

# 2022 General Election Candidate Questionnaire

## Modesto City Council

### **District 2**

Eric Alvarez – no response received

### **District 4**

Nick Bavaro – no response received

### **District 5**

#### **Naramsen Goriel**

##### **1. What are your qualifications?**

I was born and raised in District 5 in Modesto. My grandmother's house was in district 5, my aunts houses, and my church as well. I attended Stockard Coffee Elementary School, Ustach Middle School, Fred C. Beyer High School, and Modesto Junior College. My family immigrated to Modesto in 1979 because of the political problems in Iraq.

Before I became an Attorney I was a community organizer in Modesto from 2017 to 2022. I organized 100s of events and canvassed on over 10,000 doors through my five years as an organizer. I was appointed to the Board of Zoning Adjustment in 2017 and currently sit as chairperson of the BZA for the second consecutive year and have never missed a meeting for the BZA. I sit on the Landmark Preservation Committee and I am a Board of Director for the McHenry Museum and Historical Society. In 2020, I started the Modesto Park Cleanup which organizes volunteers every last Saturday of the month to help clean up our local parks and surrounding streets.

##### **2. What would be your top priorities?**

Homelessness, Housing, Safety. My goal is to make Modesto one of the safest cities in the central valley. I will work to get homelessness off our streets and get them the help that they need. I will fight for housing across the board, and oppose any illegal dumping that will harm businesses and neighborhoods in Modesto.

##### **3. How do you evaluate the impact to business when making voting decisions?**

Stimulating our downtown economy is key to providing the city more revenue for essential services that keep our residents safe. Almost ever decision made on the council impacts businesses and we need to provide more incentives for people to shop

locally and enforce the law against those that hinder our quality of life to sustain support for our local businesses. We need to bring more businesses and retail to increase retail revenue sources over time. We can address retail retention.

- Providing local retailers with market intelligence on key consumer sergeants and local shopper propensities to purchase specific types of merchandise.

- Hosting workshops that provide local store and restaurant owners with best practices on key business topics.

- Leveraging local store marketing technology to give local retailers the ability to execute targeted marketing campaigns.

- Promoting "shop local" campaigns and highlighting local retailer success stories. Examining restaurant trends that will outlast the pandemic.

#### **4. What are your plans to make government more transparent, responsive, and effective?**

Responsive: As your Councilmember, I will always be responsive to the residents of Modesto. I will hold regular office hours to hear your concerns and thoughts about the direction of our city.

Efficient: Reducing burdens on the people and local agencies. Promote relationships between volunteers and the City of Modesto. Reducing regulatory burdens on housing, businesses for small and new businesses. Promote regulatory modernization. Identify areas with efficiency gaps.

Transparent: Review council meetings BEFORE council vote. Meet to discuss city needs to local bus owners during office hours. Seek the city to employ more diversity including women of color, immigrant communities, younger professionals.

**5. Is the organization for which you seek office operating with a balanced budget? If not, what are your plans to make the organization more sustainable?**

Budget: We have a budget shortfall of \$8.1 million for 2022-2023. This shortfall is systemic and ongoing, it will continue to increase over time. Unfortunately, cuts are inevitable due to the pandemic. I will do my best not to make cuts to important government services.

In the meantime we can use: (i) One-Time resources to delay the inevitable for one more year. (ii) continued to eliminate services and/or investments in our critical infrastructure. My budget principles. Don't spend more than you take in Don't spend one-time money on ongoing expenses Maintain prudent budget reserves Maintain strict controls on hiring and spending Fund the highest priority services first

**Jeremiah Williams**

*Good afternoon,*

*Below are my answers to the questions submitted by the Modesto Chamber of Commerce. I respectfully request the Modesto Chamber of Commerce endorsement in the election for City Council District 5.*

*Thank you for your consideration,*

*Jeremiah Williams*

**1. What are your qualifications?**

I've lived in Modesto since 1980, been a consistent community volunteer for the last 32 years, and have owned a small business in downtown Modesto since 1986. I'm running for City Council to improve Modesto and use my knowledge and experience to represent the people of District 5. My dedication and commitment to Modesto is 32 years long. I've served on numerous boards commission's, and nonprofit organizations advocating for Modesto and Stanislaus County. One particular board is the Modesto Chamber of Commerce for 12 years. I have the experience of working with others to accomplish great things for community and I will continue that as a Modesto council member.

**2. What would be your top priorities?**

My top priorities are to serve the people of District 5, improve the quality of life in Modesto, and build relationships to address issues and concerns in our community.

**3. How do you evaluate the impact to business when making voting decisions?**

When I cast a vote as a council member I will put the needs of the citizens first. Analyzing all impacts to the City and limiting unintended consequences of well meaning policies is what I will do as a council member.

**4. What are your plans to make government more transparent, responsive, and effective?**

As a council member, I will be accessible to everyone and advocate for greater community collaboration and inclusion.

**5. Is the organization for which you seek office operating with a balanced budget? If not, what are your plans to make the organization more sustainable?**

The City of Modesto is operating with a balanced budget, however, the City currently operates with a eight to nine million dollar budget shortfall that Measure H will help correct. We need the citizens of Modesto to support Measure H to ensure the City is financially sound. As a council member I will provide fiscal oversight and accountability to ensure the funds are spent appropriately to deliver the best services to the residents of Modesto.