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# Christopher T. Morgan

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## HOUSING FOR ALL

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### 1) Transit-Oriented Communities

*Providing homes in walkable, mixed-use, mixed income communities close to transit can provide more equitable access to opportunities, reduce reliance on driving, and improve environmental and social outcomes for residents. In fact, County plans call for inclusive, transit-oriented development near its transit stations and along its transit-rich corridors.*

1a) Do you agree with the Comprehensive Plan's inclusive, transit-oriented communities goals?

Yes     No     Partially

1b) How would you improve on or change the County's approach to inclusive, transit-oriented communities?

**It's critical that Fairfax County is able to furnish a high quality of life standard for all residents. Every citizen should have access to nature and green space. Every family should feel safe in their homes and protected from crime. We must be able to travel easily, safely, and quickly to work, to Little League games, to ballet practice, to the grocery store, and to the historical attractions surrounding this area. The option to walk or bicycle recreationally, access our clean waterways, and spend time with one another are reasons that make this area we call home great.**

**I support vertical mixed-use development where new buildings are zoned for restaurants, retail or similar commercial space on the ground level, with office space, and residential units on higher floors above. I support residential units sized at least 3-bedrooms to support families with children or extended families and would support amendments to the Comprehensive Plan or site specific plan amendments (SSPA) to support that, especially near transit stations and along existing high-volume transportation corridors.**

**I believe that in today's age, making it more-difficult for a family to own and to park a vehicle of their own condemns them to a life of poverty by limiting their job opportunities, and those options must be made available while investing in**

**mass transit and alternative travel. The best investment we can make to increase the wealth of an individual family is to increase their mobility.**

**I support investment in inter-model transportation and believe we need to link the Metro, the Virginia Railway Express (VRE), and our 3 regional airports and make it fast, easy, and low-cost to access this transportation network.**

## 2) Housing Goals

*The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG), which includes Fairfax County, has committed to providing 320,000 more homes in our region by 2030 with 75% near high-capacity transit and 75% qualifying as affordable. Yet Fairfax County has not committed to meeting a specific share of this need and is falling behind on its own previously set targets. This contrasts with an earlier time when then-Chairman Connolly committed the County to planning for 48,000 additional households to ensure people could live closer to their jobs and reduce the traffic commuting into and through the County.*

2a) Do you believe Fairfax County should be doing more to provide additional housing in the County?

Yes

No

**Partially**

2b) What housing and zoning policy steps would you take to fill the housing gap and construct more housing at all levels of affordability, including both committed affordable and market-rate homes? Would you support these changes County-wide or just in specific locations?

**The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) is a non-profit organization, which does include many of our elected leaders, and should be taking input from all citizens in the metro region. Fairfax County should not operate within a vacuum and certainly coordinate with neighboring municipalities, but housing responsibility remains with us.**

**Our county is wildly diverse and ranges from rural to suburban to urban areas, even within the Mount Vernon district. What works in one area may not work in another and each community and area has unique needs and goals.**

**I believe zoning input from neighbors and community leaders is essential and they must be part and parcel of such important discussions. We are a community first and foremost and must work together to solve these challenges.**

### 3) Affordable Housing Funding

Fairfax County has adopted a minimum affordable housing production goal of 10,000 units by 2034, but the annual funding is still below the amount needed to meet that goal.

3a) If elected, would you support dedicated, sustainable funding to achieve the County's housing goals, particularly for those individuals and families at lower incomes?

Yes

**No**

3b) What policies and programs would you consider to strengthen or add to address housing affordability in the County? How much money would you ask for in the County budget to build new affordable housing? To preserve/renovate existing affordable housing?

**I believe that stratification of the housing marketing is critical and that homes should be available in sufficient quantities across different prices and market segments.**

**Fairfax County has several current and past initiatives designed to achieve this outcome, such as the Workforce Housing initiatives, Fairfax County Rental Program, programs for first-time homebuyers, and subsidized housing programs. What's clear is that these programs are not succeeding in delivering the intended goals and must be reimaged from the foundation up.**

**I believe that at the end of the day, the market will ultimately determine housing costs. What we must do is ensure strong economic success so that our families can afford to live comfortably in the home they desire and prosper.**

### 4) Displacement Concerns

The County has pledged no net-loss of affordable housing but as needed investments are made in revitalization areas and transit corridors, older market rate affordable housing is being lost to newer and more expensive homes. This can lead to current residents being displaced from their communities because affordable homes may no longer be available in their neighborhood. They may even need to leave Fairfax County altogether to find more affordable housing, with profound negative impacts on intergenerational communities.

4a) Do you feel the County should do more to address displacement concerns and ensure more inclusive communities available to different income levels?

**Yes**

No

4b) What tools would you use to help provide more housing options for a mix of incomes in areas facing redevelopment as well as support residents facing possible displacement?

**I am currently serving on my 2nd term as the President of the Stratford Landing Citizens Association, a community of 775 homes. Many of my neighbors were shocked and upset recently when they received their real property assessments. Many people contacted me who were very distraught as their tax bills had risen significantly. An elderly woman, who has lived in the neighborhood her entire life was in tears and told me how she had scheduled an appointment with a realtor in Florida as she couldn't afford to live here any longer. Let me be very clear: Fairfax County is taxing people out of their homes.**

**Development is a factor; the Mount Vernon area, along with most of the county, has seen home value assessments rise 10% on average since last year. A higher assessment value translates into a higher property tax bill.**

**But the root cause of this is county overspending. The approved county budget includes \$9.8B in expenses. That puts Fairfax County as number 6 in total spend against all counties in the country while we are only 41st in population. Compared to the nearest 6 counties in terms of size, on average their spend is a mere 23% of ours. Let's be clear about what that means - Fairfax is spending nearly 330% more than similar counties.**

**No quantity of new homes, regardless of initial price will solve this problem if resident's disposable income continues to decrease and that is the problem we need to address first.**

## 5) Zoning for More Housing

*Eighty two percent (82%) of Fairfax County land is zoned exclusively for single-family detached homes according to a [2019 Northern Virginia Affordable Housing Alliance report](#). Expanding housing options in single family neighborhoods can make way for more housing, increase access to home ownership, reduce racial and economic segregation, and increase access to opportunity.*

5a) Would you support a planning process to consider changes to the zoning ordinance to expand housing types in the County?

Yes

**No**

5b) What are your thoughts on this issue in light of Arlington County's recent community study and vote to expand "Missing Middle Housing" options?

**Increasing the density of housing within neighborhoods whose existing infrastructure was not designed for a sudden population influx will fail. I witnessed this phenomenon first-hand when separating from service with**

**the U.S. Army and residing in San Diego, CA. I saw the results of allowing single family homes to be built on an existing home's backyard. I saw single family homes demolished to construct multi-family condos or apartments on the lot. I saw higher buildings placed in residential neighborhoods where they eclipsed adjacent homes and destroyed privacy.**

**These changes increased the overall housing supply, but universally destroyed the quality of life of many communities. Trees and habitat vegetation were clear-cut away. Street parking became non-existent. Children could no longer safely ride their bicycles around the neighborhood. Traffic and travel times increased. All the while, the market silently adjusted and soon raised the value of the promised "affordable" homes to prohibitively high amounts. The promises of improvement absolutely never materialized.**

**I know the same problems that I saw first-hand in California will soon plague Arlington County, and I will fight very strongly to protect Fairfax County from those same mistakes.**

**There are absolutely places to increase housing density and we should be encouraging the creation of condos and apartments with 3+ bedrooms. Units of 3 - 6 bedrooms are essential for families with children and extended families who opt to live in a higher density population area. It's dystopian to expect a family of 4 to share a 1 or 2-bedroom unit and the county should, via zoning and policy, encourage such larger units.**

**These families also require multiple vehicles in order to achieve economic success, and ample parking must be required. We should still be encouraging mass transit options, but as we work to push more families above middle class, we must be honest about what a middle-class lifestyle looks like.**

## 6) Homeownership Opportunities

*Multiple studies have shown growing wealth and racial/ethnic homeownership gaps in the County. For Black families, this is due in part to the legacy of segregation through deed restrictions that prevented them from buying homes and building wealth.*

6a) Do you support County policies to provide more opportunities for home ownership?

Yes

No

**Partially**

6b) What types of policies or programs would you propose?

**I have personal experience utilizing a home ownership program. I was able to purchase my first home -- albeit it was a small 1-bedroom condo -- by utilizing the VA [Veterans Affairs] Home Loan Program. That program provided the opportunity to purchase a home without having to make a large downpayment,**

**which I did not have. I was still required to make monthly mortgage payments as well as all taxes and insurance.**

**I would support Fairfax County investigating the creation of similar programs, in which the downpayment requirement is either deferred or waived. I believe this would especially benefit county employees including police and educators and enable them to live closer to where they work.**

## SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION

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### 1) Improving Public Transit

*Public transit is the backbone of a sustainable, equitable transportation system and a thriving economy, and Fairfax County has admirable plans to expand its bus rapid transit (BRT) network to ensure fast, frequent, and reliable service for residents. While public transit ridership on some systems has been hit by the pandemic with reduced commute trips due to increased teleworking, transit remains key for essential workers, and for supporting compact, walkable communities.*

1a) Do you support increased funding for public transit to address budget shortfalls and make improvements to better serve riders?

Yes

**No**

1b) What is your experience riding public transit? What ideas do you have to improve public transit in Fairfax County?

**Mobility and access are critical to economic success. If we "get it wrong", we are condemning future generations to lesser opportunities.**

**I support investment in inter-modal transportation and believe we need to link the Metro, the VRE [Virginia Railway Express], and our 3 regional airports and make it fast, easy, and low-cost to access this transportation network.**

**Mount Vernon is a large, diverse district, but what does connect is Route 1, the Richmond Hwy. We need a clear path to improve the area, rid it of crime, and improve traffic. It's a car-centric avenue, but our focus should be extending the Metro and connecting it to the VRE, and Fort Belvoir, which is our largest-single employer.**

**I support adding travel lanes, installing dark fiber for future investment, and having dedicated lanes for self-driving cars. I would like to see vertical mixed-use development along the corridor, green spaces with preserved old-growth heritage hardwood trees, and spillway protection for our streams and waterways.**

## 2) Active Transportation Funding

*The ActiveFairfax Transportation Plan - the County's most significant overhaul of its bicycle, pedestrian, and trails plans - is expected to be finalized this year. The plan's recommendations address critical safety needs for residents who already walk and bike and also make improvements to allow more residents to walk and bike conveniently and safely for daily needs. Realizing the Plan's vision will require substantial, dedicated, and consistent funding.*

2a) Would you support Fairfax committing dedicated annual funding to support the ActiveFairfax Transportation Plan, even if that meant potentially delaying road expansion and interchange projects?

Yes

**No**

2b) What is your personal experience dealing with or advocating for pedestrian or bicyclist safety issues?

**Our family -- my wife, my 5-year-old son, and myself -- walk or bicycle together every single evening.**

**We travel within neighborhoods that are lacking complete sidewalks, have too few stop signs, and too few speed bumps.**

**I've advocated to Fairfax County staff for improvements and have learned that the process is far too difficult for the average citizen. That must change.**

**Myself, along with multiple neighbors, have been developing a plan over the past several months to request the installation of additional "traffic calming" measures in our neighborhood, including additional stop signs and speed bumps.**

**Over 1 year and 9 months ago, in June 2021, we contacted Supervisor Storck's office to request speed bumps. It took until Nov. 16th, 2021 for the Supervisor's office to respond to the initial request. At that point, the next step was for us to form a citizen "task force" and follow the process.**

**We formed such as task force attended the project kick-off meeting in Nov. 2022.**

**The process is not easy. After the initial request, adjacent property owners are asked their views, FCDOT [Fairfax County Department of Transportation] does a study, a "vote" takes place involving neighbors within a certain radius, and there is a final review in which an adjacent owner may "veto" the installation.**

**What Are the Challenges?**

**Unfortunately, Fairfax County is not looking at pedestrian issues comprehensively and every single element is in a separate silo of approvals and procedure.**

**There should be a single point of contact, single review process, and single document on knowledge for:**

- **Speed bumps and speed tables -> This process starts with the county**
- **4-way stop signs -> VDOT [Virginia Department of Transportation] apparently has a rule where 4-way stop intersections are required to be so far apart, which is why our previous request was denied. Why?**
- **Sidewalks. -> There is no realistic process today to receive new sidewalks, which would increase both walkability and safety.**
- **Our neighborhoods also need Odometer Signs ("you're going 30mph"), painted crosswalks, school bus stop traffic pattern reviews, temporary speed bumps and rumble strips to gauge effectiveness before an expensive installation, and police enforcement among other issues.**

**Safety, transportation, and traffic issues are a critical aspect of our quality of life and it's likely going to take the involvement of many of us to enact meaningful change.**

### 3) Low-Stress Bike Network

*Fairfax County has committed to reducing the amount people have to drive and associated transportation-related carbon emissions. The County's climate plan calls for meeting a goal of 30% non-auto commuting trips by 2030. To make this shift, the County will need robust, accessible alternatives and bicycling is an ideal, low-cost, carbon-free alternative. But that mode shift requires dedicated infrastructure including an expanded network of trails and comfortable, protected, low-stress bicycle facilities - not just painted bike lanes or sharrows - to make bicycling meaningfully safer, more appealing, and more accessible and often requires roadway redesign that reduces parking and/or vehicle lanes.*

3a) Compared to the current prioritization, do you think greater priority should be given to the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians in the County's roadway designs?

Yes

**No**

3b) How would you ensure that people of all ages and abilities have robust active transportation access to and along the County's major and most important thoroughfares and connecting streets?



**The Route 1 Corridor, which is a commuting avenue, connects multiple areas of the Mount Vernon District, and should serve as a model for such programs has serious safety and crime issues. Nobody will ride their bike through an unsafe area.**

**I'm particularly concerned when we see such patterns.**

- **On May 2nd of this year, a Woodbridge Man allegedly conducted a spree of armed robberies including a carjacking and kidnapping near Furman Ln.**
- **In February, an 81-year-old woman was assaulted and carjacked in a grocery store parking lot in broad daylight by two out-of-state men.**
- **Last June, a 63-year-old woman died after an assault while waiting at a bus stop.**
- **Last January, an 18-year-old male college student was shot and killed at a bus stop over a dispute over shoes. The career criminal who allegedly shot him then shot another man in the head while attempting to carjack him.**
- **Smash and grab robberies are becoming common at local businesses. Last April, over \$20,000 in eyeglass frames were stolen by a gang of 5 youths.**

**This is in no way a comprehensive list of the violent street crimes that are now plaguing our neighborhoods. I have voluntarily joined a "ride along" with Fairfax Police Department and saw and experienced first-hand the issues in our community and the challenges we are facing. I spoke with our officers and heard their concerns and listened to their suggestions and well as observing my own.**

**As someone who used to ride his bicycle to work at least twice a week, I can testify that before we can expect people to commute on bicycle, we need to address these serious safety concerns.**

#### **4) Safe Streets for All**

*On May 10, 2022, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors unanimously endorsed the Safe Streets for All Program, a comprehensive initiative to address systemic transportation safety issues for people walking, biking, taking transit, and driving. Included in the recommendations is a call for roadway infrastructure changes to slow traffic on our community's streets. Unfortunately, the County has not yet dedicated staff or funding to begin executing the program. At the same time, Fairfax County experienced a troubling uptick in traffic-related pedestrian fatalities in 2022.*

4a) Do you support the full implementation of the Safe Streets for All Program in Fairfax County, including changes to roadway design guidelines and an expanded automated speed enforcement program?

Yes

**No**

4b) What proven traffic safety improvement policies, programs, and/or technologies would you like to see implemented in your district and throughout the County?

Given the lack of clarity around who has the legal and budgetary authority to make roadway safety improvements stemming from state ownership of County roads, what steps would you propose to ensure that these roadway safety improvements are implemented?

**Everyone should feel safe going to and from work, women should feel safe running at night with headphones. Children should be able to safely ride their bicycles to and from their friends' homes from dusk to dawn. These are non-negotiable tenets.**

**While controlled by the National Park Service [NPS], the George Washington Memorial Parkway is used by residents daily and is in poor condition. The \$30M project to reduce travel lanes has not improved safety and has made several intersections more dangerous and frankly terrifying to use. Invasive vines are choking the old growth trees, dangerous depressions and bumps derail traffic, and both animals and branches lay on the road for weeks at a time. The reality is that the parkway is used daily by our residents to commute to work, get to the airport, and make appointments. As a critical part of our infrastructure, the road has a completely different use and different needs than originally designed for over 100 years ago and we need our government to adjust for the times. As Supervisor, I would use my influence to push the NPS for real improvements.**

## 5) Safe Routes to School

*Trips to and from schools are among the best opportunities to reduce car trips in Fairfax County. A robust Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program can play a critical role in encouraging more families to walk and bicycle to school, which has been shown to increase confidence and sense of independence among children while also reducing pickup/dropoff vehicle congestion and associated carbon emissions. Unfortunately, the County's SRTS program includes just one dedicated staff position for a public school system that serves 185,000 students.*

5a) Would you support expanding the Safe Routes to School program, including additional staff capacity, to get more kids to walk and bike to school?

Yes

**No**

5b) What other policies or budget items will you pursue to upgrade transportation infrastructure so kids can safely walk and bike to school?

**I do not believe in expanding bureaucracy and increasing the associated county spend on a county resource whose job is to encourage children to walk to school. I do not see this as a productive use of tax dollars.**

**I believe that such funds would be better appropriated by investing in schools in high-density neighborhoods, thus reducing the need to bus students across the school district.**

**Walking to school should be encouraged by families and will happen if schools are neighborhood-based and close in proximity, there are walkable and safe sidewalks or trails, and everyone feels secure and protected during the trip.**

## CLIMATE MITIGATION, RESILIENCE, AND GREEN SPACES

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### 1) Reaching Carbon Neutrality by 2050

*The recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report made clear that tackling the climate crisis is **the** challenge of this century, and will interact with all others, from ecological to economic to social. Leaders who boldly act to reduce and prepare for climate impacts have the opportunity to truly preserve and create a better world for ourselves and our children. This starts with reducing our greenhouse gas emissions. The Community-wide Climate & Energy Action Plan (CECAP) established a goal of carbon neutrality for Fairfax County by 2050, with interim goals of 50% greenhouse gas emissions reductions by 2030 and 75% by 2040. To reach these goals, the County requires actionable implementation plans, effective management, robust accountability mechanisms, a clear communication strategy, consistent metrics and monitoring, and sufficient funding to address the current challenges. We have just seven years to reach the first 2030 goal.*

1a) Are you committed to ensuring that Fairfax County complies with and achieves its greenhouse gas emission reduction goals by 2050?

Yes

**No**

1b) What specific policy actions and/or programs would you undertake as supervisor to accelerate and/or achieve the aggressive carbon reduction goals?

**For over two years I chaired the Environment & Recreation Committee of the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Association (MVCCA) where we addressed CECAP [Community-wide Energy and Climate Action Plan], Resilient Fairfax, protected the RPA [resource protection areas], help preserve River Farm, organized the largest single English Ivy Weed Warrior training the local NPS**

[National Park Service] **had ever hosted, and addressed other important environmental policy issues.**

**I have particularly strong feelings about policies designed to reduce climate change by influencing greenhouse gasses.**

**Simply put, we cannot realistically reduce our carbon output and remain economically competitive and even if we could it would not matter at all if countries such as Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS Nations) did not do the same. What we CAN realistically do is focus on carbon sequestering efforts. By planting hardwood trees, deep-root grasses, and algae which will naturally store carbon and prevent it from free forming in our atmosphere we can subsidize the expected carbon output loads.**

**We cannot influence the global production of CO2 without either economic sanctions that would force millions into starvation or outright war, neither of which is desirable or preferred.**

**What we can do is plant more and plan for future CO2 forecasts. We can do that independently as individuals or in a more-organized fashion.**

## 2) Climate Resilience

*In 2022, Fairfax County adopted Resilient Fairfax, a roadmap to help residents and infrastructure adapt to an increasingly warmer and wetter climate. Ensuring our County is implementing the necessary measures (such as providing emergency relief hubs, planting trees, and improving stormwater management) in the face of a changing climate is important, particularly for disadvantaged communities who are identified as the most vulnerable.*

2a) Will you support the plan recommendations of Resilient Fairfax?

Yes

No

**Partially**

2b) How would you further fund and support equitable resilience investments to implement the Resilient Fairfax plan in communities most affected by climate impacts?

**Every citizen in the county should have access to green space, have ample shade trees, and have access to clear air and water.**

**I believe that in order to best serve our disadvantaged communities, our focus should be on reducing litter and improving surface environmental issues. No child should live in a community that has pollution and should have access to the natural resources of the county.**

### 3) Climate Impacts of Land Use and Development

*Every land use decision is an environmental decision. To meet both our climate and resilience goals, the County can take actions through the development process such as prioritizing compact development and land use patterns, which have a positive impact on reducing carbon emissions and on protecting current natural resources. To do this, we must ensure the implementation of energy efficient buildings (such as green buildings and the use of solar and other renewable energies), eliminate any building or development in Resource Protection Areas, reduce the amount of impermeable surfaces, and increase native tree canopy and natural landscaping.*

3a) Are you committed to utilizing the development process to reduce carbon emissions and minimize environmental impacts on our natural resources?

**Yes**

No

3b) How would you utilize the development process to achieve CECAP and Resilient Fairfax goals?

**I have a personal attachment to this issue.**

**Our family's front yard is within the Resource Protection Area (RPA) on the banks of Little Hunting Creek, a tidal tributary to the Potomac. Against our wishes, and after a lengthy fight, in 2020, Fairfax County occupied our yard for a capital construction project. They clear cut and grubbed the lot and removed over 20 old-growth trees. These included beautiful, healthy trees which served as natural habitat for many creatures and a valuable resource for reducing carbon emissions.**

**For over 2 years, I watched the county construction crews. Throughout the process we pleaded with the County to consider alternatives that would be less disruptive and more conscientious of the area being destroyed by their plans. Several of the contractors mentioned that there were viable alternatives that would preserve the trees while still accomplishing the construction goals, but the county had a plan and was not willing to consider alternatives. To this day, my family continues to argue with the minimal restoration efforts the county left behind.**

**Environmental responsibility is clearly not even a consideration with the current county administration where land use is concerned and I am committed to not only utilize county resources more responsibly, but also to preserve the limited and irreplaceable natural resources in our county and urge the county to consider alternatives that minimally impact our environment when developing and executing land use plans.**

#### 4) Tree Canopy and Forest Management

Trees help mitigate climate impacts by sequestering carbon, mitigating heat island effects, and improving stream valley integrity, thus improving drinking water quality and minimizing flooding. The result is a healthier, more friendly, and more resilient urban habitat. CECAP calls for a minimum of 50% tree canopy coverage in every census block by 2050, prioritizing areas of highest socioeconomic need first. Data from 2015 to 2018 shows that the County lost 2.6% of our tree canopy, which will make reaching these goals even more challenging. Relatedly, the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) owns nearly 10% of land in Fairfax County, including stream valleys and forested areas, yet faces significant budget challenges that impact its ability to manage and protect its natural resources.

4a) Are you committed to protecting and increasing Fairfax County's tree canopy?

**Yes**

No

4b) Which actions would you take to protect and grow the County's tree canopy, particularly in areas with the lowest tree canopy coverage?

**This year to date, I have planted no fewer than 6 new trees on my property in the Mount Vernon District.**

**In 2019, I collected nearly 500 signatures on a petition to preserve two heritage trees. While the petition was presented to Supervisor Storck, our efforts were ultimately unsuccessful...**

**I am opposed to the county's current approach to in-fill development, where a home is demolished and multiples are put in its place. While this increases the housing supply, it also increases the strain in our suburban infrastructure. There are hundreds of examples in the district of stormwater runoff and flooding due to the clearcutting of trees from lots and our county leaders are doing nothing about it.**

**I am in support of invasive vine removal programs, which are killing the trees we have. I support the preservation of old growth heritage hardwood trees on public land by default. I believe that property owners should be assessed at a lower rate if they meet defined tree canopy coverage metrics.**

## FOOD SECURITY

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### 1) Inclusive and Accessible Community Gardens

The Fairfax County Park Authority has 10 community gardens, but only one is near communities where the residents struggle to get enough to eat. Additionally, almost all of the gardens require a car to get to and have multi-year waiting lists.

1a) What County actions would you advocate for in order to increase residents' ability to grow their own food, particularly food-insecure residents?

**The great thing about gardening, farming, and growing food is the low-barrier to entry. Oftentimes all that is needed to start is a bit of motivation and education. Seeds, water, soil, and luck take care of the rest.**

**What's also great about home gardening is the opportunity to trade and barter. Let's not forget that every plot of land may not be the best solution to grow everything and there are opportunities across the board. There is an entire literal eco-system to agriculture and we should share the opportunities that abound.**

**I personally have a vermicomposter in my basement, in which I place my food scraps and wood chips. And while my herbs, and plants such as garlic, horseradish, and loofa are doing well at present, I have no tomatoes or peppers growing. Yet, as a community, I am able to connect with neighbors who need vermicompost for fertilizer and enjoy my mint and will trade for the vegetables for which I am searching.**

**I use this personal anecdote as a metaphor for how we can scale such success across Fairfax County. Our focus should not be about designing the 8"x11" identical garden for every type of resident in every neighborhood. Our focus should be about developing the education, the infrastructure, and the channels to communicate. That's how we "move the needle" to solve food insecurity in self-determined ways.**

## 2) Urban Agriculture

*The pandemic showed how fragile local food supply systems are. However, County zoning rules can severely limit entrepreneurs who want to start commercial agricultural operations that would help build a more robust food production system locally. Fairfax County also lags behind its neighbors in providing incentives for would-be commercial food growers, who may be unable to finance the upfront technology and equipment needs or support an agricultural operation for the length of time it takes to become sustainable.*

2a) What regulation changes or incentives would you endorse to facilitate innovative urban agriculture in Fairfax County?

**Since the pandemic, I personally added multiple garden beds, a tumbler composter, vermicomposter, a Bokashi composter, and have planted fruit-bearing trees to my yard. While I am personally fortunate to be able to do so, none of those required county intervention, permission, or assistance.**

**I support new building codes to support rooftop gardens, especially in larger multi-family buildings. If retrofitting a building for soil weight loads is unfeasible, the county should allow and support hydroponic and aquaponic gardening configurations. I support additional Community Use Areas at our farmer's markets for the trading of homegrown goods. I do not support a new meals tax which has the possibility of hindering the self-selling of food.**

### 3) Food Insecurity

*The demand at local food distribution sites has not yet fallen back to pre-pandemic levels, likely due to inflation and employment insecurity in low-income neighborhoods. Yet federal programs for extra food as well as rent relief have ended, leaving many residents worse off than they were before the pandemic.*

3a) Do you support additional County funding for food assistance to meet the current needs?

Yes

**No**

3b) What policies or programs would you support to make sure the lowest income families have access to food?

**If we are seeing families unable to afford food in Fairfax County, we need to be taking a serious look at how to increase the disposable income of those families by reducing their tax burden.**

**On April 11th, the Board of Supervisors held public hearings on the Advertised Budget and I traveled to the County Center to provide testimony. I kept many of my neighbors in mind as I spoke.**

**Upfront, the advertised budget addresses the economy. Page 2 of the Summary concedes a recession is looming and, yet, over the following 16 pages, 70 separate county programs are highlighted. For Sixty-five of those programs they recommend increasing spending. For only 3 did they recommend no change from the previous budget, and for only 2 did they recommend a decrease in spending.**

**In a period of the highest inflation in decades, and at a time when consumer purchasing power is the lowest it's been in a lifetime, I knew the budget was heading in the wrong direction.**

**In their own words on Page 1 of the Summary:**

**According to the January CPI [Consumer Price Index] report, Americans are paying 10.4% more in food, 7.3% more in energy, and 8.3% more in rent compared to a year ago. The stresses are beginning to show in the economy. Inflation has strained Americans' finances. The savings rate, which was running**



at above 8% to 3.3%, as Americans rapidly spent down their savings and pandemic-related aid. Credit card balances were up 15% year-over-year in the third quarter of 2022, the largest increase in more than two decades.

In other words, "times are tough".

And yet in this budget they proposed that the "average" household - that's those who have a combined income \$127,000 - and who live in an average home that came with a price of \$760,000, that this average family should pay Real Property Taxes of \$8,532, representing a 6.67% of that family's total income just on county municipal property taxes. This does not include Personal Property taxes, sales taxes, or anything levied by the State or Federal government. And it certainly doesn't include the 10.4% increase in food, 7.3% in energy costs, etc.

This budget includes increases for landscaping services, increases for subsidized veterinary care, increases for personnel services within the office of each supervisor, and offices of the chairman, and many other increases, all passed on to an already struggling population of citizens.

The Board of Supervisors passed that budget without substantial tax relief on May 9th, 2023.

Reducing the taxes on food insecure families in order to provide them economic relief is something that our current Supervisors could have done now, but failed to do. As your representative to the Board from Mount Vernon, I will not make the same mistake.

## OTHER COMMENTS

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Are there any other comments you would like to provide? (optional)

I'm running as an Independent without political party affiliation, because I want my focus to be on solving problems, not playing politics. Just like both George Washington and George Mason, on whose family land many of us now raise our families, I believe that party should not come before country. I feel that we've become too divided over concepts for which we have no control and that is taking the focus away from the quality of life issues we have the ability to influence.

I am not the candidate for voters who insist on voting for a particular political party; I am the candidate who considers different viewpoints, picks the best ideas and comes up with common sense solutions for the families of the Mount Vernon District.

**I believe my unique perspective as a veteran, as someone involved in both very small and very large companies, as someone with formal education in business and economics, and as a husband and father, I both understand the challenges we're facing and have the real-world experience to form a consensus, identify a creative solution, and get the solve done. It would be my honor to serve as your representative on the Board of Supervisors.**

**My writings and information about my campaign are available at [www.votechristophermorgan.com](http://www.votechristophermorgan.com).**