

## QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COUNTY COUNCIL CANDIDATES

### Responses of Nancy Navarro, Democratic Candidate, Council District 4

#### Budget & Tax

1. Do you support raising revenues through more progressive tax and fee structures to preserve County services and programs instead of focusing solely on making cuts? How specifically would you do this without unduly adding to the burden of moderate and modest income County residents?

I believe we first need to address our structural budget deficit— budget cuts and tax increases alone will not resolve this fiscal crisis. As a member of the Management and Fiscal Policy Committee, I am working closely with my colleagues and with the Office of Legislative Oversight as it develops a report on the structural deficit, which will be completed in December 2010. We also need to rethink how we provide services through reorganization and/or consolidation in order to continue providing excellent public safety, education, and safety net services to our residents.

2. Do you support, at the state level, imposition of a 'millionaire's tax,' requiring upper income residents to pay higher taxes?

I support progressive taxation policies. However, the current “millionaire’s tax” has not resulted in increased revenue because for reasons that are not yet clear, there are fewer millionaires filing in Maryland. We need to work with our State legislators to develop a fair and progressive tax structure that does not unduly burden middle class and working families.

3. If you believe that some cutbacks are necessary, please explain how you would prioritize cuts to the County budget, including cuts to “safety net” programs, education cuts, and other human services. What specific programs and services would you cut?

My budget priorities include education, public safety and safety net services. As a member of the HHS Committee, I worked to restore almost \$500,000 in healthcare services for low-income and uninsured residents, \$70,000 in respite care funding, and \$1.5 million for School Health Room Aides during FY11 budget deliberations. I also supported the restoration of \$4 million to Montgomery College and fought to fund 4 satellite police stations slated for closure.

Nevertheless, my colleagues and I on the Council had to make many painful cuts to libraries, parks, transportation and recreation in order to help close a \$1 billion budget gap. In addition, our employees gave up pay raises and are taking progressive furloughs of between 3-5 days, depending on salary. These cuts will not permanently resolve our fiscal crisis, however. As I explain above, we need to resolve the structural budget deficit and pursue some reorganization and reallocation of resources in

order to continue providing adequate services to County residents.

### **Affordable Housing**

1. What programs and policies do you support to preserve the existing stock of affordable rental housing in the County and stop its further decline? Do you have a plan for increasing the number of affordable housing units in the County? If yes, please explain.

I support our current MPDU policy. However, mandates like this can go only so far—we also need to increase the supply and diversity of housing, particularly near transit.

2. Do you support mandatory reporting of rents and other increases by landlords with 4 or more units? Do you support making the County's voluntary rent guidelines mandatory based on the cost-of-living, or some other method of rent stabilization with reasonable exceptions?

I support mandatory reporting, but I have some concerns about rent stabilization policies because they have been shown to limit the supply and quality of available housing. I do support “demand-side” subsidies to low-income renters.

3. Have you read the March 2010 Tenants Work Group Report? ([http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/Content/EXEC/TWG/pdf/twg\\_report\\_3-2010.pdf](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/Content/EXEC/TWG/pdf/twg_report_3-2010.pdf)) Which, if any, of the recommendations contained in the Report do you support?

Yes, I have read the report and appreciate the hard work of the Tenants Work Group in putting together its findings and recommendations.

I support recommendations that would provide additional data and information to policy-makers so that we can develop fair and sensible housing policies, and I also strongly support the rights of tenants to organize without fear of retaliation or eviction. In addition, like all consumers, tenants deserve certain protections including clear lease language and adequate disclosures, an easy to use complaint-filing system, and safeguards against code violations.

4. Do you support State enabling legislation which would allow Montgomery County to pass county-level “just cause eviction” legislation to allow evictions only for specified reasons such as non-payment of rent or on-site criminal activity? If the legislation is passed at the state level, would you support just cause eviction legislation in Montgomery County?

Yes, although we would need to work closely with all stakeholders in developing such a proposal, especially as we define what would constitute “just cause.”

### **Transportation & Infrastructure**

1. Do you support the expansion of public transit, including building the Purple Line, CCT, and Bus Rapid Transit?

Yes, I strongly support the Purple Line, CCT, and the creation of a BRT network throughout the County.

2. What other ways would you expand the building and usage of public transportation in the County?

In order to make transit accessible and cost-effective and prevent further sprawl, we need to focus new mixed-use development in “smart growth” areas, rather than build auto-oriented housing developments and strip malls. By concentrating walkable, mixed-use development near transit, we encourage alternative transportation and reduce vehicle miles traveled.

3. Do you support tax or other incentives to promote telework, vanpools, and carpools?

Yes; however, we may currently be constrained in offering these incentives due to the County’s budget crisis.

## **Education**

1. What measures do you support to maintain the high quality of education in Montgomery County Public Schools, given the current budget situation?

Our school system is poised to weather the current crisis well, because it has enjoyed consistent leadership and a collaborative relationship with employee organizations, there is a robust strategic plan in place, and it has targeted investment in areas with high educational load. This combination paves the way for success, even during periods of budget constraints.

I also believe that the Kennedy Cluster Project, which I spearheaded as a member of the Board of Education, is a cost-effective model for addressing the achievement gap through inter-agency collaboration and wraparound services. I applaud the work of the stakeholders in this Project and believe that it should be replicated throughout Montgomery County.

## **New Development**

1. Do you support the recent increases in school and transportation impact fees? Yes.

2. Do you support assessments of infrastructure, service, health, environmental, human, and small business impacts prior to approval of new developments?

Yes, I support assessments that will help us make informed decisions about new development. I also believe we must reform and streamline the development process in order to provide greater certainty to developers and communities alike.

3. What changes in the County Master Plan do you support to promote smart, sensible, environmentally sound, and managed growth?

As I explain above, most new development should be mixed-use and concentrated near transit. While our “wedges and corridors” Master Plan has served us well in some respects, the County has permitted too much sprawl development over the last thirty years or so and East Montgomery County has a stark jobs-housing imbalance. Although I was very pleased to vote for the White Flint and Great Seneca Science Corridor Master Plans, in doing so I made clear to my colleagues that addressing this imbalance must now be a priority. East Montgomery County is a wonderful place to live, but because it has been primarily residential it lacks sufficient jobs and the amenities that go with them. This means that we must all drive farther to get to work, go out to eat, or go shopping. In doing so, we exacerbate our traffic problems and erode our quality of life. For these reasons, I worked with the Planning Board and my colleagues on the Council to expedite the development of the East County Science Center Master Plan. This is an important first step in addressing the long-term sustainability of our community and ensuring its continued vitality.

4. How do you propose to prevent displacement in communities along the route of the Purple Line, such as Long Branch and Langley Park, if the Purple Line is built?

One of the fundamental principles of “smart growth” is that healthy communities should include a diversity of incomes, ages, races, housing types and uses. Living near jobs, amenities and transit should not be a privilege exclusively for the affluent. We need to make this a priority, and work with developers and non-profits to ensure that there is an adequate supply of affordable housing in these areas.

## Elections

1. If State enabling legislation is passed, would you support campaign finance reform in Montgomery County, including publicly funded campaigns for County races? Yes.
2. Do you support such State enabling legislation? Yes.
3. Do you support legislation making monthly reporting of campaign contributions mandatory for candidates for County office? Whether such legislation is passed or not, will you pledge to make such monthly reports in this and future campaigns?

I believe our current report reporting schedule is adequate.

4. Do you support issuing a publicly-financed voter guide, prepared by an independent body, with candidate statements and information that would go to all registered voters?

Yes, although I would need to see information concerning cost and funding sources.

### Immigration

1. Do you support equal access to education and other County services for all County residents regardless of immigration status? Yes.
2. Do you support the policy of not asking or checking immigration status unless there is a felony charge arrest? Yes.
3. Do you support free, readily available English language classes and other education programs to help immigrants become full participants in the civic life of our County?

Yes, although our current budget constraints may limit our ability to provide additional funding for these programs at this time.

4. Do you support legislation making Montgomery County a “sanctuary county?” (In a sanctuary county, no agent, officer or employee of the county may assist the U.S. Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement in the investigation or arrest of any persons for violation of the U.S. immigration and nationality laws.)

I support the County’s current policies and would oppose any additional involvement in the enforcement of federal immigration laws. I also support comprehensive immigration reform and the DREAM Act.

### Agricultural Reserve

1. Do you support the protection of the County Agricultural Reserve including additional protections against development for the Reserve or do you think current restrictions are sufficient?

Yes, the Agricultural Reserve is one of Montgomery County’s greatest assets and if current protections prove insufficient, I would consider additional safeguards.

### Other

1. Why should an organization such as ours, which supports progressive policies and representatives, endorse you in this race?

As the results of the 2010 Census are already beginning to show, the County is experiencing major demographic changes. I believe we need leadership that reflects the changing face of the County. I also have years of experience running a non-profit and as a member and President of the Board of Education, so I understand the issues we are facing and how they can best be addressed, particularly through the creative use of public-private partnerships and greater collaboration between government agencies. My husband and I chose to live and raise our two daughters in Montgomery County because we believe it is a special place, full of diverse, vibrant people and economic opportunity. I want to help preserve the things that make Montgomery County special, while working to make sure all our residents have the opportunities many of us can take for granted.