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## Kathy Smith

SULLY CANDIDATE | Democrat; incumbent | kathysmith.org

### 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?

**As supervisor, I will continue to push to make mixed-use, livable, walkable activity centers a priority. In 2017, we added this kind of development as an overall goal for new development.**

#### 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?

**There are many ways to approach affordable and market rate housing. The County and our staff are working to address the workforce dwelling unit and preservation of affordable housing policy to increase the number of available units for sale or rent. I have a history of supporting affordable housing initiatives, and have proudly voted for affordable housing efforts in my own district.**

### 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 have supported policies to address housing affordability in the County. We also need to be leveraging grants from nonprofits or the federal government to expand our affordable housing programs.**

### 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'd work to ensure that for any affordable housing that is redeveloped we are also creating new affordable housing to replace that. We also have to protect renters that are displaced not necessarily from redevelopment, but from rents being hiked on the places they already live.**

**Our government employees, healthcare staff, teachers, and workers of all kinds are being displaced from the communities they work and serve in and have to spend more of their time and resources commuting. Workers should get the opportunity to live in the communities they are part of, and I will champion projects that I believe will benefit the Sully District and the county overall.**

## 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?

**The board is addressing housing affordably with innovative concepts. This is an issue we need to continue working through with the community. Reducing the restrictions on ALUs is important. I'm committed to working with key stakeholders to make Fairfax County's housing more affordable.**

## 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?

**Supporting home ownership is one of the best ways we know of building stronger, more stable communities. While there are Federal and State programs to assist first time home buyers, the County is looking into providing assistance as well.**

## 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?

**I have been a strong advocate of improving our bus system so that our commuters can get to other parts of the county and the District. We need more regional cooperation to increase and improve bus service with neighboring counties. Our public transportation systems should serve lower-income areas better, and we should provide more public transportation and walkable communities near Fairfax County work activity centers.**

### 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      *No answer provided*

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

**We need to ensure that we make appropriate improvements in active transportation and also ensure that our roads are safe. Road improvements also include pedestrian improvements, like walking and biking trails. This is not an either or answer. I will continue to work with the community to advocate for more high visibility cross walks and address concerns raised for certain locations.**

### 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?

**Expanding our usage of Shared Use Paths and ensuring that bike lanes have physical barriers between them and automotive traffic can make biking more accessible and attractive to commuters, and can reduce congestion on our roads overall. I support multi-modal transportation projects, and I would like to update and maintain our walkways and trails so that people can use new forms of transportation safely.**

#### 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?

**The state owns the roads, but we take our job seriously when it comes to safety issues and will work to address them.**

#### 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?

**We should increase Automated Speed Enforcement in school zones to make roads safer, and we should have dedicated funding towards this program so that it can do its job well.**

## 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?

**Housing and transit policy is climate policy, so reducing car dependence overall will also make our city more sustainable environmentally. I believe that mixed-use and transit-accessible communities that enable workers to live near their jobs can reduce congestion and improve air quality as well. We should support all forms of transportation, not just cars, and that should include active transportation such as bike trails as well as expanding public transit.**

### 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      *No answer provided*

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

**One of the most impactful ways we can build climate resilience is retrofitting and weatherizing older buildings. This is an issue that effects lower-income people and renters, as they tend to live in homes that are older, less energy efficient and have poorer insulation, which results in higher electric and water bills. It's not a choice between spending the money or not spending the money, it's a choice between investing in our community to make it more resilient in the face of a changing climate, or being forced to spend more on disaster relief and energy bills as our weather becomes more erratic.**

### 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?

**We have standards in our comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance that require addressing energy efficiency and climate resiliency.**

### 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?

**When there is redevelopment we need to ensure that green space is included.**

## 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?

**I supported changes to our ordinance for community gardens.**

### 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?

**The board has implemented efforts to repurpose vacant lots, rooftops and buildings and supported grants for small businesses, and I'm open to talk if there are more issues that need to be addressed.**

### 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?

**I will continue working very closely with the County's NCS (Neighborhood and Community Services) Office to continue the various programs and avenues we have in place to reach those residents who are struggling with food insecurity. I also work with WFCM and their food pantry on a regular basis.**

### OTHER COMMENTS

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

*No response provided*