

2025 Charlotte City Council & Mayoral Candidate Survey

Hosted by Sustain Charlotte

As a 501c3 organization, Sustain Charlotte does not endorse candidates. The survey was sent to all Charlotte City Council and Mayoral candidates prior to the general election. We are sharing the answers we received verbatim from candidates who responded. Several of the seats this year are uncontested.

Juan Diego (J.D.) Mazuera Arias, Democrat Candidate for District 5

1. Transportation Sales Tax

Do you support the proposed one-cent sales tax referendum for transportation?

Answer: No, strongly oppose

Explanation: "I oppose the proposed transportation sales tax because it's an inequitable, unreliable, and poorly structured plan that would disproportionately harm working families. There are no established mechanisms for accountability or oversight, and the plan itself continually shifts without clear timelines or assurances of where the money will be allocated. Most major cities in the country fund their public transportation systems through multiple revenue sources, rather than placing the entire burden on a regressive sales tax. This approach would raise Charlotte's prepared foods tax from 8.25% to 9.25%, which is higher than New York City's.

This proposal fails to ensure equitable access for communities that rely on transit the most, particularly in East Charlotte and across the Crescent, effectively leaving them behind. Trust has also been eroded; local leaders have already spent over \$50 million just on designing the Silver Line extension, yet we still lack a transparent plan for construction or funding. To make matters worse, the Metropolitan Transit Commission's proposal was shaped with less than 1% community feedback, most of it coming from North Mecklenburg, meaning the voices of the very residents who depend on transit were excluded from the process.

We deserve a transit vision built on equity, accountability, and community trust, not a rushed tax increase that leaves working families paying more for less."

2. Transportation Investments (Choose 2)

Answer:

- ✓ Expanding bus and rail service
Making streets safer for walking & biking / Improving accessibility for people with disabilities
- ✓ Reducing traffic congestion for drivers

3. Safer Streets

Do you support traffic calming measures such as lowering speed limits, adding crosswalks, and building protected bike lanes?

Answer: Yes

4. Parking Minimums

Do you support eliminating parking minimums for new development?

Answer: Yes

5. Affordable Housing (Scale 1–5, 5 = strongly support)

How strongly do you support policies that expand affordable housing near transit and job centers?

Answer: 5

6. Equity Investments

Do you believe Charlotte's transportation and land use investments should prioritize historically underinvested communities?

Answer: Yes

7. Public Engagement

How would you increase opportunities for residents to have meaningful input in city planning and decision-making?

Answer: "To make city planning and decision-making truly meaningful, we need to meet people where they are and make participation accessible, not bureaucratic. I would expand opportunities for residents to engage by hosting regular community meetings in neighborhoods, not just at government buildings, and by providing language access, childcare, and flexible hours so working families can actually attend. I also want to establish a Community Planning Corps, a network of residents, small business owners, and faith leaders who receive briefings on upcoming projects and provide input to shape feedback before final decisions are made.

In addition, I believe that all major planning initiatives should include public progress dashboards that show how community feedback was utilized, and require city departments to report back to residents in plain language, not just through PDFs or presentations. True engagement means more than just collecting comments; it involves closing the feedback loop so that residents can see their input reflected in the outcomes. East Charlotte deserves to be a partner in planning, not an afterthought."

8. Environmental Priorities (Choose 2)

Which TWO environmental investments do you most support?

Answer:

Expanding parks, nature preserves, and greenways (in coordination w/ Mecklenburg Park and Recreation)

- ✓ Preserving and expanding tree canopy
- ✓ Reducing greenhouse gas emissions from transportation
- Supporting policies to incentivize redevelopment

9. Climate Leadership

How should City Council align its policy and budget decisions with Charlotte's Strategic Energy Action Plan (SEAP+) to work towards meeting Charlotte's adopted goal of becoming a net zero carbon city by 2050?

Answer: "City Council should align its policy and budget decisions with Charlotte's Strategic Energy Action Plan (SEAP+) by embedding climate and equity goals into every major investment the city makes. That means requiring departments to measure and report how proposed projects reduce emissions, improve energy efficiency, and advance environmental justice, especially in underinvested areas, such as East Charlotte. We must prioritize electrifying city buildings and fleets, expanding reliable and clean public transportation, and investing in weatherization and energy efficiency programs for low-income households to reduce both emissions and costs. Council should also ensure new development follows net-zero and green building standards, expand tree canopy and heat mitigation efforts in vulnerable neighborhoods, and create pathways for residents to access clean energy jobs. By making SEAP+ a core part of budget decisions, we can move Charlotte toward net-zero by 2050 in a way that's both sustainable and equitable."

10. Accountability

Should City Council hold departments accountable for implementing adopted plans and ordinances (e.g Strategic Mobility Plan, Unified Development Ordinance, Strategic Energy Action Plan)?

Answer: Yes

11. Candidate Statement

Why should voters who care about sustainability, equity, and livability support your candidacy?

Answer: "Voters who care about sustainability, equity, and livability can review my Sustainability and Environmental platform at jd4clt.com/platform, which outlines my priorities, emphasizing the creation of a Charlotte where growth benefits everyone. I've championed sustainable development by supporting transit-oriented, mixed-use projects that reduce car dependency and strengthen walkability. My focus on equity drives every decision — ensuring that city investments reach historically underfunded neighborhoods, such as those in East Charlotte, and that housing remains affordable for working families. I believe livability means safe streets, reliable transit, clean air, and opportunities for every resident to thrive, regardless



Advocating for Smart Land Use + Transportation Choices

of ZIP code or income. My approach is rooted in collaboration, transparency, and long-term planning to build a city that's resilient, inclusive, and prepared for the future."