



Economic Development Candidates' Forum Survey Questions

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Vision for Greensboro

1. What are the three most pressing issues facing Greensboro?

Business development
Crime and public safety
Leadership

2. What do you see as your most important challenge if you are elected?

Transitioning City Council to a business/economic oriented focus

Administration of the City

3. The City Council focused heavily on Water Resources during the budget discussions. There was discussion about the creation of a Water Sewer Authority to eliminate politics from the issues surrounding rate increases and projects. Would this be an idea you would support and why?

I would be open to discussion on the merits of an Authority.

4. What role does diversity play in the Boards and Commissions of the City of Greensboro? How do you plan to ensure they are more reflective of our community?

It will be good for the city if its Boards and Commissions reflect its makeup. Participation is voluntary. The city should continue its efforts to attract more volunteers to these bodies through cable advertising, postings at the city website, and the Board and Commission meetings, where there is direct public encounter. There has to be citizen willingness to volunteer and commit personal time to make this work.

5. How do you plan to support continued business development in Greensboro?

Greensboro city government must take on a "business friendly" face. This has been missing from local discussion. It has to begin here. I would invite a dozen of the leading Greensboro business executives to a ninety minute informal SWOT meeting where I found out what they think about Greensboro's strengths and opportunities. As mayor I would begin sending signals through the city manager to staff that city government is taking a turn toward a business friendly-business oriented stance. Time spent in Charlotte or Raleigh is the best way to learn how unity can be achieved and the city started on a forward path.

The city is not adequately engaged in regional efforts to pull the Triad together. Recent regional events that I have attended attest to this fact. As a unified region we stand a chance to take on the likes of Boeing, General Electric or other multinational companies contemplating relocation. Singly as Greensboro, Winston-Salem and High Point our chances are far less in this regard. The Wyndham Championship is a good example of how regional cooperation can work. It should serve as a model.

Locally the city can do a better job of servicing the local business community through speedy processing of important business requests, sensitivity to business licensing and fees, and being ready to assist entities in every way possible. By being seen as a "business buddy" the city can become a strong partner in local business development and success.

Public Funding Investments

6. Do you support public investment such as incentives in job creation?

I would like to listen to a broad cross section of business leaders on this subject. I want to know how this group envisions the pros and cons of incentives. Greensboro needs companies that have a successful track record and a strategic reason for considering Greensboro. We want companies that will be here for the long haul. If economic payback to the city from investment in incentives can be assured with a good degree of certainty, incentives might be considered.

7. Do you see any area in which we should try to expand our incentive program (such as to the retail industry)? If so what?

Retail industry is consumer driven. If sufficient demand exists for consumer goods, existing companies can fill the void: the market decides on the level of retail activity. I think incentives for retail development would carry an unacceptable level of risk to city government.

8. Completion of road projects, such as the Urban Loop, is of critical importance in our community. What are your thoughts on financing options our community should pursue?

Traditional funding sources for highway construction have fallen off due to the recession. Near term recovery is unlikely. Out of the box thinking might include a look at a toll system. With luck Greensboro's effort to foot a portion of the cost of completion will spur NCDOT to find funding for the remaining construction. This seems to me a long shot in the current environment. The current economy really complicates planning. A new state bond issue may be out of the question, but hopefully it has been taken into consideration.

9. Public funding needs exceed the city's available revenue. Which of the following options would you support as a way to finance public budget items?

- a) Additional sales taxes.
- b) Increased user fees.
- c) Increased car registration fees.
- d) Impact fees.
- e) Real estate transfer taxes.
- f) Increased property tax.
- g) Use of special taxing districts.
- h) Bonds.
- i) Certificates of Participation.**
- j) Increase permit, inspection and plan review fees.
- k) Increased government efficiencies.**
- l) Cuts in government services.**
- m) All options should be considered.

Future Outlook

10. What options are you willing to pursue to promote regional cooperation?

- a) Tax sharing
- b) Merger of certain departments**
- c) Multi-jurisdictional infrastructure projects**
- d) Multi-jurisdictional development projects (public)**
- e) Multi-jurisdictional development projects (private)
- f) Support for inter-basin water transfers**
- g) Economic development recruitment**
- h) Regional planning collaboration**
- i) Technology compatibility**
- j) Regional water & sewer solutions or authority**
- k) A structured, formal framework for regional collaboration**

11. In what ways do you think the City government can continue to support and encourage DGI and Action Greensboro to facilitate and expand the growth of Downtown?

Adequate policing
First rate municipal services

12. There is a growing Aerotropolis in and around the Piedmont Triad International Airport. How do you think Greensboro is best served in planning for the future development of this land?

There must be a solid connection with Piedmont Triad Partnership efforts to unify the greater Triad region. When we think about the Aerotropolis we need to think regionally. Land development planning needs to encompass the planning of each Triad city near PTI; otherwise we face the prospect of conflicting ideas and policies. The recent PTP/UNCTV conference at Volvo highlighted the high level of non-cooperation. We have to overcome this to have an effective land development policy.

Planning/Land Use

13. The issue of municipal annexation has come to the forefront in recent years. What is your viewpoint regarding Greensboro's current annexation policy? Is there anything you would change about this policy and why?

The city has agreed to extend utility services into the southeastern quadrant of the county with, as I understand it, an agreement that the affected areas will eventually be annexed. The extension of utility services alone is insufficient reason to consider annexation. If significant economic development occurs in the coming years so that a sizeable tax base is created, the city might want to think about further annexation.

Quality of Life

14. What do you see as the city's responsibility for investing in programs that contribute to the quality of life, such as arts, development of trails/greenways, parks and recreation, etc.?

Each of the aforementioned activities is important to the quality of life in Greensboro. A strong vibrant economy should be capable of supporting parks, recreation, arts, etc. It is going to take years to restore our business infrastructure to a position of strength, and our standard of living will be affected accordingly. We need to temper the city's venture into further development of quality of life programs until we catch up economically. We can not afford to continue to grow municipal spending with significant tax increases.

15. What is your position regarding the Downtown Greenway and what, if anything, would you do to ensure its success?

See 14 above.

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