

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. 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

I support the projects, but there are less expensive ways to get these projects done. I have met with members of WABA to discuss how we might complete these projects in a less expensive and faster way, including using flexible posts to delineate protected pedestrian/bike trails. This type of solution has been implemented quickly and relatively inexpensively and provides an immediate, safe, separate path rather than waiting years for utility replacements and more. And it does not preclude doing more or something different at a later date.

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 am committed to continuing the implementation of Vision Zero. We have been working to implement a variety of important changes. We have implemented traffic calming measures

and reduced speeds to slow down cars where needed. To encourage more bicycling as a safe and reliable transportation option, we should continue work to isolate bikeways from the general roadway, and one of the fastest and most cost efficient ways to do that is with flex poles as we have begun to do. We also are using flex poles to straighten the corners at intersections, which helps protect pedestrians and cyclists. I am particularly interested in putting parking outside of bike lanes whenever possible. To improve pedestrian safety, we need more lighted crosswalks, including stop signals where appropriate. I don't think public education programs on pedestrian safety have been effective and they should not be relied upon to solve this problem. They are necessary but not sufficient. Stricter enforcement of the law regarding stopping for pedestrians should be a priority.

Police out of Traffic Enforcement

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

Yes No

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 support funding that is shared equitably across the county. Also, I am working with Parks department to identify additional sources of funding, including federal funds, for these types of projects.

I do think it's important to note that the Council has continually voted to reduce the Spending Affordability Guidelines, which cuts overall funding that's available for these types of projects. I have been the only elected official to offer innovative ways to fund capital projects (but fully inline with how DC and Va have been moving ahead with funding infrastructure); if we were to enact the proposal, it would relieve pressures on the capital budget and allow funding of more capital projects, including Parks projects.

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

Yes No

My reply is not at this time; it is important to remember that when this tunnel was first put in the budget, it was estimated to cost \$15 million, which was completely wrong and not based on any real information. As it is now, it is not the best use of scarce resources to spend \$55 million to build a 900-foot tunnel when cyclists could safely and easily cross at the traffic light when crossing Wisconsin Avenue; bikes could have a pedestrians and cyclists-only crossing which would eliminate any conflicting movements with cars. We have planned and designed for a trail to go all the way up to Wisconsin Avenue on both

sides of Wisconsin. (On the western side of Wisconsin, the trail is mostly completed.) The only part that the \$55 million would fund is for a tunnel underneath Wisconsin Avenue to connect the two sides of the trail. (And additionally, it is likely to cost more than \$55 million - that estimate is already out of date.) We have many, many bike, transit and pedestrian projects that need this funding; we could build a lot more trails and benefit many more people than if we built this one small tunnel. Nevertheless we are seeking additional sources of funding for this project at the state and federal level. Furthermore, I think it is important to note that when the Council reduces for developers the impact fees intended to fund infrastructure combined with when the Council reduces the amount of bond borrowing each year, they are reducing revenues available for capital projects like this one.

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

Yes _____ No _____

We can complete the project to have a complete bike trail without spending \$55 million and sacrificing so many other projects. Please see my complete answer above.

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 ___ **Oppose** _____

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

Since almost my first day in office, I have been organizing opposition to Governor Hogan's extraordinarily expensive, elitist plan to expand I-270/495. In addition to this project being overly expensive, it would not solve the congestion problem; it simply shifts the traffic to north of I-370 still in Montgomery County and all the way to Frederick. The State Highway Administration has followed some of my suggestions to use a "can of paint" to provide more capacity within the existing footprint of the roadways. We also need to minimize new construction by using the highly directional nature of traffic in Montgomery County to our advantage, using reversible lanes that provide capacity during the time of day and in the direction that needs traffic relief; doing so reduces both capital costs and environmental impacts. As I've said before regarding Governor Hogan's proposal, it makes neither environmental nor economic sense to use a sledgehammer where a scalpel will suffice.

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?

The changes the pandemic has had in driving patterns make it hard to judge accurately. We know the pandemic has caused driving to become more erratic but it has also reduced traffic as more people are working from home. We are implementing more ways of protecting pedestrians in conjunction with the State Highway Administration.

I have worked with the State Highway Administration so that they have allowed us to use the flex poles so square off corners in state highways in urban areas. We also got the state to reduce speed limits in urban areas. We have collaborated with the state to request more funding for things such as HAWK signals. We have listened to neighborhood requests for more pedestrian and cyclist friendly streets. When a neighborhood reaches out saying they don't feel safe as pedestrians or cyclists we are more concerned with addressing their concerns than with keeping speed limits high for motorists.

Transportation Equity Pledge

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

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