



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, by Friday, September 6.

Instructions - Please provide your name and answer to each question below and email to Joan McIntyre, jmcintyre57@gmail.com).

Name _____ Audrey Clement _____

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?

The best way to ensure equitable outcomes for new development is to enforce the rule of law. Evidence that Arlington County routinely flouts the law in approving new development projects was presented in Nordgren v. County Board of Arlington, VA, a civil lawsuit challenging the wholesale upzoning of the County via the so-called EHO Ordinance adopted by Arlington County Board in March, 2023.

In July, 2024 counsel to plaintiffs demonstrated to an Arlington Circuit Court judge hearing the case that none of the impact studies required by state law in advance of the countywide upzoning were done. The result is that the massive impacts of the upzoning on run off, tree canopy, congestion, parking and school enrollment are either unknown or grossly underestimated.

If elected, I am going to insist on strict adherence not only to state and federal laws governing the environment, but also on strict interpretation of the GLUP and associated plans, policies and procedures.

I am also going to prioritize approval of site plan projects that repurpose existing commercial buildings rather than new construction, which often entails extremely wasteful demolition.

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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?

Arlington County deserves credit for entering into a virtual power purchase agreement (VPPA) with Dominion by purchasing energy offsets from power generated at Dominion's solar farm near Danville, VA. But those offsets apply only to emissions generated by county government operations.

Although the Virginia Clean Economy Act permits localities to enter into third party power purchase agreements for renewable

energy, the scope of these agreements is too small to meet GHG reduction targets.

To meet renewable energy targets, I propose that the County require that all new site plan development projects meet LEED Gold standards and provide bonus density for projects that provide rooftop solar.

On a neighborhood level, I advocate restoring residential glass recycling as a needed service that would promote less car trips throughout the county.

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- 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?**

Arlington can promote reduced energy use on the part of developers by strengthening existing green building standards, such as adopting LEED Gold as a standard rather an option.

For existing businesses, I want to get the Arlington Chamber of Commerce into the act—using its extensive list of members—to promote Green energy and energy efficiency as a potential new profit center.

Residents are a harder nut to crack, because most cannot or will not get out of their cars. I want to promote biking and walking as necessary for health and well-being. For seniors, parents and

others who need cars to get around, I advocate ride-share and car-share as an alternative to single occupancy vehicles.

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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?

The statement “Yet the County Board has made climate resilience and mitigation a top priority” is highly questionable. If it were true, why did County Board adopt the 2023 EHO Ordinance, which will result in precisely what Ecoaction Arlington opposes, namely “clear cut lots and limited replacement of mature shade trees?”

The new Forestry and Natural Resources Plan is just window dressing to cover paving over the entire County with massive infill development via EHO.

The solution to massive loss of tree canopy due to Missing Middle and other misplaced development schemes is to stop the doublespeak about what the County is actually doing.

Once it is acknowledged that the County is committed to the goal of increasing tax revenue via developer initiated densification schemes, then and only then will it be possible to challenge the goal and mitigate its impacts on the environment.



One mitigation technique would be to up the fines for violation of the County's tree ordinance from \$2,500 to \$10,000 or more.