

Chris Ricci, District 3 City Council Candidate 2020

Tell us a little bit about yourself (family, interest, education, work experience, etc).

I moved to Modesto in 1999 from Sacramento because I felt that it was a city that really needed live entertainment. I was able to establish myself here and have done hundreds of events and festivals throughout the years. I live near Roosevelt Junior High with my wife Kimberly and my sons Connor (13) and Henry (2). I have a BA in History with a minor in Business from University of San Diego. I am a huge soccer fan and often travel around the country supporting the United States National Team. I also am a passionate sailor (I really like Hobie Cats)

What is your greatest professional achievement?

Producing an event that closed down 16 blocks of downtown Modesto, brought 150 bands, on 20 stages, and 15,000 people 16 years in a row that was called X Fest was definitely my life's greatest achievement. However, my most lasting achievement is the Modesto Area Music Awards that I still produce that has been recognizing the best local musicians in the Modesto area since 2000.

Why do you feel qualified to represent district 3 (which includes all of CANA) As a councilperson?

I am an out of the box thinker that has always seen the potential of Modesto and successfully harnessed it for over 2 decades. We need someone who is willing to try new things, find new solutions, and take bold action to make our community better.

What political topics and issues are you most passionate about?

We need affordable housing. Modesto is 20,000 units below what a city of our size needs.

Economic development is another area that needs immediate action. We must create new engines to rapidly develop small businesses in the face of the collapse we are seeing as a result of Covid.

Finally, we need to develop a culture in Modesto that makes the people that live here proud to be from here.

Do you have any ideas you hope to implement during your time in office?

I have developed 100 ideas to improve Modesto. You can review them at [100 Ideas | Chris Ricci For Modesto Council Dist. 3.](#)

How do you plan to foster a healthy and vibrant downtown? Such as clean walkable spaces and appropriate businesses.

We need to create ways for businesses to build capital so that they can move back into their downtown spaces after shutting down for Covid. I also want to encourage the development of housing in the downtown core. There are many possibilities for housing in existing buildings that would create new regular customers for businesses. One of my 100 ideas is a warehouse market where vendors can rent a space monthly downtown and sell fresh meats, bread, produce etc. I think this would make downtown even more walkable and give it another unique destination.

How do you plan to clean up the parks and other public spaces to make them more 'family' friendly? Of concern to our neighbors is the use of the parks as a space for housing the homeless, drug addicts and common criminals.

One of my 100 ideas is to create park ambassadors to help monitor parks on a regular basis, organize activities for families, and help unite the neighborhood.

How do you plan to attract business to Modesto? Allowing folks to both live and work here instead of Modesto being known as a "bedroom community" for the Bay Area.

Covid is changing the economy and it's a safe bet that much of it won't change back once the pandemic is over. Knowing this, Modesto needs to improve its culture and amenities if it expects to be able to compete with other cities. If a person has a choice to base their business in Sacramento, Modesto, or Livermore what would make Modesto the top choice? Right now if you compare Modesto to similar cities we just aren't competing. The way we get more businesses here is to improve our city. I also have some ideas to bring businesses here in my 100 ideas including a "tech relocater", but I don't think we can emphasize programs like that right now as we are limited

on budget (unless we can qualify for state or federal grants to get them done).

How do you plan to balance the budget? ... taking into consideration the emerging fire and police funding crisis.

Although the task to balance the budget will be a difficult one in 2020 due to the recession, it also will be an opportunity. We are going to be forced to look at city departments and that might allow us to find ways for them to achieve the same jobs but for a lower cost. Once we've exhausted all the possibilities for cost savings, my plan will be to listen to my colleagues, city departments, city staff, and the citizens to try to make the best decisions for everyone in the city.

Do you have any ideas or plans to improve the status quo for pedestrians and those who ride bicycles in the College Area and also Modesto at large?

One of my 100 ideas is to create an East West tributary trail to connect with the Virginia Corridor. Our trail is one of the most popular attractions in our neighborhood for our families and residents. Giving them a new trail to explore would be a great addition.

Please provide any additional information or considerations for election:

Modesto is a city that desperately needs to celebrate its strength. We are a city of diverse culture, of tremendous talent, and of limitless possibilities. We need leaders that aren't afraid to try new ideas that spur development and energize our people. City government in 2020 must be about more than garbage pickup and public safety. As the world quickly changes our city government needs to be a key that constantly unlocks our community's potential by adjusting rules, publicizing opportunities, and celebrating the heroes that are making it happen every day.