

## 2022 Election Candidate Questionnaire for Montgomery County Executive

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](mailto: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?

This winter/spring I worked closely with WABA to form an actionable budget proposal based on the original WABA proposal and the Planning Department's High Priority Projects contained in the Bicycle Master Plan Biennial Monitoring Report 2019-2020. My \$10.7 million budget proposal funds for design and construction six Tier 1 neighborhood greenways across Wheaton, Silver Spring, and Langley Park and facility planning for the Cherry Hill Rd Cycletrack in White Oak. It also adds another \$5 million to do facility planning for a good portion of the remaining 29 projects of the original WABA proposal that aren't already programmed in the County's capital budget.

I secured unanimous support for this proposal at the Council's transportation committee and at a preliminary budget hearing at the full Council. I am working hard to make sure this proposal makes into the final budget.

Going forward, my recommended capital budget will program the necessary resources to build out the remaining pieces of the WABA proposal so that residents and visitors to those four equity focus areas will enjoy safer access to jobs, amenities, health care, and recreation.

### **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?

For several years now I have been advocating to remove police from certain traffic enforcement responsibilities due to concerns about equity. I requested and the Council received a study by the Office of Legislative Oversight about moving traffic enforcement over to MCDOT and I have worked with state elected officials to advance legislation to enable the County to implement that in a variety of ways. Unfortunately the Executive allowed a police captain to testify in opposition to the legislation in Annapolis and it did not pass. I generally believe we should find ways to replace patrol enforcement for minor traffic offenses with camera based enforcement, which can help us achieve greater safety with less bias. The existing police strategy of routine traffic stops has created significant enforcement disparities and community resentment. It is also ineffective at fighting crime. The Police Advisory Commission that I proposed and the Council created through legislation has also recommended a new approach on traffic enforcement that does not involve police to the same extent, and I look forward to taking it up soon and also if I am elected as County Executive.

### **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 \_\_x\_\_ 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

I have led the Council to support this critical project in the wake of the current County Executive's repeated attempts to delete it from the budget. The tunnel under Wisconsin Avenue is a critical connection to downtown Bethesda and for the entire Capital Crescent Trail, and I will accept nothing less than the highest quality connection.

In this year's capital budget deliberations, I am working hard to reinstate the funding so that construction can begin in FY25 and finish in mid-FY27, which will synchronize the opening of the tunnel and the Purple Line.

### **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 oppose adding lanes to the Beltway East of the 270 spur. Unlike UpCounty, there is adequate transit in that part of the County.

In July of 2021, the majority of the Montgomery County Council, which I joined, agreed to support adding toll lane capacity to the American Legion Bridge and 270, consistent with our long-standing position and previous master plan votes. As part of that process, the Council secured an agreement from the Governor to use toll revenue to build and operate a high priority transit project in Montgomery County.

Now, thanks to the anticipated toll revenue, we have \$170 million in funding in our capital budget to build a continuous BRT line from Wheaton to Germantown, within the next 5 years. This plan could be truly transformational for these dangerous roads. In fact we recently held a vision zero rally on Veirs Mill to call attention to the need for safety infrastructure. Thanks to toll revenue on 270 and anticipated Federal funding, we will have enough money to rebuild Veirs

Mill for BRT as well as for pedestrian and bike safety. Without toll revenue, there will be no major construction for safety.

The result of all of this effort will be a transformational transit line to reshape development patterns in the UpCounty to be more urbanized and transit focused. With resources from the tolling project, we will create a real transit alternative.

While the Council's decision has faced criticism, in reality the state could have (and may well have) secured the votes at the TPB without County support. Under that plausible scenario, the ALB/270 project would move forward without a commitment to provide toll revenue for transit. Meanwhile, Montgomery County must have a strong connection to the Virginia economic center, and tolls are the way to pay for it.

I have also opposed widenings and expansions, as I oppose widening the Beltway. I oppose M-83 and I believe that BRT on 355 provides a reasonable alternative. Recognizing this, I led the Council to adopt a policy that no longer counts M83 for future master plans. There are no other new highways. I have worked to remove plans that would overbuild road capacity, including Montrose Parkway East; several years ago I worked to shift funding out of Montrose East into critical transit and bike projects.

## **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?

While the County has made some progress and has developed a more systematic program (processes and personnel) for achieving Vision Zero, there are still far too many collisions resulting in serious injury and death. Last year, we had over 450 collisions involving pedestrians/cyclists. Seven of which, tragically, proved deadly. This is unacceptable.

I am committed to redoubling our efforts and actually implementing the County's Vision Zero Plan, starting with the 2022-2023 Action Plan. My highest priorities would be reducing vehicle speeds, particularly in the High Injury Areas, implementing the "20 is Plenty" speed limits that the state legislation I pushed for enables but the Executive has not created, building out the Tier 1 bicycle projects as fast as possible, increasing automated enforcement, building more HAWK and pedestrian activated signals, and increasing our bicycle education efforts in coordination with MCPS.

This will require close coordination with the State Highway Administration (SHA), since they maintain many of the roads where we see the most dangerous conditions. While SHA and

County coordination has surely improved in the last couple years, we must do better. I would commit more County staff resources and County dollars to quickly addressing safety issues on State Highways.

### **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/>