

2022 Election Candidate Questionnaire for Montgomery County Council

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

Candidate: Maricé Moraes for County Council District 6

Previous office held: Maryland House of Delegates, District 19

Committee name: Friends of Maricé Morales

Point of Contact: Ezra Pine, Deputy Campaign Manager, morales@maricemorales.com

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?

In order to make walking and biking safer so that we can increase transit mode shares, I support maximizing investment in our Equity Focus Areas (EFAs). Residents in EFAs are [twice](#) as likely not to own a car and 34% more likely to rely on public transportation. Especially in downtown Wheaton, which is a key EFA in my district, there are many key roads where we can encourage

safer means of transportation. The bike lanes that were piloted by the State Highway Administration (SHA) on University Boulevard Rt. 193 are a good example of the possibilities of how SHA or MDOT could work with our county to create a more bike friendly community. The County Council must constantly work to bridge the gap with community residents to ensure that there are more equitable methods of transportation that do not disrupt traffic flow. As a resident in downtown Wheaton, I experience first-hand the unsafe crossings on Veirs Mill Rd and Georgia Avenue. Similarly, as I have canvassed my district, the number one concern from residents has been road safety. On the Council, some of the changes I will help enact are protected sidewalks, dedicated bus lanes, lower speed limits, and other measures that reduce car usage and increase pedestrian safety along the busy street.

I will also lead the fight in advocating for a more efficient Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) network with dedicated lanes. BRT is critical for those who do not have access to a reliable vehicle. The Veirs Mill corridor is highly transit dependent and it is lacking a high-quality, east-west connection between Rockville & Wheaton. Currently, transit on this corridor does not meet demand and there are also reliability issues related to bus bunching and slow travel times. I support enhancing bus services, such as lane widening along for bus queue jumps, minimizing route delays due to traffic, allowing for Transit Signal Priority (TSP) along congested corridors, and reduced fare along BRT routes in EFAs.

My vision for mass transit in the county is reliant on ensuring affordability and accessibility of public transportation without compromising our commitment to quality service and economic success. I support strategies such as increasing high-density affordable housing near transit centers, which will reduce the number of miles traveled by car as well as increase equity in access to job opportunities. I believe that we can push for the redevelopment of the Wheaton Metro Station and Forest Glen Park & Ride lot, while at the same time evaluate different parking options and serve our low-income communities. I am also committed to advancing the work around Vision Zero to eliminate all traffic related fatalities, promote our walkable communities with dedicated bike lanes, and further the work that has led to our thriving and diversified local economies. Some key things the Council can focus on in this area are improved lighting, longer pedestrian lead intervals, and not allowing right on red in high traffic areas.

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?

As a practicing criminal defense attorney, I know pretext traffic stops are pervasive and lead to disproportionate consequences, with devastating impact to the defendant's life and a costly

process from the moment that individual is handcuffed to the moment they have served their sentence and/or potential probation. We need to be working with our county police officers on de-escalation tactics, while at the same time be investing in long-term solutions that reduce traffic incidents and protect the most vulnerable among us. The Office of Legislative Oversight report has best practices for traffic enforcement responsibilities, and how we must promote fairness, reduce bias, and highlight organizational efficiency. On the Council, I will follow the reports for those practices and reconstruct the relationship between law enforcement and the community to ensure that members are safe and comfortable within the community.

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?

I am opposed to the proposal to widen parts of I-495 and I-270. I believe that government needs to be doing everything it can to eliminate the dependency on vehicles -- especially in areas where the ecosystem already exists. By ecosystem I mean, the funding, public support and political will. Over [40%](#) of Montgomery County's greenhouse gas emissions come from transportation. The more we move to a zero emissions environment, the better for us all. This proposal would negatively impact environmentally sensitive areas that are integral to our local climate. One thing the pandemic has shown us is that increased telework reduced traffic congestion and commuting anxiety on I-270 and I-495. I would show my opposition by voting against such legislation and strongly advising my colleagues to do the same. I can support or oppose new highway or road expansions depending on the situational context.

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?

With Vision Zero, there is always more work we can do. In 2021, there were 480 injuries and 10 fatalities in 2021 due to traffic incidents. And this year, there are already 73 injuries and 3 fatalities. As evidenced by the victims' names, mostly communities of color and immigrant communities are affected. With the current Vision Zero plan, some areas we can improve on are adding pedestrian visibility devices, sidewalks in communities that are poorly lit, with bus stop routes near schools that cut through neighborhoods like Wheaton Hills and Glenmont Forest to avoid rush hour congestion on Georgia Ave. crossing over to Randolph Rd; we also need MDOT to remove the wait times and reduce requirements for residents seeking traffic calming installments, such as bumps or refuge islands, to reduce multilane road speeds for vehicles. This should happen especially in residential communities with RideOn bus stop routes near schools and in areas with seniors and residents with special needs.

We must invest in improved safety measures through high traffic areas that contain large amounts of pedestrian traffic. It is also imperative that the State Highway Administration not only tests running important projects, but also approves and implements them. I fully support the current \$110 million proposal for bike lanes which will also help achieve the County's Climate and Vision Zero goals over six years, \$55 million of which are exclusively set aside for Wheaton. I will leverage my relationships as a former member of the Maryland General Assembly to work with our state delegation, as well as the new leadership at the SHA that will be brought by the gubernatorial election to ensure that our communities are protected and that this proposal becomes a reality.

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/>

Absolutely!