



North Potomac

CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

North Potomac Citizens Association (NPCA) 2018 County Council At Large Candidates Questionnaire on Issues Affecting our Area

County Council At-Large Candidates	Response Given
Gabe Albornoz	No response
Rosemary Arkoian	Yes
Marilyn Balcombe	No response
Charles Barkley	No response
Shruti Bhatnagar	No response
Cherri Branson	No response
Brandy Brooks	No response
Craig Carozza-Caviness	No response
Ron Colbert	No response
Bill Conway	Yes
Hoan Dang	Yes
Robert Dyer (R)	Yes
Tom Falcinelli Jr	No response
Chris Fiotes (R)	No response
Lorna Phillips Forde	No response
Jill Ortman Fouse	Email bounce back
Loretta Jean Garcia	No response
Paul Geller	Yes
Evan Glass	No response
Richard Gottfried	Yes
Neil Greenberger	Yes
Seth Grimes	Yes
Ashwani Jain	No response
Will Jawando	No response
David Lipscomb	No response
Melissa McKenna	Yes
Danielle Meitiv	No response
Penny Musser (R)	No response
Hans Riemer	Yes
Michele Riley	Yes
Graciela Rivera-Oven	No response
Darwin Romero	No response
Mohammad Siddique	Yes
Shelly Skolnick (R)	No response
Jarrett Smith	No response
Steve Solomon	Yes
Chris Wilhelm	No response
Tim Willard	Yes

Candidate were asked to provide their views on the following issues:

1. Cell towers in residential neighborhoods to support 5G.
2. A new bridge across the Potomac River north of the American Legion Bridge plus a roadway through Montgomery County to link the new bridge with Route 370 and the ICC. In the past, this proposed project has been identified as The Truckway, Techway, or the second bridge.
3. Toll lanes on I-270
4. A bus rapid transit line (The Corridor Cities Transitway or CCT) along a 15 mile route from the Shady Grove Metro Station to Clarksburg or any part therein.
5. How would you propose to alleviate traffic congestion in North Potomac, Rockville & Gaithersburg?
6. School overcrowding and the forecast for 2020.

Responses:

1. Cell towers in residential neighborhoods to support 5G.

- **Rosemary Arkoian:** I am concerned about having cell towers in residential neighborhoods and the adverse effect to the health of residents.
- **Bill Conway:** I am keenly aware of this issue because of concerns expressed by local North Potomac activists, notably my friend Donna Baron. Those concerns lead me to believe that the issue must be addressed in further public discussion. Factors favoring 5G installations include:
 - a. The need for greater and more reliable telecommunications capacity to accommodate increasing digital demands and the “internet of things”.
 - b. The need for completely reliable wireless 911 calling capacity as homes increasingly lack land lines.
 - c. The need for broadband access for rural areas which 5G would provide.Factors disfavoring 5G installations include:
 - a. Unresolved questions about potential negative health effects from proximate exposure to radio frequency radiation from 5G antennas.
 - b. The visual harm (and potential effect on property values) of placing 5G antennas in neighborhoods whose utilities are otherwise buried.
 - c. These issues are surprisingly complex, and at this point I feel the need for more in depth information.
- **Hoan Dang:** I believe further study is needed when it comes to cell towers antennas being built in neighbors to support 5G service. I am aware of the concerns residents have about potentially harmful cell antennas located within close proximity of homes and schools. I do believe the recent decision made by the County Council in regards to the ZTA creates a compromise for addressing community concerns while reflecting the reality that more bandwidth is needed in our communities.
- **Robert Dyer:** I think we have to do everything possible to protect our residents from both the visual and possible health impacts of small cell towers. We should focus on keeping these towers as far away from homes as possible. Towers must be 500 feet apart, and every neighborhood has its own layout, so installation should be custom-tailored to each rather than a one-size-fits-all regulation.
- **Paul Geller:** I do not support the construction or use of 5G cell towers in residential neighborhoods. While connectivity is a great thing, we do not need 5G signals concentrated in our residential neighborhoods. As I understand it, 5G signals require more concentrated tower networks than we currently have for 3G and 4G service. I believe the majority of residents

would support the view that we can sacrifice some speed in order to avoid an over-concentration of cell towers in our suburbs.

- **Richard Gottfried:** The great thing about our political system is that those who run for office are representatives of the people. As a homeowner and taxpayer in MoCo, I can tell you that I wouldn't want a cell tower in front of my home any more than anyone else would. I believe there are always better alternatives, and on an issue like this, the place to start is open dialogue with the community. Not "make a plan and then talk to the homeowners later," but open dialogue at the outset of the issue. I will be a proponent on this, and many other issues, of bringing the stakeholders to the table and understanding the interests of all sides.
- **Neil Greenberger:** I have worked as a senior staff member on the County Council for most of the past 11 years, and I live in the Upcounty after many years living in Gaithersburg. I am very familiar with the North Potomac neighborhood and your issues. I have been at most of the community meetings involving the small cell towers. The Zoning Text Amendment approved by the Council this May provided some progress, but hardly addressed the concerns of residents who may have towers erected right in front of their properties. The need for the towers for improved cell service may be important to users in the future, but getting that service by disrupting the look and desires of homeowners is not acceptable. If elected, I would seek to revive this issue and work with County attorneys to see if we can press parameters to a greater extent than the current Councilmembers were willing to go. If this needs to be addressed on the federal level, we should actively pursue the help of our representatives in Congress and the Senate.
- **Seth Grimes:** I advocated stripping residential neighborhoods from the recently enacted Zoning Text Amendment allowing for Small Cell Towers, and that's what the County Council did!
- **Melissa McKenna:** I am not in favor of microcell towers or antennae placement in residential areas. Not thoroughly convinced for other areas either since their placement must be so close together. I am certainly against any preemption by the state to make these zoning decisions for counties or municipalities.
- **Hans Riemer:** I represent our County — and local government generally — on an important FCC advisory committee, where I am one of the country's leading voices advocating to preserve local control over 5g deployment so that we can protect our communities. We are up against great odds at the FCC, and in the MD legislature, and in Congress, where the industry has a dominating voice. The worst case scenario is state or federal action that removes local control over siting of this new infrastructure. I am doing everything I can to prevent that. While we want to continue getting the maximum benefit from mobile technology, how it happens makes a big difference.
- **Michele Riley:** I'm glad the Council did not change the current code for telecommunications facilities in residential zones in the recent ZTA. Residents should be provided with public notice and hearings for new applications.
- **Mohammad Siddique:** Next generation of 5G Cell Towers are a reality. We want our county to benefit but I will favor them in anyone's backyard. In fact current 4G towers can be used without too many new towers. The new ones should be placed discreetly as the current 4G towers without infringing on our environments.
- **Steve Solomon:** I am in favor of 5G cell towers in commercial and industrial areas.
- **Tim Willard:** I oppose placing 5G cell towers near homes or near to schools. There is a growing body of evidence that these cell towers may increase the risk of cancer. We should use the precautionary principle and not install them until the science is settled. I also oppose legislation that was introduced in Annapolis that would pre-empt local zoning ordinances and allow construction of towers without public notice or hearings.

2. A new bridge across the Potomac River north of the American Legion Bridge plus a roadway through Montgomery County to link the new bridge with Route 370 and the ICC. In the past, this proposed project has been identified as The Truckway, Techway, or the second bridge.

- **Rosemary Arkoian:** I would be open to studying this new bridge as a possibility, but I'm not in favor of encroaching upon the Ag Reserve.
- **Bill Conway:** I strongly oppose a second bridge crossing and roadway through Montgomery County north of the American Legion Bridge for two reasons. First, such a roadway would either go through the Agricultural Reserve (which has been reserved against such intrusions) or go through closer-in areas which would result in destruction of residential neighborhoods. Second, every study of which I'm aware, including the Transportation Planning Board's study in late 2017, has found that a second crossing would be both extremely expensive and produce little benefit.
- **Hoan Dang:** I would be open to possible future study of the impact this bridge would have on communities, traffic, and the environment. But at this point I do not support the creation of a second bridge across the Potomac River.
- **Robert Dyer:** I strongly support construction of a new Potomac River crossing. There is an existing planned right-of way to take I-370 to the river that would not require demolition of homes, and that is the route the road should take. It is essential to reducing traffic congestion on I-270 and the American Legion Bridge, and to economic development, as international firms have said they want direct access to Dulles Airport.
- **Paul Geller:** I am opposed to a second crossing over the Potomac River north of the current American Legion Bridge. We need to get smarter about how we use the American Legion Bridge and need to consider alternative methods of getting more traffic across it. And while it may seem cost prohibitive to either expand the number of lanes on the current bridge and on I-495, it is far less expensive than building a new road from scratch that will harm our cherished Agricultural Reserve. We also need to consider what traffic patterns are going to be like in ten to thirty years. Autonomous vehicles, to some the stuff of science fiction, are on the way. I recently attended the Planning Department sponsored Makeover Montgomery 4 Conference. There, our Planning Department invited local experts to share their knowledge about various areas of development. One session was entirely devoted to autonomous vehicles. All four presenters agreed we will have self driving cars within fifteen years. This will mean our roads will be able to handle more cars, at closer driving distances to one another, all traveling at greater speeds. If the technology continues to progress, we could see more cars able to use existing road space at faster speeds. Finally, we also need to consider the possibility we will add a great deal of jobs with employers in Montgomery County over the next few years. Amazon HQ2 is just the beginning. I plan on working pro-actively as your next At-Large Councilmember, along with my colleagues, the new County Executive, our Economic Development Corporation, our Chambers of Commerce, and other interest parties at creating new jobs right here in Montgomery County. This would also reduce the need for expansion of I-270, I-495, and other main roads in the area.
- **Neil Greenberger:** In my job working for the County, I was in charge of the County cable station. One show that we produced was on the "Building of the Beltway." My staff did a great job of tracing the opposition to the project, how long it took to evolve and how it finally came to be built (even with some compromise curves in the Bethesda area). I cannot imagine the Washington area without it. I feel the same way about building a new bridge across the Potomac. It will take a long time in the planning process, but as someone who is in Northern Virginia often (including Loudoun), I strongly feel we will need this bridge. The next Council

(and County Executive) will need to show some guts by starting the early planning process. If elected, I will be leading this first step.

- **Seth Grimes:** I believe that a combination of transit, smart-roadway technology, added American Legion bridge capacity, and a shift of Montgomery County's development focus to East County will save us the expense of creating a new Potomac bridge and roadway corridor, which has been a highly controversial project. The East County focus-shift – directly linked to North Potomac via the I-370 and the Intercounty Connector – is the foundation of long-term sustainability for Montgomery County and for nearby Prince George's and Howard Counties and should draw strong State of Maryland support given the business it will generate for BWI rather than Dulles Airport in Virginia. A new Potomac bridge would by contrast help Dulles grow at Maryland's expense.
- **Richard Gottfried:** I am in favor of using infrastructure improvements and technology advancements to attack our rapidly-increasing traffic congestion in MoCo. Our biggest challenge has nothing to do with transportation – it's that our county budget is severely flawed, and our current county government is either ill-equipped or unwilling to fix it. When we talk about spending money to benefit the residents of MoCo, the conversation, unfortunately, has to be brought back to, "How are we going to pay for it?" – because that's the situation taxpayers have been boxed into. As the only financial professional running for the at-large seats this year, I have made fixing the county's budget my #1 priority, to put our government in a position where it can actually serve our needs, rather than in an inescapable hole that can only lead to (even) higher taxes or (even) less services.
- **Melissa McKenna:** I would want to investigate the possibility of double decking the American Legion Bridge. A second bridge crossing through the Ag Reserve is far from ideal. I disagree that the traffic from MD into VA via the Legion Bridge is necessarily within the beltway and need real data on all the commuters habits in our county not just those who work at Montgomery County businesses. For those whose final destination is Loudoun County or Reston, toll or HOT lanes on I270 and I495 will not help relieve congestion over the bridge. Perhaps it's time to get Elon Musk and his Boring Company to help create a Metro tunnel from Shady Grove Road to the Silver Line.
- **Michele Riley:** I oppose this bridge unless Virginia pays for the majority of its construction. In my view, this bridge would benefit Virginia by making access to Dulles easier, and Virginia should bear the majority of the cost.
- **Mohammed Siddique:** I feel another bridge on the Potomac is a necessity. But it should be located in Southern Frederick County to divert southbound Frederick county traffic to Virginia.
- **Steve Solomon:** I have always advocated for a 2nd bridge across the Potomac. This should have been planned for and budgeted by now, because it will take years to complete. Population growth projections show that as every year goes by the need for the bridge increases.
- **Hans Riemer:** I oppose a second bridge. While I understand that the commute to Northern VA can be awful, we must focus on transit solutions as well as build a bigger job base here locally. I support widening the American Legion bridge; combined with express lanes and rapid transit, we can provide alternatives for people.
- **Tim Willard:** I oppose a new bridge across the Potomac. This has been studied numerous times and found that a new bridge would have minimal impact on congestion on the American Legion Bridge. A 2017 study by the regional Transportation Planning Board found that a new bridge would be one of the least effective ways to reduce congestion on the American Legion Bridge. An outer beltway would threaten the Agricultural Reserve, bring more sprawl and pollution.

3. Toll lanes on I-270

- **Rosemary Arkoian:** I would NOT charge tolls on the present I-270.
- **Bill Conway:** I support adding two reversible lanes on I-270 and widening of American Legion Bridge with BRT service provided between Montgomery County and Tyson's Corner to run on the new lanes as well as cars. The existing I-270 right-of-way will accommodate two new reversible lanes with little or no condemnation of property. In a world of increasingly scarce capital dollars for infrastructure it may be that tolls are the only way to finance this expansion, and therefore I do not categorically oppose tolls. Moreover, it is worth pointing out that drivers who cannot afford or choose not to pay tolls will benefit from this expansion as drivers on the new lanes will free up traffic capacity on existing lanes.
- **Hoan Dang:** I would be supportive of adding reversible toll lanes and bus-rapid transit (BRT) capacity to I-270 from the Beltway into Frederick County.
- **Robert Dyer:** I support Gov. Hogan's Express Lanes plan for I-270.
- **Paul Geller:** While toll lanes seem to be an interesting idea for funding road maintenance and curbing demand, it has been appalling to see the rates being charged on toll roads in Virginia during peak rush hour. Should we have toll lanes on I-270? It remains to be seen. The only way I would ever consider supporting tolls on I-270 is if the maximum rate being charged would be fixed at a relatively reasonable rate (say \$0.50 a mile) and most of the proceeds went to rebuilding our roads and infrastructure. Otherwise, if the tolls will be unreasonable in any way, or a private company would benefit from this particular project (like the speeding cameras we currently have) I would not support tolls.
- **Richard Gottfried:** First and foremost, I am an avid believer that the two inner service lanes on I-270 should be open during rush hour; while not a comprehensive solution, this would immediately yield benefit. Regarding reversible, high-occupancy toll lanes, I believe the concept must be looked at as part of a holistic approach to congestion relief, considering not only the current areas of congestion, but what repercussions different traffic patterns could cause down the road (literally and figuratively). Given the projected growth in population in MoCo and Frederick County, all options need to be on the table.
- **Neil Greenberger:** We must add lanes to I-270. I think the best answer (and most cost effect plan) would be to add two reversible lanes from the Beltway to I-70 in Frederick.
- **Seth Grimes:** Proposed I-270 toll lanes have been characterized as "Lexus Lanes" because of the very high toll costs, imposed on Maryland commuter, that would be needed to finance the road, meaning that either the lanes can't be built or that massive public funding would be needed. Better to invest in communities and promote employer and job growth in Clarksburg, Germantown, Gaithersburg, Rockville down to White Flint, and in the creation of local amenities, so that congestion will become a not-so-fond memory.
- **Melissa McKenna:** NO! We need two reversible lanes, not four toll lanes. Four toll lanes would be required for it to be financially viable to a private investor. Don't need to be charged to get home and don't need the extra detrimental environmental impact of that many lanes. Currently, the more pressing problem is that the scope of MDOT's Managed Lanes Study on I270 only goes as far North as I370. Not nearly far enough to have any meaningful impact and would only exacerbate the existing choke point at Montgomery Village Avenue. (see the study scope at 494-270-P3.com)
- **Hans Riemer:** I support the Council's adopted plan, which would allow for continuous express lanes all the way to Virginia. We need predictability for our future economic growth.
- **Michele Riley:** I am in favor of two reversible toll lanes on I-270 (reversing so that they are southbound during morning rush and northbound during afternoon rush).
- **Mohammed Siddique:** Currently I-270 should not have any toll lane. If additional lanes are built to be Toll lanes that will be fine provided those can also be used for dedicated Bus Rapid Transit. Also, if another bridge is built as mentioned in item 2. All this shall be paid by state.

- **Steve Solomon:** I am in favor of toll lanes on 270. I support much lower toll amounts than those used on I-95 express lanes. Those price points are too high and discourage people from using them.
- **Tim Willard:** The Transportation Planning Board study found that one of the best solutions to congestion was Express toll lanes (free for HOV, toll for non-HOV) on almost all of the limited-access highways, express buses every 10-20 minutes on those highways and other arterials, and two more express lanes on the American Legion Bridge. I think this option should be seriously studied.

4. A bus rapid transit line (The Corridor Cities Transitway or CCT) along a 15 mile route from the Shady Grove Metro Station to Clarksburg or any part therein.

- **Rosemary Arkoian:** I'm concerned about the cost of the CCT and I'm wondering if enough people would use it to justify the cost. I'm also concerned about adverse impacts to some neighborhoods along the route of the CCT.
- **Bill Conway:** I support the CCT. However, I believe the existing planned alignment which would take a substantial detour to accommodate a massive (and now apparently defunct) development at Belward Farm should be revised.
- **Hoan Dang:** Yes, I am very supportive of the CCT connecting the Shady Grove Metro Station to Clarksburg.
- **Robert Dyer:** I would like to seek a public-private partnership with an international firm to see if the CCT could be built and operated by them as a rail line. This would solve the financial question, while greatly boosting ridership over the undesirable diesel bus. I oppose BRT on Route 355, and oppose the planned countywide BRT network. We can help the most people for the least cost by addressing the mode 90% of us use: roads.
- **Paul Geller:** While not the biggest fan of the Corridor Cities Transitway, I am willing to give it a try and listen to those on both sides of the issue. One of the reasons for my hesitation is we need to make a clear, show stopping reason for people to give up their cars and take the CCT on a regular basis. Ridership is key. If we can get the riders, we can consider the CCT a success. That would entail making the CCT vehicle something special: very comfortable seats, USB ports and lights at every seat, video monitors displaying estimated time to next stop and information about Montgomery County, and more. A regular bus is not going to encourage people to forgo using their cars. This needs to be part convenience, part money savings for the rider, and part luxury experience. We also need to consider on demand transportation options such as shared ride vehicles, Lyft and Uber service, van service, and more. Having on demand service makes better use of available resources by not running near empty buses during non-peak times.
- **Richard Gottfried:** I'm a big believer in rapid transit as a method of alleviating traffic congestion. A new bus line here would certainly be helpful to many MoCo residents. However, I reiterate my comments in question #1... Before we can talk about how to pay for new things, we've got to get a handle on the county's wallet. Because of poor management, there's simply not enough money to go around, and the shortfall is only getting worse each year it's not dealt with.
- **Neil Greenberger:** After toll lanes on I-270, I think the most important transportation project in the county should be building the CCT. We likely would have to change some of the tentatively planned route, but we need people on the Council who represent the residents who live north of Rockville. There is strong opposition to this line from residents south of Rockville because they do not think it benefits them. I try to explain to them that every car that does not travel down I-270 because there would be a transit alternative would be a car that never

reaches the Beltway and impacts residents who live in that area. But there is only one way the CCT could be successful: It MUST include parking areas at most of the stations. Current plans do not include parking areas. Planners are being foolish to think people who live more than a 10-minute walk from the stations would be willing to take a bus (or two) to get to a CCT station. My campaign is all about adding reality to all planning projects. This is a prime example.

- **Seth Grimes:** I support the Corridor Cities Transitway along an alignment to be finalized by the state, county, and residents. It's time we put funds into UpCounty transportation infrastructure. Add to this all-day bi-directional Brunswick Line MARC service, to reduce I-270 car trips, and a new station at White Flint, whether or not we win Amazon HQ2 (which I hope we will).
- **Melissa McKenna:** I am not in favor of the current alignment of CCT. Not sure there will ever be a good one. Getting people in farther out suburbs onto buses may work for commuting but not daily life since the end destination is Metro at Shady Grove. Not sure we'll ever get the ridership required. Again, need better data on where people are traveling to/from, when and why, before investing in expensive infrastructure. Let's use crowd-sourced ride-share service (like Bridj) to pilot new bus routes and timing schedules without costly investment up front.
- **Hans Riemer:** I strongly support the CCT. It will create an important local transit option for this region of the County. It will also allow for a biking and walking path, making a bike ride to Metro a realistic option for many people.
- **Michele Riley:** Although I support increasing transportation options, the current alignment for the CCT is long and winding and may not attract significant ridership to make it cost-effective. Since this is a state project and the Maryland Department of Transportation has deferred until 2023, and given our tight budget situation, I don't think the County will be providing any funding toward the CCT anytime soon.
- **Mohammed Siddique:** I strongly favor BRT or CCT to connect Upcounty to down south. We built Clarksburg but did not efficiently connect it to employment centers or elsewhere. That shows lack of timely planning. It must be fixed quickly.
- **Steve Solomon:** Yes, we need the CCT. The state budgeted \$100 million for this 5 years ago, and we're still nowhere on moving this forward in the county.
- **Meredith Wellington:** I support a fast and efficient CCT as part of a larger BRT system, and I believe that public transit should be funded as part of any proposal to decrease congestion on I-270 and on the Beltway. I believe the County Department of Transportation should revisit the selected route, as it is not necessarily "rapid," and resolve last mile transit that will facilitate access to a dedicated CCT BRT.
- **Tim Willard:** I support building the Corridor Cities Transitway along its entire route. The Up County has been promised transit for decades and never received it. I believe that the CCT should be given a higher priority than it presently has.

5. How would you propose to alleviate traffic congestion in North Potomac, Rockville & Gaithersburg?

- **Rosemary Arkoian:** I'd complete the 5.6 miles of M-83 ASAP and put BRT on M-83. That would take traffic off I-270.
- **Bill Conway:** I support an "all of the above" strategy for reducing congestion with substantial focus on mass transit but with limited road construction as well, including two new lanes on I-270 as mentioned above. We should also be building in bike lanes and better pedestrian access and invest in advanced signal light technology. In particular, I believe we should be rethinking

bus service. Many Ride On buses have very few passengers whereas “last mile” connections (i.e. getting between major transit points and home) are often lacking.

- **Hoan Dang:** Beyond supporting a bus rapid transit line (BRT) along the Corridor Cities Transit way (CCT), I would implement a pilot program to provide a public door-to-door ride-sharing “Micro Transit” service (public ride-sharing version of Lyft and Uber) to resolve the “first mile/last mile” challenge for seniors and commuters.
- **Robert Dyer:** It’s urgent that we build the M-83 Highway, which can offload Clarksburg/Damascus/Mt. Airy-bound traffic from I-270 at the Watkins Mill interchange (now under construction). Second, we can move Dulles/Loudoun County-bound/origin traffic off 270 by building a new Potomac River crossing at I-370. 25% of current American Legion bridge traffic is headed to, or from, the Dulles area. We also need to kill the \$10 billion BRT boondoggle, and transfer that money to road construction/widening, and to intersection improvements and interchanges at choke points.
- **Paul Geller:** There is one simple answer to this that I will eagerly address when elected to an At-Large seat on your Montgomery County Council. Improve our business climate. We must nurture our current businesses here, and encourage them to grow. We must attract new businesses here from around the world to either open up offices, or move their headquarters here. And, we must provide a climate of affordable and flexible space to incubate new businesses and encourage them to grow. For example, right now in Montgomery County we have approximately 10,000,000 square feet of vacant office space. That is enough space to provide 200,000 people with a place to work. Coincidentally enough, 200,000 Montgomery County residents leave the county each weekday to go to work in Virginia, Washington, D.C., and elsewhere in Maryland and beyond. Imagine if we could create jobs for even one quarter of these residents? It would alleviate some of the traffic congestion area wide. In the meantime, one of the quickest fixes is to utilize intelligent traffic signals countywide. How many times have you been driving somewhere and encountered one red light after another? Along the length of Shady Grove Road are twenty-four traffic lights. One time I counted eleven of them being red. This is unacceptable. With intelligent traffic signals, all the lights are synchronized along a given street. For a set amount of time, all lights are green along main roads. Then, for a set amount of time, they all go red to allow for cross traffic. This allows traffic to move faster along main roads. The other advantage of intelligent signals is when traffic is minimal, you can allow green lights to last longer. Lights will turn red only when a sufficient amount of time has passed and cars are waiting at cross streets for a green light. We should work closely with the State Highway Administration, Montgomery County Department of Transportation, the Cities of Gaithersburg and Rockville, and other interested parties, to make travel times faster and smoother. As your next At-Large Councilmember, I will do just that.
- **Neil Greenberger:** The CCT and more lanes on I-270 are a start. And right now, there are plans to add more parking spaces to MARC rail stations in Germantown and Boyds, which will take some cars off of I-270. However, I worry that the County will allow continued development in the Great Science area without the CCT being built, and this is against the staging provisions the County Council allegedly set when approving the plan. If elected, I would work to make sure development did not continue unless transportation solutions (I-270, the CCT or both) are set in motion.
- **Richard Gottfried:** Besides fixing our county budget, our most pressing issue in MoCo is traffic. My two immediate legislative proposals are: (1) to open up the two inner service lanes on I-270 during rush hour; and to build a database of congestive intersections in our neighborhoods, then utilize smart traffic signals (meaning the lights are timed) and blinking red lights, stop signs, yield signs and other technologies to improve mobility in and out of our neighborhoods.

- **Seth Grimes:** Employer and job growth in Clarksburg, Germantown, Gaithersburg, Rockville down to White Flint and the creation of local amenities – plus new transportation solutions including smart-roadway technologies – so that congestion will become a not-so-fond memory.
- **Melissa McKenna:** Better traffic signal timing. “smart signaling” that adjusts in real time to keep traffic moving. Am unconvinced that BRT service can be replicated on Rt. 355 because the current ridership can't support it. Not sure the ridership will increase through that option, especially if there's no dedicated lane or ability to avoid the traffic. To me the proposed stops would not necessarily be a “rapid” route.
- **Hans Riemer:** Expand WMATA/Metro service with more frequent trains. Provide more shuttles to the Metro. Build the Corridor Cities Transitway. Build rapid bus service on 355. Expand bike trails and safe biking routes to Metro. Expand MARC service to become a true commuter rail. Expand 270 with express lanes.
- **Michele Riley:** I support adding reversible lanes to I-270. I also support following through with funding for adaptive traffic signals. Unfortunately, the County has reduced the funding for the adaptive signal traffic signal pilot project. We must make better use of technology to address congestion. I support adding more MARC service on the Brunswick line, 8 car trains on Metro Red Line, redesigning the Ride On system routes to be more efficient and more frequent and providing On demand, flexible Microtransit services in neighborhoods.
- **Mohammed Siddique:** I live in the area and have noticed that at rush hours the traffic signals are mostly out sync. First we must use technological solutions to traffic flow. As mentioned earlier I would like to introduce high speed BRT where possible to reduce cars on the roads, such as Shadygrove, Midcounty, Rockville Pike. Route 355 needs to be widened where possible. We will work closely with State to get work done on State roads.
- **Steve Solomon:** As someone who drives in Rockville everyday, I understand the traffic congestion. One solution I'm in favor of is more incentives for companies to have telecommuting workers. The government does a great job at this, but private industry does not. More telecommuting workers means less traffic.
- **Tim Willard:** Some of the most congested intersections in the county are in North Potomac, Rockville and Gaithersburg. Many are on small, two-lane roads in suburban or rural communities such as Darnestown Road and Riffle Ford Road in North Potomac, or Layhill Road, Ednor Road, and Norwood Road near Sandy Spring. These places are spread-out and far from transit, jobs, and other amenities. We should look at road improvements in these areas. I believe we need to explore new transit solutions such as flexible transit and micro transit which are beginning to be used in other cities. These transit strategies are cheaper to implement and better suited for areas not presently served by transit such as less densely populated areas.

6. School overcrowding and the forecast for 2020.

- **Rosemary Arkoian:** I'd make sure education and schools get the money they were promised from the gambling revenues. I'd also get more money from the State of Maryland by working closely with our State Legislators.
- **Bill Conway:** Most of our schools are already overcrowded, some severely so. MCPS is projected to receive between 2000 and 3000 new students every year – an entire high school – for the foreseeable future. The fundamental problem is funding new construction. The cost of school construction is split between the County and the state – and the current state allocation of construction dollars is not commensurate with the number and proportion of students we're receiving. Annapolis believes that the streets are paved with gold in Montgomery County. To counter that impression and get a fair allocation of construction dollars the County's political leadership – state delegation, County Executive and County Council – need to speak with one

voice. Beyond that, and for a variety of other reasons, I hope to see the County increase MCPS funding consistent with other budget priorities.

- **Hoan Dang:** The cost of overcrowded schools can affect new business and housing development, as well as creating school environments that are not ideal for students and staff. It is unlikely that the County will continue to raise revenues from residents, the State, or the Federal government to alleviate the problem of overcrowding. As an alternative, I support the leasing and re-purposing of unused commercial space for schools, particularly for Pre-K through 2nd grade, magnet programs, and vocational/technical programs. Several jurisdictions across the country already use this model, including Fairfax County, Virginia, which recently converted a vacant office building into Bailey's Upper Elementary School. With an office vacancy rate of over 14 percent in Montgomery County, I believe there is great potential for an adaptive reuse of these spaces, which would also reduce the vacancy rate and boost the economy.
- **Robert Dyer:** Developers have to pay higher school fees, and start coughing up more school sites. Period. But this will only happen if you elect a candidate like me, who has a long track record of fighting developers on behalf of residents. My opponents get all weak-in-the-knees when a developer walks in the room, and get fat checks from their developer sugar daddies. Vote smart, or your kids will be taking gym class in a hallway like they do now at Pyle MS in Bethesda.
- **Paul Gellar:** As the Immediate Past President of the 42,000+ member Montgomery County Council of PTAs (MCCPTA), I am very familiar with the issue of school overcrowding. We have far too many portable classrooms, and far too many overtaxed buildings that simply were not built to accommodate the number of students they hold. While portables can, and do, spring up like mushrooms after a rain storm, the core space of the building (gym, cafeteria, media center, hallways) are the same size. We must do better. As your next Councilmember I will see to it! I am fortunate to have a great working relationship with our MCPS Superintendent, Dr. Jack Smith, and many key members of the MCPS family. I will work with them to be sure we take more pro-active measures to plan for school capacity needs long before the additional space is required. We need to be ahead of the curve on this. One way I plan on addressing this issue is making sure MCPS opens up bidding for all contracts to any capable and qualified firms interested in these contracts. Currently, only a handful of companies are included in this process. We need to open this up. Why? Because I have heard from firms outside of Montgomery County that tell me it is impossible for them to get their foot in the door for renovation and construction projects. This bottleneck, caused by one department in particular, needs to be cleared. It costs us a significant amount of money to artificially restrain competition, and this is unacceptable. As your next At-Large member of your Montgomery County Council I will see to it this changes. The taxpayers of Montgomery County deserve to save money on projects...especially money that can be used to alleviate overcrowded schools much faster than the glacial pace it is addressed at today. As an MCCPTA leader, I was extremely successful at advocating for MCPS to receive greater funding from Rockville and Annapolis for both the Operating Budget (teacher and staff funding) and Capital Improvement Program funding (construction projects,...). I listened to the needs of all my MCCPTA members countywide and helped get them the funding that made a difference in their community. MCPS overcrowding can be addressed with proper planning, open bidding on contracts, and the expansion of "Refresh" projects like those done by our Montgomery County Libraries at schools where it would be advantageous.
- **Richard Gottfried:** Yet another issue that falls into the category of "How are we going to pay for this?" – only the student population isn't a "new" project that people want to see funded. It's a reality that MoCo has to deal with. The challenge for MoCo (and any other municipal budget throughout the country) is different that it's been in the past. The way people live their lives is

changing, and the government's revenue generation is antiquated. As a quick example, when you own a car, you pay registration fees, gas tax, tolls, parking and speeding tickets – all user fees that go to support local, state and federal government. When you ride share, you pay none of those things, and as that service becomes more prominent, those revenues start to dissipate. Then, it's exacerbated – the government raises property taxes to mitigate the shortfall, which makes it more expensive to own a home, forcing more people to rent, creating an environment with fewer property taxpayers to foot the bill. We must get control of the county budget, we must modernize our government and the way we provide services to our taxpayers, and we must be forward-thinking – something that right now is an uphill climb when paying debt service on past spending is MoCo's third biggest line item in the budget. Given the projections for 2020 and school overcrowding, the time to deal with the county budget was 10 years ago. The best we can do is start now – which I will do on Day One.

- **Neil Greenberger:** Our school system has been growing at the rate of 2,500 students per year. On average, that is about 11 additional students added to every school in the system. Some of this growth is due to our elected officials approving development and redevelopment plans throughout the county that do not address realistic needs for supporting new road lanes, transit, parking spaces and school capacity. In numerous cases in the past few years, the current Council has literally given plan approval with the provisions of “start building, and we will figure out the details later.” Figuring out transportation needs and school capacity needs “later” is not acceptable. I will not vote to approve any development plan until detailed plans to address needed supporting infrastructure are in place—with a priority on school capacity. If we continue at this pace without a dose of reality, our schools will be bursting by 2025. We need to keep building and refurbishing schools, but there is not enough funding availability to continue like our current elected officials have acted.
- **Seth Grimes:** Montgomery County has done a poor job keeping up with school capacity needs, due to inaccurate projects, defective planning processes including in the Subdivision Staging Plan, overhigh construction costs, and developer exemptions and give-aways, and inadequate state funding. We can do better. As a councilmember, I will make sure we do.
- **Melissa McKenna:** School enrollment forecasting is extremely difficult for an area like North Potomac because the majority of our enrollment increase has come from housing turnover. In older, established communities it is nearly impossible to predict when and how much of a neighborhood will turn over from older, empty nest couples to young families with school age children. Having been on the MCCPTA Executive Committee (2016-2017 was VP) and the Capital Improvement Program Committee Chair for two years, I am extremely knowledgeable about our overcrowded schools. Not to be confused with over crowded classrooms, which some have large class sizes but that's why we are using so many portables, to keep class size down more classrooms are needed. An overcrowded school has more students than the cafeteria, library, and core areas can accommodate. Enrollment for the 2018-2019 school year is expected to slow down from 2300 to 1700 new/more students and this slower growth trend is expected for the next few years. However, as a county we are already many years behind in providing new capacity for existing students and face more growth from development in urban areas and especially upcounty. There must be a way to better balance the need for construction while trying to manage bonding and growth of debt service as a portion of the County's budget. My accomplishments regarding capital funding for schools:
 - a. Helped increase MCPS Capital Improvements Program (CIP) funding with the Council through changes to the recordation tax, which resulted in \$67M more in 2016-2017.
 - b. Brought back \$18M in new MCPS CIP grant funding from Annapolis in 2015 and 2016 for school systems experiencing rapid enrollment growth. (MCPS receives this amount annually now in addition to formula funding.)

- c. Worked extensively with MNCPPC staff and Planning Board, County Council staff, and Councilmembers on the Subdivision Staging Policy to change to individual schools test from former cluster thresholds, roll facilities payment into impact tax, and increase revenue for school CIP projects. In the Capital Budget and 6-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) process, the bi-annual process is broken. The focus of “on” year versus “off” year is confusing and allows for too much flexibility in the “out years” (last 4 years of the CIP). The front-end focus allows projects to linger too long in the depths of the budget while new projects come in and displace previous priorities. The construction bidding process should be opened to all interested parties, and building design should be straightforward to rein in costs. We don't need gorgeous, architectural masterpieces for our schools with all the bells, whistles and newest doodads. We need school facilities that are reasonable, efficient, safe, secure, comfortable, and technologically appropriate. The savings would allow for more money to reach more schools. Paul Geller (Former MCCPTA president and also Council Candidate at-large) and I have been vocal proponents with MCPS to “refresh” schools, similar to the library refresh program, and to keep schools that have “good bones” instead of doing a complete teardown and rebuild. My testimony to both county and state governments on this topic, as the MCCPTA CIP Committee Chair and in other roles, spans several years. Last Spring, my testimony struck a chord with MCPS Chief Operating Officer Dr. Andy Zuckerman, who recognized that the MCPS rev/ex program of school replacement was no longer feasible from a fiscal perspective. Paul Geller and I met with Dr. Zuckerman and Ms. Essie McGuire to discuss moving forward on school “refresh” projects early last summer. Additionally, I continue to advocate to MCPS for solar and green roofs on new buildings and greater energy-saving measures in school design. County officials and school officials have worked on a more amiable and cooperative relationship in the past few years. Knowing and having worked with all the players, I would bring a strong foundation of budgetary knowledge to the process along with a well-established spirit of collaboration with all parties involved. We need to maintain transparency and fully explain how the school system is being a wise steward of public funds.
- **Hans Riemer:** I have voted to increase MCPS funds in order to reduce class size and boost school construction. No other candidate in the At-Large race can state that they have already cast tough votes at the Council to meet our education challenges. I will continue to support class size reduction and new construction of school capacity. Montgomery County is a wonderful place to live, and we must plan our growth in a smarter manner. I have worked to bring schools and planning together to establish a more coherent and accurate vision of where we are headed. And I have voted to re-prioritize our budget again and again to support education.
 - **Michele Riley:** The county must do a better job of collecting impact fees from developers. In White Flint, we have only collected 10% of the fees that are due. If we do not collect the requisite fees, we will not be able to appropriately fund infrastructure such as schools, which leads to overcrowding.
 - **Mohammed Siddique:** We need to work on efficient use of tax dollars. Having worked in the county, I know there is room to serious belt tightening. With my technical knowledge of budget and schedule controls, I will push for workforce training to cut overspending on capital projects and misuse of tax dollars. Based on my experience I estimate we can save about \$200 million a year. Part of the savings can be used for school construction projects and hiring of school teachers.
 - **Steve Solomon:** The new Seneca Valley high school will be the largest in Maryland. It will be home to 2400 students and alleviate the overcrowding in Rockville-Gaithersburg-Germantown

area schools. We need to build vertically and utilize space better. Shared campuses are also a good solution, like in the Wheaton-Edison school in Silver Spring.

- **Tim Willard:** The county has been following a development policy that has not planned for the necessary infrastructure to support the new development. As a result, we have the most overcrowded schools of any county in the state, with different parts of the county competing for limited dollars to support their schools. We need our representatives in Annapolis to advocate for more state money to meet our growing education needs. But we also need to re-evaluate our development policy to limit development until we can provide the infrastructure to support it.