



30 Broad Street – 30th Floor
New York, NY 10004
212-361-6350

politics@nylcv.org / www.nylcv.org

2021 Environmental Questionnaire for Westchester Candidates

Thank you for taking the time to fill out the New York League of Conservation Voters Questionnaire.

To ensure your responses address the issues NYLCV and its partners are most concerned about, please consult [NYLCV's 2021 Westchester Policy Agenda](#) when answering the questions.

The New York League of Conservation Voters is the only non-partisan, statewide environmental organization in New York that fights for clean water, clean air, renewable energy, and open space through political action. This questionnaire is designed to elicit your views regarding what environmental, public health, clean energy and transit, and environmental justice groups consider to be the most important issues of the day. Responses may inform NYLCV's educational and legislative programs and actions NYLCV takes in the election cycle.

Responses should be considered public. Although NYLCV may choose not to publicize the responses to every question, verbatim responses may be reproduced and distributed publicly. If so, your responses may be shortened, if necessary, but will not be edited in substantive ways. If you choose to refer us to a position paper or website, please indicate exactly what text you would like us to cite. For candidates choosing not to respond to the questionnaire, NYLCV will note as much in its public materials.

NYLCV and its partners in the environmental policy arena believe that New York's voters are determined to make the environment a voting issue this year. Candidate positions on issues such as protecting public health, building a clean energy future, and mitigating climate change will help voters decide how to cast their ballots this election cycle. This questionnaire is one of the primary ways the public will get this information.

Here are a few guidelines:

- Questionnaires are due **Friday, April 30, 2021**
- The completed questionnaire is mandatory for endorsement consideration and must be submitted via e-mail as a Microsoft Word file to: politics@nylcv.org
- Questions or extension requests may be directed to Joshua Klainberg (jklainberg@nylcv.org)
- After receipt of the completed questionnaire, candidates will be invited to participate in a formal interview with a local Chapter Board.
- General election endorsements will be made by the NYLCV State Board on July 29, 2021.

CAMPAIGN CONTACT INFORMATION

Candidate name: Matthew Slater

Office sought (& district number if applicable): Yorktown Town Supervisor

Campaign e-mail: matt@slaterforyorktown.com

Campaign phone: 914-582-2361

Website: www.slaterforyorktown.com

Facebook page: facebook.com/slater4yorktown

Twitter handle: @matt4yorktown

Campaign manager's name and email: Kellie Slater/kellieslater1@gmail.com

Press Secretary's name and email: N/A

Scheduler's name and email: Jenna Belcastro/jlennox11@gmail.com

PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. Please share your accomplishments or experiences that indicate your commitment to advancing a pro-environment agenda. These experiences may be professional or personal.

During my time in public service I am proud to have worked on the forefront of environmental policy on the state and local level. My experience as a staffer in both house of the state legislature has allowed me to craft legislation and secure funding for critical environmental efforts while also implementing policies on the local level as Yorktown Supervisor.

Despite a global pandemic I made the advancement of a pro-environment agenda as an elected official a prime focus of my first term. I successfully organized and launched Yorktown's Climate Smart Communities Task Force which has proven to be an incredible asset for policymaking as we strive to reach bronze certification for the July 2021 filing.

Since taking office we have successfully passed the regulatory framework for large scale solar projects and we became one of the first municipalities to pass the regulatory framework for battery storage projects as well. These initiatives have paved the way for signature projects including the approved solar car canopy at IBM (<https://www.yorktownny.org/solar-canopy-ibm->

approved) as well as the Town's proposed solar car canopy, battery storage and electric vehicle charging stations at our Granite Knolls Sports Complex (<https://www.yorktownny.org/yorktown-awards-solar-array-granite-knolls#:~:text=On%20Thursday%20night%20the%20Town,four%20electric%20vehicle%20charging%20station>s.).

In fact, the New York League of Conservation Voters President Julie Tighe applauded the passage of these two pieces of legislation saying, "Yorktown is leading the way on renewable energy and storage systems. As we head towards Climate Week, we need more communities like Yorktown to implement policies like these that reduce their carbon footprint and slash emissions. NYLCV commends Yorktown Supervisor Matt Slater for his leadership."

(<https://www.yorktownny.org/yorktown-approves-framework-future-solar-arrays-and-energy-storage-systems>)

These laws complimented our strong partnership with Sustainable Westchester which included the launch of a community solar campaign. At last check, Yorktown had the highest number of residents participate of any municipality. Our relationship and collaboration with Sustainable Westchester also led to the Town entering an energy credit purchase agreement with Lodestar. Nina Orville, Director of Solar Programs at Sustainable Westchester said, "We're so pleased to partner with the Town of Yorktown to bring the benefits of clean solar power to residents, and now to the Town itself. Yorktown has clearly demonstrated its commitment to accelerating the transition to renewable energy through all its recent actions and we applaud the Town for its leadership." (<https://www.yorktownny.org/yorktown-enters-solar-power-agreement-offsets-70-electricity-use>)

My commitment to a pro-environment agenda has also meant a focus on our fleet. This year we purchased our first hybrid vehicle for the police department

(<https://www.yorktownny.org/yorktown-buys-first-hybrid-police-interceptor>). We expect this to be the first step in our full transition to electric or hybrid vehicles.

During my first term in office we were able to maintain our Tree City USA designation from the Arbor Day Foundation for the 10th year in a row (<https://www.yorktownny.org/yorktown-named-tree-city>) and most recently we joined Westchester County's food waste recycling program which we anticipate to begin this summer

(<https://www.tapinto.net/towns/yorktown/sections/green/articles/yorktown-joins-food-scrap-recycling-program>).

Lastly, I would be remised if I did not share with pride the partnerships we have built with Yorktown's agriculture community. In 2020 we hosted Yorktown's first Fall Farm Weekend (<https://www.yorktownny.org/community/yorktown-announces-inaugural-fall-farm-weekend>) which proved to be very successful. Yorktown has the most working farms in Westchester County and their diversity provides amazing local produce options. Our emphasis and focus on these small

businesses spurred a renewed interest in these longstanding and pivotal components of the Yorktown community.

ISSUES

Each year, NYLCV works closely with New York’s leading environmental, public health, conservation, energy, environmental justice, and transportation organizations to identify the most pressing priorities on fighting climate change, conserving land and water, and protecting public health. These issues drive NYLCV’s advocacy work throughout the legislative session, influence the bills we select for NYLCV’s Environmental Scorecards, and informs the decision on the candidates we choose to endorse. To ensure your responses are in alignment with the issues NYLCV and its partners are most concerned about, please review [NYLCV’s 2021 Westchester Policy Agenda](#) when formulating your responses.

Please indicate your level of commitment to, and if applicable your recent personal and professional activity concerning, all the policy priorities of our partners per the following issues:

Combating Climate Change

The time to act on climate is now. We must make radical changes in short order to avoid catastrophic climate change. New York’s Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act will require action at all levels of government to achieve its ambitious goal of reducing economy wide emissions 85% by 2050 and achieving 70% renewable energy by 2030. By allocating resources wisely, local governments can have a significant impact on energy use and the environment. Localities must also adapt to a changing climate and include resiliency planning in all aspects of future governance.

2. Energy (p. 5)

During my first term as Yorktown Supervisor our community has become a recognized leader in renewable energy initiatives. Our recently approved solar law has paved the way for smart land use concepts including the approved solar carport at IBM in Kitchawan and the approved solar farm at Hemlock Hill Farm. Currently our Planning Board is reviewing similar applications for

places like Arcadia Farm and the Croton Overlook subdivision recently revised its zoning application as it has transitioned away from housing and is now seeking approvals for an 80 acre solar farm.

Our fleet is horribly outdated but we took the first step toward modernization with the purchase of the Town's first hybrid vehicle this year. Working with our staff we are implementing fleet policies that prioritize electric vehicles and hybrids.

We will look to transition to LED lights. We partnered with NYSEG during my first year in office to replace our street lights with LEDs. Since we have both NYSEG and ConEdison we will look to forge similar partnerships for the utilities in the ConEdison territory as well.

Lastly, we must find economical ways to improve the efficiencies of our town facilities. The John C. Hart Library recently completed an LED transition for its facility but similar actions are needed elsewhere. Many of our facilities are outdated and were not built with energy efficiencies in mind. It is important that we lead by example, similar to how we entered into our own energy purchase agreement, which will encourage our homeowners and businesses to prioritize energy efficiencies.

3. Transportation (p.5)

Many studies have shown that the "transit" is not the only essential component needed to pursue to transit-oriented development. Walkability, mixed use, traffic density and other factors are just as important as our proximity to rail stations. We can begin to address these areas in the context of planning by passing a local sustainable complete streets ordinance to make our departments, as well as the planning and zoning board utilize sustainable complete streets design principles when implementing transportation projects.

For the first time in more than a decade we have deployed tools, which were identified in Yorktown's master plan, to revitalize our business hamlets. A main focus of these efforts and revitalization is the implementation of complete streets. The COVID-19 pandemic has certainly altered the trajectory of transit and commuting but it has caused an increase in pedestrian traffic and bicycling as people remain home. Our roads, especially within our commerce areas, must be more accessible and safe for this type of traffic.

Municipalities cannot just encourage residents to transition to electric and hybrid vehicles we must show them how. That is why we finally started to transition our municipal fleet with the acquisition of our first hybrid police cruiser and begin planning for additional acquisitions as we upgrade our fleet.

Lastly, the deployment of electric vehicle chargers in public spaces continues to be a priority. Yorktown plans on deploying four EV chargers as part of our renewable energy enhancements at Granite Knolls Sports Complex and we have begun exploring additional municipal sites with Flo, a leading EV charging station company. Future sites include the John C. Hart Memorial Library, Shrub Oak Park and Legacy Field.

4. Resiliency (p. 6)

We need to improve our resiliency and be better prepared for storms, floods and rising sea-levels. We need to create stormwater management plans for each of our sub-watershed areas that account for the increased pressures of development such as pollution, run-off, global warming and the diminishing supply of land. Development throughout the region has reduced soil absorption capacity, contributed to erosion and carried large amounts of sediment and phosphorous into our inland waterways, contributing to eutrophication. We need a systems-based approach, with citizen-led committees to examine the impacts of drainage, flooding, soil quality, water quality, wetlands, sewerage infrastructure and separate stormwater sewer systems. In the course of pursuing a Climate Smart Communities Designation for Yorktown, I established a Task Force that is looking at each of these issues through the lens of citizen and resident expertise.

It's not just our infrastructure that needs hardening, it's also our food supply. I've worked with stakeholders from sustainable farms like FABLE: Farm to Table to address these issues. Instead of social media scaremongering, a homeowner should get reasonable notice and scientific information when their neighbor wants to try their hand at beekeeping. Yorktown needs a right to farm policy that provides for food safety, addresses food waste and encompasses everything from growing mushrooms to backyard chickens. The visual and economic benefits are too great to ignore, and we should be promoting agricultural development rather than dense residential development.

5. Solid Waste (p. 7)

Earlier this year the Town of Yorktown joined Westchester County's food waste recycling program to provide residents with the ability to safely recycle food scraps. Partnering with Teatown we have launched a logo design contest and will be engaging in a full educational program encourage and assist residents on how to fully utilize this great program.

The food waste program will only enhance our recycling efforts which include curbside pickup of cardboard, plastics and glass. Our Refuse & Recycling Center provides quarterly E-Waste,

Textile and Tire drop off events. This year we reinstated the Battle of Yorktown Litter Cleanup event that brought more than 80 groups and collected nearly 17,000 pounds of trash.

Lastly, our Organic Waste Yard located on Greenwood Street has never been more popular. Especially during the pandemic we made sure to keep the yard open, available and free to residents who are delivering organic yard waste. The facility is also the depot for the biodegradable paper leaf bags, branches, logs and Christmas trees collected by our Refuse & Recycling, Parks and Highway Departments. Residents are able to bring their tree branches logs, leaves and grass clippings as well.

Protecting People and Natural Resources

All New Yorkers deserve indoor and outdoor environments that are free of contamination and pollution.

6. Clean Land, Air, and Water (p. 9)

Providing clean land, air and water has been a primary focus of my first year in office. As detailed above, we have made great strides in this realm including renewable energy initiatives, local waterfront revitalization programs and sustainability efforts. However, one of the greatest hurdles we have been trying to overcome as a community is proper sewer installations.

There is a clear correlation between the identified waterbodies and the lack of sewers in those same areas. For years the Town has been trying to expand the Hallocks Mill Sewer District around Sparkle Lake. This year we took significant steps toward making this a reality through a 3-phased proposal. The first phase has been identified as a \$14.3 million project of which \$10 million has been secured through Westchester County via the East of Hudson monies from New York City. The public hearing to establish the first phase is scheduled for June 15th and we expect to send to the State Comptroller for review this summer.

Additionally, the Town of Yorktown stopped its cement relining program for nearly 30 years. I am happy to report we have reinstated this important maintenance program which ensures clean drinking water for our residents. Working with our Water Department Superintendent and Finance Department we have put the wheels in motion for a two year capital improvement project estimated to cost nearly \$2 million to jumpstart the cement relining of the water pipes in most need.

Speaking of water, upon taking office I learned that Yorktown has failed to properly implement a state-of-the-art water meter replacement program. We are relying on obsolete technology that does not properly read water usage and the replacement budget puts us on a trajectory of 50 years for full replacement when the lifespan of water meters is 20 years. I have put forward a

bold initiative finally replace all of our water meters with state-of-the-art acoustic technology that will not only help the end user but make the management of our water meter deployment, department and water department financials more efficient and effective.

During my tenure as a staff member in the New York State Senate I was proud to provide local municipalities with the critical tools to provide create Local Waterfront Revitalization Plans by adding key waterways to the State's coastal and inland waterway program. Here in Yorktown, whether it be Mohegan Lake and Lake Teatown, two of New York's most at-risk lakes, or community swimming holes like Junior Lake and Sparkle Lake, we have an obligation to enhance and protect these critical natural assets of our community.

Working with key stakeholders we will be presently assembling Yorktown's own Local Waterfront Revitalization Committee to take full advantage of the LWRP program and capabilities. One such benefit is a green infrastructure state grant Yorktown was awarded through the consolidated funding application. This is allowing us to do a feasibility study for mitigation of stormwater phosphorus inputs to Lake Mohegan which contribute to the eutrophication of the lake and the occurrence of harmful algal blooms (HABs).

Harmful algal blooms is a regional concern in our portion of the Hudson Valley. While in the State Senate I helped author and passed legislation creating the first state level program in the nation to combat harmful algal blooms, modeled after the State's successful invasive species program. Working with the DEC I was proud to successfully advocate for \$1,000,000 in funding to study harmful algal blooms in Putnam Lake and Mohegan Lake and secured \$100,000 for a weed harvester for the Mohegan Lake Improvement District to help combat invasive species.

Looking ahead, it is my goal to leverage our Local Waterfront Revitalization Committee to continue the important work I have had the ability to participate in. Bringing in partners such as Professor Michelle Land of the Pace University Environmental Center and Teatown Lake Reservation will allow for a collaborative effort that will only assist our municipality in enhancing our local waterways.

7. Sustainable Development (p. 10)

Yorktown's growth has been stagnant for a number of years because our planning has been segmented and not forward thinking. We have large seas of parking lots, chronic commercial vacancies and outdated buildings that desperately need updating.

Last year as part of our Destination Y campaign I proposed overlay districts for our business hamlets in an effort to spur smart growth, reinvestment and reimagining our downtowns. While the concept of overlay districts were included in our mast plan they were never implemented. Once passed, this will be the first major zoning upgrade in nearly 60 years for our community.

Among the parameters of our overlay district emphasis is placed on complete streets concepts and sustainability practices. The legislation requires any new development to adhere to LEED requirements and we are on the verge of adopting the NY Stretch Building Code which will require new construction to have the capabilities of installing solar and EV chargers.

8. Parks and Open Spaces (p.10 – 11)

Coming into office I recognized the budgetary deficiencies that have forced our parks to fall into disarray. Working with our department leaders we have put forward a comprehensive five year capital improvement and equipment enhancement plan that will allow our department to succeed. Equally as important is our ability to find new revenue on an annual basis to offset these costs. Our recent approval of a 20 year lease for a renewable energy system at Granite Knolls Sports Complex will fund future capital improvements that we would otherwise be unable to achieve. This is a great example of how embracing renewable energy initiatives can improve our environment and provide fiscal relief in such challenging times.

Not only have we finally come up with a realistic plan to move this critical department forward we have already taken incredible strides into the 21st Century by launching an online platform for residents to sign up for the many recreational programs that Town offers. This year we were able to incorporate electronic enrollment for our summer camps and pool passes making it more convenient for residents to enjoy our services and facilities.

As noted above, we strengthened our local tree law and set the stage for our first tree farm as part of a multi-faceted enhancement of an underutilized town park. Willow Park will now be home to the Garden of Hope, which is our first public community garden, our Town's first butterfly sanctuary and the Town's first tree garden which will be used to replace existing trees along streetscapes.

We also closed Yorktown's Herbicide Loophole by instituting a policy change that establishes a system to timely notify Town residents of the Town's use of herbicides on Town property, including the date of treatment, location treated and the products being utilized. Thankfully, Yorktown applies natural citrus based herbicides but residents deserve the transparency of knowing when these methods are used especially at our local parks and playgrounds.

Looking ahead, Yorktown should invest in a municipal tree inventory and survey to determine all of our native species. We have been forceful with utility companies, especially after Hurricane Isiais, to ensure they are performing regular tree maintenance. Working with the Yorktown Tree Advisory Commission and our Planning Board we are looking to enforce the new parameters of our Tree Law which includes funding for a tree bank when native trees are being removed from a project and equitable mitigation is unattainable.

9. Farms and Local Food (p. 11)

Historically, Yorktown was a farming community. We take great pride in knowing we have the most working farms in the county. To support these businesses, especially during the pandemic, we launched Yorktown's inaugural Fall Farm Weekend in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce.

Many people do not know about the natural assets we have in our community and our farms top the list. White Oak Farm is the most southern commercial producer of maple syrup in New York State. From Thompson's Cider Mill, to Wilkin's Fruit Farm to Fable Farm and Hemlock Hill Farm, Yorktown is proud of our agricultural roots and continue to promote these local businesses.

One way we have partnered with them is through our newly enacted solar law. Hemlock Hill Farm has recently been approved for a large scale solar project spanning four acres that monetizes unused pastures rather than falling victim to over development.

Finally, the pandemic brought to light the immense need to address food insecurity. Yorktown's four food pantries were overwhelmed by the demand, but thankfully, the supply through Feeding Westchester and local donations allowed them to help nearly four times their average clientele.

In response to this overwhelming need Yorktown established The Food Security Task Force in an effort to bring our food pantries together, share services and best practices but also study the issue of food insecurity within our community. While Yorktown is perceived to be an affluent community more than one-third of our residents are below the ALICE threshold meaning one emergency away from poverty. This is exactly what we witnessed during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and while the level of need has subsided the need remains.

Our Food Security Task Force is now partnering with our local school districts to ensure all residents are aware of the services within our community which include access to healthy, local and affordable food.

