

2022 Election Candidate Questionnaire for Montgomery County Council

Andrew Friedson
Montgomery County Councilmember, District 1

Dear Candidate,

We ask that you complete our questionnaire so we understand your views on the pressing transportation issues facing Montgomery County. Your answers will be given to our membership for strictly education purposes only. Answers will also be posted on our website, shared on social media, listservs, and with our members in Montgomery County.

The questions are yes or no as well as questions that require you to elaborate for your response. We ask that you return the questionnaire by COB 4/2/22. Please email the questionnaire responses to me at advocacy@waba.org. If you have any questions please email us. Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to complete the questionnaire.

WABA **does not endorse** candidates for any political office.

Sincerely,

Jeremiah Lowery
Advocacy Director, WABA

Bike Network

The Washington Area Bicyclist Association is proposing that the County fund the construction of bikeable/walkable networks in four Equity Focus Areas of the County, in Wheaton, White Oak, Langley Park and Downtown Silver Spring. Do you support this \$110 million proposal which will also help achieve the County's Climate and Vision Zero goals over six years?

Yes No

What else do you think the County Council can do in the next term to make walking and biking safer and to help increase the biking and walking and transit mode shares?

I have strongly supported biking and walking throughout my time in office starting with my leadership on the County's first Vision Zero Master Plan for the Veirs Mill Corridor, and especially after the tragic and avoidable death of Jake Cassel, a 17-year-old cyclist who was struck by a car when he swerved to avoid a trash can placed on the sidewalk where he was riding along Old Georgetown Road in 2019. Throughout my first term, I have not only prioritized funding for better bike and pedestrian infrastructure but spent significant amounts of time and energy pushing MCDOT and SHA to provide more space in the right-of-way as well as money for bike and pedestrian facilities. These efforts have paid off in the form of both significant increases in capital budget expenditures for protected bikeways and sidewalks and in getting state and county transportation agencies to reduce speed limits, add protective barriers to bike lanes, provide landscape buffers between sidewalks and busy roads, stripe crosswalks, and adopt other traffic calming and safety measures. In the future we should:

- **Build out projects in the Bicycle Master Plan and Pedestrian Master Plan, starting with Tier 1 infrastructure in Equity Focus Areas and densely populated centers of activity like Bethesda, Silver Spring, White Flint, Wheaton, and White Oak.**
- **Support Vision Zero policies such as lower speed limits, HAWK signals and marked crosswalks with additional road crossings in high-demand areas, road diets,**
- **Give pedestrian and bike infrastructure equal weight as infrastructure for the movement of cars. We made progress on this in the most recent Growth and Infrastructure Policy by prioritizing bike and pedestrian improvements as part of the development review process while de-emphasizing automobile LOS, and we should build on these steps.**
- **Use master plans to improve the bikeability and walkability of new development projects and add street grid connections.**
- **Retrofit roads based on “complete street” guidelines included in the new “road code,” including landscape panels between sidewalks and roads, dedicated lanes for transit, protected bike lanes, narrower general purpose travel lanes, and similar features designed to improve the safety and convenience of biking and walking.**
- **Complete ADA compliance work by adding curb cuts, widening sidewalks, relocating sidewalk obstructions such as utility poles and trash collection, and taking other steps that improve accessibility for the disabled while also making infrastructure safer for all users.**

In order to increase non-auto driver mode share (and in addition to the above), I would:

- **Invest in improvements to MARC service and study extension of the Red Line to Germantown**
- **Build out the planned BRT network and “corridor connectors” with dedicated transit lanes**
- **Prioritize transit and ped/bike projects over highway/road expansions**
- **Plan for and build residential and commercial density at transit stations and adopt design guidelines for new development projects to encourage walking and biking, e.g., by including mid-block bike and pedestrian connections, adding street grid connections, requiring ample secure bike parking, shower facilities and changing areas in office buildings, etc.**
- **Invest in last-mile infrastructure/solutions to ensure everyone has access to reliable transportation options.**

Police out of Traffic Enforcement

Do you support removing police from all or some traffic enforcement?

Yes ___x___ No _____

How will you balance the need for traffic enforcement and equity while in office?

In general, automated traffic enforcement such as red light and speed cameras can help to strengthen enforcement while curbing the potential for discriminatory application of traffic laws. People of color and residents of low-income areas face higher levels of exposure to unsafe traffic conditions, so while I recognize the potential for inequitable

enforcement, I also believe that equity in transportation requires us to make extra efforts to address this reality. Better infrastructure design and engineering will help to calm traffic and make infrastructure safer, but enforcement is also an essential tool to protect all users of our roads, especially pedestrians and bicyclists who are most vulnerable.

Trails - repaving

Do you support fully funding the budget request of the Parks Department to include monies for repaving the Sligo, Rock Creek and Capital Crescent Trails?

Yes No

I have been a leading advocate to fund the Parks Department's and especially supportive of efforts to upgrade our network of hard and natural surface trails. As I've said repeatedly, trails are not just recreation, they are transportation infrastructure and should be built, funded and maintained accordingly.

Tunnel

Do you support funding the \$55m project for this important regional trail connection through downtown Bethesda?

Yes No

I have led the effort on the Council in every budget cycle to maintain funding for this project against repeated efforts by the County Executive to kill it or badly compromise its quality.

Do you support funding that will complete construction of the project within the current FY 23-28 CIP period or sooner/later?

Yes No

270 widening

Do you support or oppose the proposal to widen parts of I-495 and I-270 to add four express toll lanes?

Yes No

Why or why not? And how would you show that support or opposition. Do you support other new highways or road expansions?

I have a strong and consistent record of prioritizing spending on bike, pedestrian and transit infrastructure over new highways. I also recognize the managed lanes project offers the opportunity to generate significant toll revenue for transit in the I-270 corridor and build a badly needed replacement for the American Legion Bridge to include a bike and pedestrian facility and the ability to accommodate transit.

I have worked to ensure the project includes sustained funding for transit priorities and is itself multi-modal, with new bus rapid transit service in the Managed Lanes enabling a missing transit link between Montgomery and Fairfax Counties. I will also continue to work with the State to mitigate project impacts on residents, businesses and parkland, safeguard the interests of Montgomery County taxpayers, and achieve an appropriate and respectful resolution to protect sensitive historic sites such as the Moses Morningstar Cemetery.

Vision Zero

Vision Zero - is it working and if not, what needs to be done by the County to achieve the goal of zero deaths due to traffic crashes? What would you do to work with the State Highway Administration to achieve true Vision Zero?

We've made progress since Frank Towers and Mauricio Gutierrez Osorio were killed trying to cross Veirs Mill Road in accidents less than six months apart, yet the deaths of Jake Cassell, Brett Badin, Jennifer DiMauro and countless others since then shows we have a very long way to go. We need to spend more money on bike and pedestrian infrastructure, and we also need to continue pressing MCDOT, SHA, and law enforcement agencies to act more decisively to address the many obvious unsafe conditions on our roads. For example, SHA has been studying a redesign of Georgia Avenue in Montgomery Hills for years and should fund and build the project without further delay. Early in my first term, I met with then-SHA Administrator Greg Slater in Rockville to have a frank conversation about how so many of the commonsense upgrades we needed - HAWK signals, an intersection with four crosswalks instead of just three, buffered sidewalks - were being rebuffed by his engineers because they were following the old MUTCD. That conversation helped lead Greg and his team to develop a new set of context-sensitive guidelines that recognize that Wisconsin Avenue in downtown Bethesda must be treated differently than Route 50 in Cambridge! I have been one of a relatively small number of local elected officials in the country to provide formal comments to the federal government for needed improvements to the MUTCD so proven engineering and design improvements can be more easily and broadly implemented so changes can be made to prevent tragedies rather than in response to one. The key to achieving Vision Zero is to ensure that we make systemic changes to prevent tragedies, rather than intersection-by-intersection improvements in response to tragedies. We need to change the way we think about public infrastructure so it serves the modern needs of all people.

Transportation Equity Pledge

[Will you sign our transportation equity pledge?](#) Please see note below.

Transit Equity Pledge:

While I strongly support most of the priorities in the Transit Equity Pledge and have been a leader in advancing many of the issues at the County Council, I don't agree entirely with everything. Broad-based rent control/stabilization, for instance, is problematic to advance the very goals it intends to solve by discouraging the construction of new housing we desperately need to achieve all of the other goals in the pledge. Similarly, my position on managed lanes is more nuanced than outright opposition because of the opportunity for transit funding in the 270 corridor and replacement of the much-needed American Legion Bridge with potential transit connections across the Potomac River.