

2022 Election Candidate Questionnaire for Montgomery County Executive: David Blair

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?

- 1. We'll work with the State Highway Administration (SHA) and WMATA to eliminate dangerous mid-block crossings by building pedestrian-activated signals and moving bus stops to crosswalks;**
- 2. Build 10 miles of "Tier 1" protected bicycle lanes a year (a majority of these lanes could be the Equity Focus Areas identified by WABA);**
- 3. Partner with SHA to rebuild Georgia Avenue as a walkable, bikeable, and safe boulevard;**

4. **Finally invest in sidewalk and bikeway projects around the County that have been repeatedly delayed in the County's six-year Capital Improvements Program (CIP); and**
5. **Invest in adaptive traffic signal technology, proven to reduce travel times and enabling us to work with SHA to dedicate lanes to buses, bicyclists, and pedestrians.**

Police out of Traffic Enforcement

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

Yes No

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

We must maintain police traffic enforcement to help prevent and enforce impaired driving, distracted driving, and reckless speeding. I'm committed to working with our Police Department and community leaders to continually improve Police training - such as de-escalation policies and implicit bias training. We must also accelerate our efforts at hiring quality and diverse police officers reflecting our County.

I'm open to the idea of shifting some automated/camera speed enforcement responsibility to the Department of Transportation because traffic engineers may provide added insight and data into roadways where speeding is a consistent safety concern.

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

Tunnel

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

Yes No

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?

We must address the longstanding bottle neck at the American Legion Bridge and work with the State to achieve the County's decade-long goal of connecting Managed Lanes to Virginia's I-495 Managed Lanes. As County Executive, I would work with the State to deliver a project that does four things:

- 1. Avoids private property takings and impacts;**
- 2. Establishes a public-private partnership agreement that doesn't leave taxpayers holding the bag for more public investment later;**
- 3. Sets toll rates that aren't inaccessible and inequitable; and**
- 4. Provides toll revenue to fund our other transit projects and establishes bus transit service in the Managed Lanes themselves (such as to and from Tysons).**

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?

No, it is not working. Deaths and severe injuries increased in 2020 and showed no significant decline in 2021 from when the County first committed to Vision Zero in 2017.

First, County leaders must finally recognize the most effective Vision Zero solution is re-designing our roadways to build in physical protection for vulnerable users (bicyclists and pedestrians) and to discourage driving at high speeds. Too often, Montgomery County has fallen back into "pre-Vision Zero" approaches that don't reduce deaths or severe injuries - such as education campaigns or asking pedestrians and bicyclists to wear bright clothing. It's time for a fresh approach with leadership that understands the need to address the root cause of crashes.

I mentioned a few of the Vision Zero initiatives I would invest in as County Executive in my response to the first question and I'll detail a few steps here:

1. Too many people in our County are killed or severely injured while trying to cross a street to catch a bus or after getting off a bus. This is because in many cases, the closest signaled crosswalk can be a quarter-mile, half-mile, or even farther away from the bus stop. We'll work with SHA and WMATA to eliminate dangerous mid-block crossings by building pedestrian-activated signals and moving bus stops to crosswalks;
2. Invest in adaptive traffic signal technology, proven to help better manage traffic flow. This could enable us to convince SHA to dedicate unneeded lanes to buses, bicyclists, and pedestrians.
3. Convert "hot-right," high-speed right turns into sidewalk and curb bump-outs. These turning movements, present at hundreds of County and SHA intersections, encourage drivers not to stop while merging into traffic, diverting their attention from pedestrians or bicyclists to their right. It's a dangerous-by-design concept that we can eliminate.
4. Adopt traffic engineering standards that prioritize safe design over vehicle throughput and encourage MCDOT traffic engineers to use the discretion available to them to recommend spot safety improvements.

Transportation Equity Pledge

[Will you sign our transportation equity pledge?](#)

Link to sign: <https://waba.org/blog/2022/01/transportation-equity-pledge-for-2022-candidates/>

I agree with and am committed to working with WABA and the coalition on most of the items part of the pledge. However, I'm concerned that permanent rent stabilization measures would hurt our ability to build the 30,000 new housing units we need by 2030 to close the affordable housing gap. I believe we should prioritize Vision Zero, improve transit, and design a safer transportation network while working with the State to implement Managed Lanes on I-495 and I-270.