here and this is an economic loss for the city.

Operations / Infrastructure Issues

5. Do you see any overlap or duplication of services between the county and the city? If so, what services, and how could these services be consolidated?

City and County do have overlap of services like Police, Fire, Jail and ECUA, etc. I am not for total integration of county and city but we could look at integration of acquisition of equipment and some things that make sense like perhaps dispatch. I do think there is merit in maintaining separate fire and police for county and city as they have unique challenges and it would put additional stressors on system.

6. Homelessness and panhandling continue to be a significant problem in the city of Pensacola. What are your solutions to this pressing problem that impacts the business community?

My solution is not to put them in a tent city under an underpass and not to house them in hotels using taxpayers money. All bad solutions that have the folks in our community livid. If you build it, they will come. We have folks migrating to our community that are homeless from other states because the word is out on the street that we are tolerant of these behaviors. We need real

solutions that don't just put a bandaid on the issue. We need accountability for the homeless to participate in programs to move back to the best version of themselves as productive citizens in the community. We should require mental health, substance abuse treatment and job retraining as necessary. We should find meaningful work for these folks as a requirement for the resources to assist them. We need smart ordinances and I do have some ideas about how to address this but we definitely need to learn from other cities that have tackled this issue.

7. Do you believe the city allocates sufficient resources for infrastructure projects? How would you prioritize these projects and fund them?

In the Navy we had a saying. We told our sailors to be "Brilliant on the Basics". Pensacola needs to take this to heart. We do not allocate sufficient resources to infrastructure but we also are not realizing the revenue stream that we could from business and development that is necessary for having the capital for these projects. I would like to see us repair and place sidewalks, fix lighting in the communities, engage FPL through the franchise agreement renegotiation to get power lines buried due to our propensity for storms and do an overall assessment of the sewage lines in our old city to see where leakage might be contribution to pollution in our waterways.

8. What do you consider to be the number one infrastructure concern for the City of Pensacola going forward, and how do you propose to address that concern?

Modernization of our power structure and stormwater management go hand in hand. We need to bury the power lines underground. An immense amount of money is spent during every storm to restore power and community members go without power that in many cases can be essential to life sustainment (elderly, severely ill). We are going to continue to experience storms on a regular basis and we should move to put in place mitigation strategies for stormwater issues and to encourage FPL to focus on burying power lines at a time they seem more focused on increasing power rates to build solar farms.

9. What would you change about the relationship between the Mayor's Office and City Council (i.e. should the Mayor attend all city council meetings, etc.)?

Ensure better clarity about roles. City Council should establish ordinances, approve budget and ensure City is executing budget appropriately. Mayor doesn't necessarily need to attend City Council meetings unless there is an issue he/she wants to weigh in on since the Mayor has veto power. Mayor should spend more time outward looking to improve community, draw in new jobs for our community and increase revenue for reinvestment.

10. What would your Five Year Plan for the City of Pensacola look like?

1. Establish a master plan for the city to outline needs of community (housing types and number and infrastructure to support) and employers that we are trying to recruit to establish here

2. Improve school performance which is important to our children future and to recruitment of good jobs to the area -Improve and expand our airport
3. Renegotiate our franchise agreement with FPL to support the needs of our citizens and community in ways that are meaningful to our livelihood

Economic Development Issues

4. What role should city government take in attracting new businesses to the area?

The Mayor should take the lead on attracting new businesses to the area with his staff. The Mayor can be assisted by the Chamber, City Council Members and other community leaders as needed and based on their expertise. Other City Leaders assist with the mission of attracting new business to the area by ensuring we have top notch schools (School Board), favorable business environment (City Council, County Commissioners), safe and clean neighborhoods (ECUA, City Council, County Commissioners, Police/Fire)

5. Which industries should the City of Pensacola should concentrate its business development/growth efforts? Be specific.

1. Small business
2. Biotechnology
3. Cloud computing and computer technology
4. Aerospace Mental health care
5. Primary Care
6. Additional hotels for tourism

6. What should the city do with excess properties that it owns? Which properties should take priority? Do you believe certain city parks could be considered excess property?

Some should be developed in the downtown area into parking structures to support the tremendous growth that has taken place--sell off to private companies to develop specifically for parking. Some should be sold for the purpose of specifically developing affordable housing particularly for city employees such as teachers, firefighters, police, etc that support our communities. I do believe that we need to do an inventory of the number of parks that we have, how often they are utilized and if they could be repurposed.

7. Tourism is an integral part of Pensacola's economy. What are the top 3 ways that the city can add value for the Pensacola business community with respect to increasing tourism and nurturing a positive tourist experience while here in Pensacola?

1. Decrease crime and improve safety
2. Address homelessness and panhandling

3. Code enforcement to reduce blight

8. What is your vision for Pensacola's waterfront from Three Mile Bridge to Joe Patti's? Feel free to incorporate the Port of Pensacola, Community Maritime Park, the Hashtag Project, and Bruce Beach.

I would like to see a tastefully developed waterline that is mixed residential and commercial that all members of the city can enjoy. It should be a mix of apartments, condos, townhomes and various stores and eateries for citizens and visitors to enjoy. It should not be more million dollar condos that are left vacant by out of state owners. It should not encroach on the waterline too much so that we create environmental issues. We need to be smart about development near the waterline and ensure that profits are not prioritized over the beauty and health of our waterline. I am in favor of increased walkability and bike ability but we need to make sure we have a good master plan for where we will end up so we don't find ourselves with gridlock on the roads after development like Destin and the surrounding areas are experiencing.