



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: Madison Granger

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?

I think it's important to recognize that the trend of urbanization (which is true not just for Arlington but for America more broadly) will continue to be part of Arlington's future given the consistent high demand to live here. Arlington is a vibrant community that can't be frozen in time but must continue to evolve. We can benefit from the influx of jobs, housing, etc. that this development brings and we can improve the efficiency and sustainability of structures that are rebuilt. Given the reality of development, we must find ways to do it right. Some of these ways, which are within the power of local governments and which I support, include:

1. Accounting for the externalities of development – County leadership should set and maintain policies that price in the negative externalities of development. One example is stormwater management. Because construction sites can be especially troublesome sources of stormwater pollution, the county should ensure it maintains and enforces its stormwater controls on development sites during construction, as outlined in its Land Disturbing Activity/Stormwater Permit process. This can also include trees. Projects should strive to avoid or minimize removal of trees wherever possible. However, in cases where the pros outweigh the cons for the community, there should be a requirement for tree replacement offset, which can have a higher ratio than 1:1 especially in cases concerning mature trees.
2. Incentivize energy efficiency and sustainability in building and built structures – Increase the likelihood that new buildings will include energy efficient components or be made from environmentally sustainable materials through tax-based incentives. These could include incentives for local and regenerative materials (e.g. if there are any trees harvested from the site they could be incorporated into wood elements). They could also include incentives for developers to incorporate technologies that mitigate impervious surface issues, such as permeable pavement, rain gardens, and green roofs. This already exists somewhat in the form of the stormwater tax credit system.
3. Get the zoning right so people can live near where they work and we can minimize car commuting – Investigate ways to do this best, likely including development of mixed-use buildings with good access to public transport and/or bike lanes and bike paths.

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 Patch recently asked me about the best advice I ever received in their candidate questionnaire and my answer relates very much to this question so I'll share it here as well: I will always love the classic "Be the change you wish to see in the world." An example of how my campaign has been guided by this advice: because reducing waste is very important to me, I've decided to use biodegradable yard signs, recycled paper for fliers, and thrifted t-shirts for volunteers (shoutout to local screen printing business LA Tee-Shirt for helping make this last one possible). These have each come with a marginal increase in cost but to me it has been worth it because it has meant



living my values. I hope to be part of a change to reduce the amount of waste that political campaigns generate.

My answer demonstrates my personal commitment to zero waste goals and my belief in the importance of being the change you wish to see in the world, which is what I believe this question is about. At a county level, the Climate Change, Energy, and Environment Commission is doing great work with the county to move Arlington towards our environmental goals. I'm supportive of the efforts outlined in their [2024 Work Plan](#) and think the county should continue collaborating with this commission and taking advantage of their creativity, passion, and expertise.

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?

Individual behavior change is hard but recent decades have given us better tools for trying to influence it. I'm fascinated by behavioral economics and nudging and would strive to put these concepts to work in Arlington County for the benefit of environmental goals. Policy examples might include requiring businesses that adjust their default behaviors around single-use plastics (i.e., cashiers needing to ask a customer if they want a plastic bag before simply giving them one, having plastic cutlery for take-out food be something customers opt IN to receiving instead of opting OUT). I'm supportive of policies that generally make environmentally conscious decisions easier for individuals and businesses. The county is already doing some things well in this regard, like the recent deployment of food disposal bins for apartment dwellers. The county might also investigate how it can help multifamily properties move towards electric charging capabilities. Many communities, like the one I live in, face hurdles with aging energy infrastructure.

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?

See item 1 under my answer to question 1. I also applaud EcoAction Arlington’s Tree Canopy Equity program and think the county should support these kinds of efforts.