

April 22, 2019

Dear Mayor Sean Ford and City Council Members,

I am a grassroots community leader and I am applying to be on the Commerce City, City Council because I believe I can make a difference and move my community forward. I am very passionate about making Commerce City a destination for a lifetime. I have earned the trust and credibility of the community to continue the empowerment of residents and business owners to be proud of our community and promote our great City. I am honest, committed and a hard worker individual. I am also an immigrant women and entrepreneur that proudly reflects a big part our wonderful City.

My experience and background run profound due to the amount of time that I have lived and worked in this Community. In my early years I was privileged to work in various departments in the City of Commerce City. I started in the Community Development Department where I gained firsthand knowledge of resident's needs, government rules and regulations. My last position at the City was Community Relations Director and that position marked my lifetime commitment to support economic development and community outreach. In addition to the great experience, I was able to build strong lifetime relationships with many city employees. Thanks to the ten-year tenure at the City I have been able to accomplish many important tasks in my life. I developed community outreach efforts that are still existing and helped to establish trust and safety of our residents. I started when the City only had a few new home permits and left when there were hundreds. I also helped in the development of the recycle efforts of our City. I continue to work and to improve our community. In 2011 I founded Adelante Community Development, a nonprofit organization that supports, empowers and promotes local businesses. I have created a community free community garden. I have also been an instrumental supporter in the founding of the Commerce City Chamber of Commerce. I have been able to run a successful business for the past 12 years by making important decisions, having a business plan and understanding budgets.

I worked in the successful 2K campaign as an ambassador and chaired the business advisory committee. I believe we are the right place to live, work and play because I do that every day. I own my home and business in Derby and enjoy our parks and local business to the fullest.

My thoughts about the relationship between the Historic City and the Northern Range are each are very unique, and we should commit to listening and providing the support they need as they continue to grow. I felt that the City could improve and make stronger connection as one City. Out of the 30 years I have lived in Commerce City, five have been in the North Range and I can tell you by experience that both are unique and have strong ownerships and that it would take time and commitment to meet their unique needs. Like many, I hope to unite them and build a strong sense of belonging. However, without the proper outreach and dedication this could take longer than my lifetime.

I believe the three most pressing challenges or concerns in the Commerce City community are safety, lack of retail businesses and lack of strong education system.

The three biggest opportunities for Commerce City right now are the open space, the proximity to Denver International Airport and its diverse population. I know that there are many opportunities for Commerce City and that I why I want to be a part of the growth and direction to meet the needs of all the residents.

The concerns that I have about serving on City Council are mostly about the current and new leadership. We will be losing Mayor Sean Ford. Mayor Ford has contributed with his knowledge and strong relationships to the growth and development of our City for many years. I am positive that with the right leadership our city could prosper and the dream place for many people to call home.

Quality Community for a Lifetime means to me that I am safe, happy and encouraged to belong to this community. In Commerce City I have raised my family, I have worked for the City and opened my business. This is home and I want to assure our students have a place to learn, our parents have a place to work and our business a place to prosper.

For the past 25 years I have been an active volunteer board member for several non-profit organizations and government associations in Adams County, Colorado. I am a founder and president of Adelante Community Development and one of the founders and board members of the Commerce City Chamber of Commerce. In addition, I am a board member for the Metro North Chamber of Commerce and currently serving my first year as a board member for the Colorado Minority Business Advisory Council appointed by the Governor.

I have also been board member of The Denver Foundation, Commerce City Community Enterprise, The Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Quality Community Initiative, Commerce City Business Advisory Committee and Commerce City Business Retention Taskforce, Access Housing. My volunteer work has been in the area of social change and creating economic development opportunities for minority-owned businesses.

I am very interested in participating in the Commerce City Civics Academy. I have not participated in the past.

I have been in Commerce City since 1989.

My favorite place in Commerce City is Derby. I live and work there every day. I see this community as a jewel, and my hope is to make this a better place for all.

I thank you in advance and I look forward to working in the growth and development of our great City.

Respectfully,

Maria Gonzalez,

Maria Gonzalez



President & CEO

Top sales producer and business development professional. Results driven and highly motivated bilingual professional with over 25 years of experience in community relations with expertise in the insurance and construction industry. Respected as a proponent community leader.



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Professional Experience & Achievements

GONZALEZ INSURANCE GROUP | COMMERCE CITY, CO | Feb 2007 - CURRENT
President & CEO

Driving force behind Gonzalez Insurance Group, a \$4.0 M portfolio management insurance agency with focus on servicing insurance needs for subcontractor trades in Colorado. Overcome complex business challenges in the current construction industry using experience-backed judgement, strong work ethic and irreproachable integrity. Solid proponent of empowerment and accountability.

Strategy & Development- Characterized as a visionary, strategist and tactician, delivered over 30% annual growth. Successfully provided individual guidance to over one hundred startup businesses annually resulting in new trade name registrations, federal employer number and referred to specific resources needed. Managed a process to identify and prioritize product development initiatives based upon customer requirements.

Leadership of Human Capital- Motivate, mentor and lead highly talented professionals to reach annual goals resulting in ability to maintain 90% retention and 30% annual growth. Live the culture and lead by example. Collaborate cross-functional teams using interactive and motivational leadership that spurs people to consistently exceeded targets. Serve in an advisory capacity for clients, vendors, carriers and other insurance brokers to provide solutions to current business trends. Drove change management strategies and plans to maximize employee adoption and usage while minimizing resistance.

Operations and Outreach- Ensure agency meets the expectations of our clients by demonstrating our hands-on approach with educating and servicing a wide variety of insurance policies such as general liability and workers compensation. Communicate and educate clients on latest insurance trends, concerns and industry changes. Develop and present risk management insurance coaching and evaluations for our clients as well as other business entities. Build long term relationships with clients, carriers and community stakeholders by giving presentations to small business organizations such as Small Business Development Center, Mi Casa Resource Center and Centro San Juan Diego.

Deliver mission-critical results- Driven by a need to strategize, innovate and disprove the words *"It can't be done!"* I am now a mentor to several insurance producers in the metro area sharing my methods based on proven ethical business results and reputation.

FARMERS INSURANCE | ARVADA, CO | May 2006 - May 2007

Insurance Agent Producer

Contributed to the growth of the business to 800 policies within 10 months. As a service leader created the Latino outreach of this agency including the branding, marketing and sales for all insurance products in this agency.

Expertise

- Business Development
- Collaboration
- Public Relations
- Strategic Partnerships
- Strategic Planning
- Comprehensive Risk Assessment
- Relationship Manager
- Team Leadership
- Problem Solutions
- Stakeholder Communications
- Budget planning

Summary of Qualifications

- Strong advocate of addressing and meeting the needs of our local small businesses.
- Strategic, insightful, decisive approaches to researching, designing, launching, marketing and managing products with measurable impacts to the organization.
- Strong ability to lead a team in developing and launching new products and services.
- Leadership to build productive relationships with internal and external stakeholders.
- Empowering leader by example, eliciting consensus, contributions and teamwork.
- Recognized as a dynamic, dedicated, determined leader who takes initiative.
- Served as the spokesperson to the Hispanic community.



BANK OF THE WEST | DENVER, CO |

Hispanic Market Liaison

Dec 2004 - May 2006

Bank of the West had just moved into Colorado purchasing Commercial Federal Bank and I Led a team to strategic outreach to meet the needs of the Hispanic community all products and services during the development, launch, management and marketing phases. Served as the spokesperson to the Hispanic community in the financial decisions of their needs for mortgage loans, bank accounts and investment opportunities. Created the "Rapido card" a service that offered access to customer money in the US and their family members in Mexico with a second ATM card .

CITY OF COMMERCE CITY | COMMERCE CITY, CO |

Community Relations Director

Dec 2000 – Feb 2004

Responsible for building and strengthening relationships with city, county and state organizations to provide resources to diverse community.

Ensure smooth integration of diverse ethnic groups within the municipality. Created and implemented outreach events, and stakeholder meetings for diversity accountability. Create resource directory of local city, county and state services offered to residents. Hosted the local Channel 8 in English and Spanish to provide up to date communication to the local residents.

Collaborate closely with other stakeholders to integrate programs and development opportunities to provide a better quality of life to our residents.

Partner with local, county and state elected officials to prioritize community development issues. Contributed to the development and enhancement of new training materials for city departments. Produced and analyzed reports to determine clear next steps for improvement and increased efficiencies.

CITY OF COMMERCE CITY | COMMERCE CITY, CO |

Development Review Technician

Sep 1994 – Dec 2000

Responsible for receiving and coordinating permit applications with code enforcement, engineers, architects, plan examiners, inspectors, fire chief, economic, community development and park departments to ensure the completion of the building permit as well as to coordinate inspections for full Certificate of Occupancy for buildings in construction. Assist the general public with understanding the rules and regulation of the construction permit process and fees associated.

Education & Licenses

- *Executive Leadership Certification, Latino Leadership Institute, University of Denver – Daniels College of Business Denver, CO 2017*
- *Property & Casualty License Since 2005*
- *Life and Health License since 2005*
- *Accident & Disability License since 2005*
- *Permit Technician Cert. 1996*

Affiliations & Achievements

- *Governor appointed board member Colorado Minority Business Advisory Council 2018-Present*
- *Founder and Board of Directors Commerce City Chamber Directors 2016-Present*
- *Founder and President Adelante Community Development 2011-present*
- *Candidate for State House of Representatives District 32 in 2016*
- *Rising Star Adams County 2016*
- *Hispanic Chamber Foundation board member 2016-2017*
- *Candidate for City Council at Large, Commerce City, CO 2015*
- *Metro North Chamber of Commerce Leadership Graduate 2013*
- *Commerce City Business of the Year 2010*
- *The Denver Foundation board of director for Strengthen Neighborhood and Economic Opportunities Committees 10 years*