

# 2009 SPPACE QUESTIONNAIRE

**Matthew Ridenhour  
Charlotte City Council At-Large**

1. **What are the top three issues our community needs to address? How would you propose to tackle these issues?**

Taxes and city spending, roads, and public safety are three issues which I think are vitally important for our city to address. I intend to take a fiscally responsible look at how to fund essential services like public safety and transportation, while reducing the tax rate and fees.

2. **Do you support the adoption and use of transfer taxes and/or impact fees as a way to overcome budget shortfalls? Why or why not?**

No, and no. I do not support any tax or fee which encourages developers to look elsewhere for property to develop. Additionally, studies have shown that impact fees are often passed on to the renter or purchaser of the property after it has been developed, thus raising the final cost.

3. **How do you believe Charlotte should fund school capital costs, parks, roads, transit, police and fire protection needs for the city? Should purchasers of new homes be responsible for funding these services for the entire city? Do you believe that these types of proposals are a fair way to pay for required services to existing taxpayers?**

Charlotte should fund programs through property taxes and sales taxes, not through fees and taxes targeted towards real estate development. Purchasers of developed property should not bear the burden of the city taxing developers through transfer taxes and impact fees. This does not encourage growth.

4. **How would you encourage our community's economic growth while including a variety of housing types and prices?**

Across the country, many communities have phased in real estate taxes in order to encourage economic growth and development, particularly in blighted areas. By offering such an incentive, the city encourages developers to look at revitalizing properties which otherwise may see no such attention. I encourage the city to adopt such measures.

5. **Recently adopted ordinances and policies have increased development costs and as a result will increase prices for office, industrial and retail space, as well as housing. What could be done to lower development costs in order to prevent families and businesses from relocating across county lines?**

Local government needs to understand that these regulations increase the cost to developers, which then impacts housing affordability. If such regulations are to continue to be adopted, then the city should examine waiving impact fees and transfer taxes on affected developers.

6. **Charlotte's City Council sets priorities but staff controls work flow. How would you ensure that staff remains, per city code, focused on Council goals and provides a wide variety of solutions to address Council's priorities?**

By adopting zero-based budgeting, which I propose, programs which do not affect the city's adopted five focus areas will be eliminated. This will immediately re-focus city staff on the Council's priorities. I will direct yearly goals for each department, and then expect quarterly reports from managers.

7. **Would you support a cost/benefit analysis for existing and proposed land use regulations in order to ensure that the purported benefits outweigh their negative impacts on economic development and housing affordability?**

I would absolutely support a cost/benefit analysis for existing and proposed regulations.