



CHARLESTON CANDIDATE SURVEY

NAME: Mika Gadsden
OFFICE SEEKING: Charleston Mayor
WEBSITE: votemika.com

PRIORITIES: What are your top three priorities and why?

- Combatting the impacts of the Climate Crisis
- Creating more affordable housing options
- Managing our city's growth in a more sustainable fashion

As a working class candidate, I can say nothing has influenced my decision making on where to live or work more than these 3 core issues. With 44% of our city's available housing being occupied by renters and a hospitality/food and beverage industry that pays workers approximately \$31K/yr., having leadership in place that understands the urgency of ensuring that our workforce has access to their most basic needs is paramount.

DEVELOPMENT: Taxpayers complain a lot about too much development changing the character and nature of Charleston. What specifically would you do to make sure overbuilding stops and doesn't kill the tourism goose that laid our golden egg? Or would you continue things as usual, and why?

I reject any notion that suggests that Charleston cannot facilitate a more sustainable tourism culture while meeting the needs/concerns of its residents. By expanding our vision for tourism to include more destinations away from high traffic areas, monitoring the number of large-scale development projects on the horizon and working to insure that Charleston is able to take full advantage of the new legislative changes to our Accommodations Tax structure (having more discretion to apply funds to affordable housing initiatives), we'd be better positioned to improve, both, the tourism and residential living experience here in the Holy City.



FLOODING: Seas are rising. What specifically would you do about flooding to protect property throughout the whole city?

The mayor must meet climate change with a firm understanding of how green infrastructure solutions can serve as a type of suture that mends the gaps that gray, more traditional solutions tend to create. Things like reinvesting in our city's rain garden grant program, replacing the tree cover lost in an effort to maintain power lines, exploring the use of oysters to 1.) create reefs that slow water speeds (helps with erosion and some sea level rise) or 2.) to help improve water quality are all possibilities. Green infrastructure is regenerative, it gets better with time and is cost effective.

UNION PIER: What will Union Pier look like in five years and how will you work to make it fit in with Charleston and not become an overdeveloped monstrosity?

Charleston needs to fight for more Third Places. As mayor, I'd fight to see Union Pier look more like a reflection of our professed values as outlined in our city Climate Action Plan. I'd like to see it remain accessible to the public (free), include walkable, green spaces with native flora and fauna and be a place for families and visitors alike. I'd also like to see us engage the likes of a Robinson Design Engineers to see whether we could create anything as magical as what they were able to spearhead in Columbia, SC with the Page Ellington Park.