



Tenley Peterson for Arlington County Board 2024 County Board Candidates Questionnaire

In recent years Arlington has experienced intense rainfall, flooding, record breaking temperatures, and periods of unhealthy air quality as the impact of the growing climate crisis and broader degradation of our natural environment becomes clearer, Arlington is experiencing. County Board members will be expected to lead efforts to mitigate and adapt to these changing conditions. To assist voters in assessing how candidates will advance the County's climate goals for carbon neutrality and protection and enhancement of tree canopy coverage and natural resources, EcoAction Arlington and Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions requests that you complete this questionnaire, which we will share with our membership and the public at large.

- 1. Arlington continues to face significant development in residential and commercial sectors. While new buildings can be more energy efficient and environmentally sustainable, the tear down of existing structures have significant climate impacts and community displacement. Given private developers rights and significant leeway in choosing how to develop land parcels, if elected, what specific solutions and policies would you endorse that would better ensure a more climate solution and equitable outcome to the county's residential and commercial development?**

In my twelve years serving on Arlington County commissions, sustainability has been a huge priority of mine. I have a proven track record for supporting climate-friendly policies in Arlington County.

On the Budget Commission (Fiscal Affairs Advisory Commission), I called for a grant to replace proposed funding cuts to the Green Home Choice Program and supported increases in staffing levels and the Stormwater Management Fund to ensure compliance to the MS4 stormwater permit.

As a member of the Planning Commission, I have been committed to advancing environmentally responsible land use decisions through master, sector, and site plans. I have



Engaging Our Community in Caring for Our Environment



Faith Alliance for
Climate Solutions
Arlington

- a. *voted in support of the Community Energy Plan;*
- b. *voted in support of Expanded Housing Options (Missing Middle Housing);*
- c. *consistently called for more family-sized units in our highrise buildings, and I got 3-bedroom units added to the Pentagon City Sector Plan as a priority;*
- d. *voted in support of strengthening our green building standards along Columbia Pike;*
- e. *supported the electrification of new buildings;*
- f. *called for more bird-friendly glass at higher heights, in particular when there's planned or existing tree canopy;*
- g. *called for a more expansive definition of tree canopy goals to include green roofs, shrubbery, and native species.*
- h. *encouraged and supported developers doing adaptive reuse when redeveloping sites, such as the Red Lion and NSTA sites that will reuse existing parking garages;*
- i. *supported efforts to decrease parking requirements, which would increase green space and encourage people to use public transportation;*
- j. *supported our biophilic cities initiative and encouraged developers to bring nature into our urban design;*
- k. *supported the breakup of "super blocks" and the addition of mid-block crossings, which make neighborhoods more pedestrian friendly;*
- l. *supported plans for our Green Ribbon network of biophilic walking paths connecting public spaces, destinations, and transit throughout Pentagon City and greater 22202;*
- m. *called for increases in EV parking and EV-ready parking in our new developments;*
- n. *called for more rooftop solar in new buildings;*
- o. *ensured new developments supports bike use, including e-bike parking and cargo bike parking;*
- p. *supported improvements to our trails through development.*

As a County Board member, I would like to strengthen the Community Energy Plan during the 2025 update. I would like staff to create toolkits and resources to show developers specific ways their site plans could better support the Community Energy Plan. I have already started working with the Forestry and Natural Resources Commission on resources to bring more biophilia into our urban design; one benefit of this is addressing the heat island impact, which would have benefits related to energy use. I am a big supporter of C2E2's site plan "report card" and have encouraged other commissions to use a similar model. I regularly use C2E2's report card to assess whether a proposed project is strong enough from an environmental perspective and celebrate the projects that do well. The Goodwill site plan is an excellent example of a project that I supported that was above-average in their green building features, and this project is a benchmark for future site plans. I would like to strengthen our Green

Building Incentive Program. I would also like the county to incentivize more EV-ready parking spaces in new building designs, and we need to support existing buildings in providing EV parking. I recently wanted to buy an electric vehicle but could not because my 90s-era condo could not support charging. Finally, I would like to see more family-sized units in our residential highrises so families have that housing type as a viable option, since living in a highrise has significant sustainability benefits compared to a single family home.

I have been endorsed by the Sierra Club and Sustainable Mobility for Arlington.

- 2. How can Arlington County best lead by example in phasing out fossil fuels, reducing its carbon emissions from facilities and operations, and advancing its zero waste goals? How can the County use the annual budget, the Capital Improvement Plan, and internal policy guidelines for construction, purchasing, and operations to advance a whole of government approach to addressing the climate crisis?**

As a member of the planning commission, I have supported County efforts related to Electric Vehicles. To continue our commitment to addressing the climate crisis, I would advance County efforts to purchase electric vehicles when it comes time to replace the existing fleet. With my experience with Arlington Public Schools, I would encourage APS to convert the County's current school bus fleet to electric or look at ways to use ART buses to transport school children.

In addition to EVs, I would work to strengthen the green incentive programs. I would also work with my colleagues to ensure that all new County construction achieves net zero emissions. Finally, as a Board Member, I would push for 100% green energy purchases for county energy use.

- 3. Achieving the County's goal for carbon neutrality, zero waste, tree canopy coverage, and other environmental goals requires actions and behavior changes by residents and businesses. What strategies, policies, and programs would you pursue to promote and incentivize the private sector to reduce their carbon footprint. In particular, how can Arlington County promote reduced energy use and electrification of both buildings and transportation, encourage use of transit, biking, and walking over single occupancy vehicles, foster waste**

reduction, reuse, composting, and effective recycling?

Our biggest tool to achieve our environmental goals is through land use. Our Green Building Incentive Program is a great way to bring more sustainable buildings to Arlington, and I support strengthening it.

Our metro corridors are at a point where some buildings are reaching the end of their useful life. The embodied carbon in these structures must be taken into consideration when calculating their full climate impacts. As a County Board member, I will push for finding a range of options that will incentivize renewing those buildings either through adaptive reuse or new buildings that are carbon-neutral.

As a County Board member, I will prioritize making our sidewalks throughout the county safe and accessible for all, our bike routes safe, obvious, and easy to use, our public transit options robust, and our trail network properly paved and maintained. Every trip that avoids the need to use a car is by definition a green trip. I will encourage our County to build an environment that makes alternatives to car trips attractive, convenient, and viable. The planned Green Ribbon in Pentagon City is an example of the type of infrastructure that I voted to recommend.

I have been endorsed by the Sierra Club and Sustainable Mobility for Arlington.

4. Arlington's tree canopy and green spaces are in crisis, while stormwater impacts from impervious surfaces are increasingly severe. Site development, whether commercial or residential, usually results in clear cut lots and limited replacement of mature shade trees. Yet the County Board has made climate resilience and mitigation a top priority. With the recent adoption of a new Forestry and Natural Resources Plan that calls for restoration of a 40% tree canopy cover, what “new” approaches are needed to reverse the tree loss trends and gain the greater climate resilience benefits that mature tree canopies provide, particularly in Arlington's more disadvantaged neighborhoods?

I believe we can inventory all county-controlled or owned property for impervious surfaces and grass-only sites. We have many places where pavement is not necessary and can be converted to water-absorbing surfaces. For example, in every neighborhood there are some streets that are way wider than needed for



traffic and parking and some grassy sites are just mowed but not played on. We should consider specific goals within our planning and policy documents, to reduce impervious surfaces. These newly pervious areas can be rethought to enhance tree health and maximize storm water absorption. We have examples of this along parts of the Williamsburg Blvd and Patrick Henry Drive medians.

We can also extend and better publicize our programs encouraging rain barrels and other rain runoff techniques for our low density residential neighborhoods. These are relatively low cost and when added together can have a real impact on runoff.

Many places covered in grass can be replanted with native trees, shrubs, and ground covers that require less maintenance and will extend the tree canopy.

Where the county is constrained from acting due to limitations on our authority under Commonwealth law, I will push for our state delegation to advocate for changes in those laws.