

John Hinnant Questionnaire Responses

3) What specific steps will you take to address our population growth's impact on our already overcrowded schools and congested, unsafe roadways?

I support finding a funding solution for school overcrowding. That could be a bond referendum in 2026, but it was stated in the creation of the Endowment that it was publicly stated that future capital projects could be funded by the Endowment without the need for taxpayer debt service. There needs to be a plan and I see it as a Southern and Northern Strategy. Southern: build on the Riverlights site. Send Mary C Williams there while Williams is torn down and rebuilt. Once finished, send Pine Valley Elementary there for PVE to be torn down and rebuilt. Then Alderman. Northern: build a 1000-1200 capacity middle school at the SeaTech campus and move Trask Middle there. Allow Laney to overflow into the Trask campus. Build an elementary school on the Northchase site the school board owns. Porters Neck Elementary already needs expansion. We also need to be watching the water/sewer project through Greenview Ranches. That will bisect 1,000 undeveloped acres. That area is bounded by I- 140, N College Rd, Gordon Rd and Market St. The schools that service the over 8,000 households are all overcrowded, so we need to develop a plan/vision for that area and determine the public needs for the time when that 1,000 acres gets developed.

4) What will you do to balance the planning board members and planning staff to include more citizens, sustainability, resiliency and environmental representation?

Professional experience is a necessary evil as many of the issues are technical, and sometimes mandated by state or Federal regulations. The county recently hired a standalone position of a Sustainability Manager who reports directly to the County Manager. While I would have preferred that position be embedded within either the Planning or Engineering Departments, that position will address sustainability issues. We've had environmental professionals serve over the years and turnover is equally as important as diversity. I would be in favor of asking applicants to disclose on the application their contributions to currently elected officials, and/or outside organizations, PACs and Advocacy Organizations. This would include memberships in such organizations. I'd also make it clear that planning board members serve at the will of the Board of Commissioners and re-appointment is not automatic.

5) Do you believe the pace and scale of residential development is in alignment with the wishes of current citizens? If not, what would you do to address this?

Year to Date in the City of Wilmington, the newly elected city council has approved close to 800 residential units with 2,200 in planning and review currently. I am highly sensitive to protecting the integrity of existing neighborhoods. Scale needs to transition to the predominant height, size and setbacks of adjacent properties.

6) What steps would you take to ensure that tree preservation ordinances are monitored for compliance and enforced to the maximum for development projects? What revisions to the code or the comprehensive plan are needed to ensure that we protect our area's aesthetic] and existing mature tree stands and roadway buffers?

Project 2025 is underway now and should give guidance to preserving significant trees and what the definition of a significant tree is.

8) In closing, many municipalities are getting it right, bringing balance to how they allow development to look and feel. How would you improve the way growth and development is occurring in New Hanover County?

As stated above, the City of Wilmington must be in the minority with close to 3,000 units to be approved this calendar year after the newly elected officials campaigned on slowing/stopping development. Regardless of party, the desire of some is power and control. For me, its about effective leadership.