

## QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COUNTY COUNCIL CANDIDATES

### Responses of Royce Hanson, Democratic Candidate, Council District 2

#### 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?

**Responsible budgeting requires joint consideration of program reductions or cuts and revenue enhancements and reforms. I favor a progressive tax structure. There are no easy answers about how to do it. One has to keep a close eye on the consequences of taxes and cuts for the most vulnerable residents.**

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

**As part of a progressive system, yes.**

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?

**It is not wise to establish a list of cuts starting from the top down, or from a set of impressions, but rather to build the budget from the ground up, requiring each agency to justify its proposed programs and their costs in terms of mission priorities. I place a high priority on core functions of county government and on making sure safety net programs are adequately funded—especially in difficult economic times.**

#### 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 the proposals in the Housing Element of the General Plan, which is now before the Council. Recommendations include increasing the stock of rental housing, providing incentives for construction of more affordable housing, conservation of the large stock of affordable homes, permission to add accessory units to existing homes, and increasing the stock of housing near metro stations and other places with good public transit access to reduce the combined cost of housing and transportation.**

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 do not support rent control, as it tends to discourage construction of rental units, can result in poor maintenance, and leads to conversion of existing rental units to condominiums. I favor voluntary guidelines and aggressive enforcement of housing and building codes.**

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?

**I support:**

- **The right of tenants to organize free of retaliatory evictions**
- **Strengthening consumer protections regarding notification of rent increase, evictions, and protection of renters in foreclosed units**
- **New guidelines for rent increases; limit on surcharges for month-to-month extensions of leases**
- **The right of tenants to be present for security deposit inspections**
- **Improving the complaint process**
- **Improving and increasing inspections to catch and prevent housing and building 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?

**I favor broad authority for county legislation. I would want to take a close look at specific local legislation before endorsing it.**

#### **Transportation & Infrastructure**

1. Do you support the expansion of public transit, including building the Purple Line, CCT, and Bus Rapid Transit? **yes**
2. What other ways would you expand the building and usage of public transportation in the County?

**Increase the supply of housing near Metro, and other transit centers; reduce parking requirements in areas served by transit and price parking at market rates; provide incentives for employers to provide ride-sharing and transit alternatives to driving; expand Ride-On service.**

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

**In general, yes. See the most recent growth policy report, Reducing our Footprint. I would support its recommendations to increase incentives and opportunities for trip reduction.**

### **Education**

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

**Maintaining high quality public education system must be the top priority. It is even more important as the county becomes increasingly diverse to eliminate the achievement gap between income and racial or ethnic groups. I also want to expand our community college, 4-year college, and graduate programs in the county.**

### **New Development**

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

**Yes. The Planning Board under my leadership recommended them.**

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

**Transportation and school adequacy is now determined at subdivision, and certain environmental requirements must also be met—forest conservation, storm water management in particular. Revisions to the zoning code will examine other measures to strengthen the sustainability of development. The methods available for some of the assessments noted in the question are inadequate and not worth the expense. We are moving toward ability to conduct health assessments of plans and some major developments. Thus far, the methods are quite general and crude, but worth working to improve them. A more effective approach is to require or provide incentives for measures we know work, such as meeting LEED standards for new development, reduction of impervious surfaces, co-generation of energy, tree canopy, sidewalks and bike paths, etc.**

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

**See my record of the last 4 years**

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?

**See the Takoma-Langley Sector Plan for examples. There will be some inevitable displacement as redevelopment occurs in strategic locations. Housing supply should increase, and stable neighborhoods should be protected by the plans.**

**The aim of the plans should be to make these communities more sustainable for a diverse population and work force.**

### **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?

**Monthly is OK. The reporting process is a lot of work for volunteer treasurers, so I would not go monthly unless everyone is required to do it. A more useful approach would be to require all contributions and expenditures available on the web as they are made.**

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?

**This is a good idea. Oregon has done it. One caveat: it is important that each candidate have the right to craft his/her own message—within a reasonable word limit.**

### **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?

**While I think, in general, that immigration is a federal issue, there are conceivably some circumstances in which local police may inquire about immigration status short of felony arrests.**

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**
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.)

**No. I do not believe in silly laws of dubious wisdom and enforceability. This kind of stuff smacks of nullification. Counties and States do not get to decide which federal laws we will obey or assist in enforcing. This may at times be inconvenient but it is a small price for having a nation.**

### **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?

**I am on record as favoring additional restrictions on child lots, the size and location of residences that are not accessory to agriculture, and the use of non-standard septic technology.**

### **Other**

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

**I have supported and acted to provide liberal and progressive government for my entire life. I listen to people with problems, try to find reasonable and supportable solutions, and do my best to be fair. I have a large body of work that provides evidence of my beliefs and the ability to get things done, What you see is what you will get.**