

Conservation Questionnaire for Wake Forest Municipal Election 2025

Nick Sliwinski

1. Do you believe the Unified Development Ordinance (“UDO”) adequately addresses key measures such as connecting and preserving green spaces, reducing pollution, protecting water resources, and initiatives like 'dark skies'?

Response: I think there is always more that we can do, but we have a great start with the Community Plan and UDO. However, we need to ensure that we stay within state law; I think that we have come up with creative ways to incentivize preservation and would always be searching for ways to improve on these initiatives.

2. What steps can the Town take to encourage developers to avoid clear-cutting and to prioritize tree and wildlife habitat preservation?

Response: Conservation subdivisions are a great solution already outlined in the Community Plan. We need to greatly encourage more conservation in development by partnering with developers who care about Wake Forest and want to listen to our citizens’ concerns. We have also just kicked off the process to craft a Sustainability Plan. By doing this, we will be successful in having a more sustainable future.

3. Given the importance of the Neuse River basin for many reasons, including protection of drinking water, how can the Town better protect lands that buffer streams of all categories, most especially those connected to, or a part of, the Smith Creek area around the Reservoir?

Response: We need to be mindful of the area around the reservoir and Smith Creek. These areas are not currently in Town limits, but should the application come up for rezoning and annexation, I believe the utmost care should be taken to only proceed with a project that will not overwhelm the area and takes into account the ecological sensitivity of the watershed.

4. How can Wake Forest effectively and efficiently work with Raleigh, Rolesville, and Franklin County to protect watersheds and green corridors that do not stop at municipal borders?

Response: I’ve worked hard to develop relationships, not only with elected officials in neighboring towns, but also with state level elected officials that represent many of these areas. Through those relationships we can have candid and productive conversations on how what we do also affects one another - both positive and negative.

5. Can rezoning and other land use approvals be conditioned on developers using stormwater management practices beyond pipes and ponds, such as rain gardens, bioswales, and permeable pavement?

Response: Can they be required? No. But we have been seeing more frequent uses of green stormwater infrastructure being used. The town can be a leader by implementing these types of improvements particularly in the downtown area; I am firm believer that we should be committed to being a part of the solution if we are going to ask others to do the same. What we need to do is advocate for these types of infrastructure with more than just asking for them, but discuss why these are preferred and needed in Wake Forest.

6. How can we grow in a way that adds affordable housing choices while still protecting green space?

Response: It may not be the most popular idea, but density is a friend of conservation and we can continue to work with applicants on striving for more conservation. Higher density housing types tend to be more affordable as well. The good news is that through our housing affordability plan and land disposition policy, the town can dictate things like affordability and conservation on specific parcels that the town already owns.

7. Would you support policies that make it easier to redevelop underused sites in already developed areas instead of clearing forests on the edge of town?

Response: Yes. I believe that infill development and redevelopment are wonderful ways to look at future growth while conserving our finite resources. We would also have to be mindful of what additional needs would come as a result of these projects, but a lot of that has been outlined in our comprehensive plans.