



**GSSCC Questionnaire**  
**Montgomery County Executive Candidates**

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Number of Years Lived in Montgomery County: 61

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**Please insert your answers after each question below, or answer using a separate document. Please return the completed questionnaire to [jredicker@gsscc.org](mailto:jredicker@gsscc.org) no later than close of business on Friday, March 4**

1. Please speak to relevant experience that makes you qualified to be the County Executive. For example:
  - What specific executive experience do you have?  
I have been County Executive for the past 3 years since I was elected in 2018. And I've had 31 years of experience as a councilmember at the municipal and county level.
  - What non-governmental professional executive experience do you have? Before I first ran for public office in Takoma Park many years ago, I was in the private sector for 16 years, including as a manager in the automotive department for Montgomery Ward, where I often trained new managers when opening new stores and led on troubleshooting in stores when departments were underperforming. I was a founder and one of the original worker managers of the Takoma Park food co-op, too; I understand the issues involved in meeting payroll and know what it takes to run an organization effectively.
  - What experience do you have in dealing with government requirements necessary to run a business profitably?  
At the personal level, my co-op experience in both the grocery operation and in the restaurant operation gave me extensive experience with the county. In the construction period, I dealt with inspectors and the DPS regulatory environment. During operations, worked with county inspectors who regulated retail food sales and restaurants. Before that I had experience in Howard County doing a residential real estate development. I took the property thru subdivision, built a road, had to cross a stream, and had the property perked. I acted as general contract on two house construction projects, as well, in Montgomery County.  
  
Soon after being elected County Executive, I began a 4Business tour with Councilmember Sidney Katz; we went into the community and held listening tours with dozens of business owners and listened to their experiences. Also since being elected County Executive, I have visited businesses around the county learning about what they do and what they need. I have been familiar with some of the concerns for years and we have taken steps to improve our processes especially in the departments of permitting

and procurement. Our Department of Permitting Services has implemented changes to streamline processes and improve customer service, including:

- a free pre-design consultation,
- a point of contact for all permit application,
- dashboards for commercial plan review managers to intervene if project reviews are being delayed,
- business processes for our inspectors and plan reviewers to communicate effectively and not change plans after they are approved and helping our clients resolve issues to help avoid rejecting inspections.

Additionally, we have held regular public forums and webinars to educate our clients and resolve their questions while also maintaining real opportunity for resident input.

Our procurement has also greatly improved; we have:

- Created a preference for local, county businesses in the procurement process.. We have increased spending with local businesses by 20 percent in just a little over a year. I pushed for the local business preference because we know keeping more purchases for County goods and services in the county helps the local economy.
- Increased transparency and clarity in the procurement process so that businesses can better understand how they can bid to supply the county with services or products. In fact, my procurement director (I convinced him to leave his private sector job and join my administration) won an award from the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce for the outstanding work of his department. And the procurement department has won multiple national awards for their work.

I recognized from the moment I became County Executive that it was imperative to change the reputation of the county regarding our permitting system. I directed leadership to streamline our technology, ensure consistency in reviews and inspections, and build a culture of cooperation. I wanted a system where an applicant received help and guidance to correct flaws in applications rather than be sent away and told to “figure it out.” I have personally stepped into processes that were “stuck” in order to find solutions. As a result I’ve been able to steer potential developers to projects that we assisted thru the process to assure them that we are no longer the county that they had heard about in terms of permitting difficulty. I look at the county’s clients as either our best ambassadors, or our worst detractors and I wanted to make sure that they are the former and not the latter. And as I talk to people and new challenges arise, I work with our team to find new solutions.

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- What experience do you have in trying to obtain from the County or the State, a permit or license related to operating a business?

When I worked at the Co-op store and restaurant I had to get construction permits, occupancy and health permits. When I developed property in Howard County I went through subdivision, road and environmental permits. Here, I worked with a constituent who was trying to expand her childcare business and they were faced with multiple obstacles, including inconsistent guidance from public employees (mostly planning staff, not county staff) and high charges for the relatively small amount of work they wanted to do. I reviewed their issue and saw in real time what I had heard repeatedly about some of the unnecessary barriers that small businesses faced. I worked with a restaurant in Silver Spring to resolve a water supply issue, successfully, and I helped Nick’s Diner when an inspector, not realizing they were grandfathered, ordered them to do work that would have likely put them out of business - and I was able to prevent that. Those experiences in rigidity have informed my commitment to reforming our processes. While I have no control over the Planning processes (which I have heard many concerns about), I think we have been able to improve the permitting processes and more good things are coming.

I have had frequent meetings with businesses and I bring their concerns back to the department level so we can use the legitimate concerns people raise to improve ourselves.

2. Over the past two years, the COVID-19 pandemic affected our lives and our economy in unprecedented ways. The County provided financial assistance to help businesses through these unprecedented times, but many businesses and employers have still not recovered.
  - What are you prepared to do to get businesses and our economy back to a sense of normal?
  - What will you do to support business should the COVID pandemic remain with us?
  - What kind of financial support (grants and loans) will you support to help businesses and nonprofit organizations (i.e. commercial rent support, reimbursement for testing kits, grants to support continued telework)?

This is the challenge of businesses and communities across the country. The business advancement team that I created since becoming County Executive is focusing on more outreach to better understand what our businesses need. During the worst of the pandemic, we provided personal protective equipment and tests throughout the county and we would continue that work. The county does not have the resources to provide massive cash assistance. We administered a lot of state and Federal money during covid and a smaller portion of our own and should covid return with the severity it first had, I'd expect that things will be a multi-pronged effort, not strictly a county effort. There is no one way to frame what happens when Covid returns in a more infectious form than it is today, any response has to be tailored to the particulars of the variant and the availability of effective vaccines and/or treatments. Our goal would be to remain as open as possible without increasing risks for customers, and staff.

Our efforts to keep people safe was the most important thing we could do to facilitate a return to normal. We learned from covid that its operation relied very much on a person to person infection. Once we brought the disease down to lower levels, and we had the lowest levels in the country with the most vaccinated population for a large jurisdiction, we maintained the mask orders in order to minimize the spread. It works. By making person-to-person transmission more difficult we kept the virus down - but we were able to keep businesses open, eventually without capacity restrictions. If covid gets serious again, we know what to do and the faster we do it and limit its spread the more normal we can remain.

I have been personally going around the county and visiting businesses and letting people know that we are open again. Our business support teams are resuming their efforts to help new and existing businesses navigate the county and we are expanding those efforts. While I supported the creation of MCEDC, I did not support stripping all the economic development efforts out of county government. I have always thought that we needed a more focused effort that concentrated on local small businesses, and let MCEDC focus on retention and attraction of the larger companies. We were doing that before the pandemic and we will be doing this going forward. We brought in a consultant to look at our not very good incubator system and to chart a different path forward Unfortunately, the Council never considered the useful recommendations and instead told EDC to take on incubators.

My goal is to create a robust system of support for business whether it's navigating the county's regulatory environment, or getting educated on opportunities in the county (our procurement office is very active in this, and our local small business preference in procurement will keep more money here in the county.) I want an incubator program that develops entrepreneurs and can launch them into independence. The best incubators provide wrap-around support - book-keeping, promotions, networking, match-making - for the businesses in the incubators and, outside our life sciences incubator, they haven't provided the support people need. I will keep working to ensure that our incubators are adjusting the needs and services we know are important.

3. The Silver Spring Central Business District was envisioned to become a smart-growth, live, work, and play community. However, in the past 10-plus years, Silver Spring has evolved into a primarily residential neighborhood (bedroom community), with virtually no commercial office development. At this point, the County seems to be focused on just the “live” and “play” aspects. But local retailers and restaurants are feeling the brunt of having fewer and fewer customers during office hours.
- What will you do to address this and help bring more employers and jobs back to Silver Spring?
  - What will you do to revitalize our daytime economy in Silver Spring?

First, my staff and I have been working closely with United Therapeutics on their planned expansions in Silver Spring; they are an exciting company, and we are thrilled that they’re in Montgomery County. Second, as you well know Covid has really upended business life and I think it’s hard to know what teleworking and return to the office will look like; many more people may be working from home, which could help our local businesses but it could also complicate filling existing office space and planning for future office space. So the concern for local retailers and restaurants is somewhat separate from the concern by large commercial office spaces.

Prior to the pandemic, commercial office development in our region had not recovered from the Great Recession for many reasons. Federal agencies had already downsized and consolidated into government-owned space and private companies have expanded the use of telework and smaller, more flexible workplaces (in addition to downsizing and reducing square footage and the number of employees). This is the “marketplace” at work - a more efficient use of office space and employees makes complete economic sense, but it also reduces demand for office space and does create vacancies that previously were filled. You can’t fault companies for making those decisions, even though they have negative impacts on the office market in general. Covid has only amplified that.

Additionally, I do not think that the existing CR zone, which allows either/both commercial and residential development, is particularly helpful. If every property owner takes the short-term view that residential property is hot and they want to build it, then we will lose locations that are near the Metro and are prime locations for commercial development. Historically, planners consciously planned downtowns with a mix of commercial and residential space. While the theory of a mixed-use building could be great, what currently passes as mixed-use - one small retail establishment on the ground floor of every high-rise residential building - is not mixed-use, and the retail is unsustainable without enough of a commercial presence. Moreover, a focus on economic development through retail guarantees lots of low wage jobs with a perilous retail environment. Downtowns need retail but we’ve gone overboard. Places like Tysons that are getting it right and pulling businesses in, concentrate commercial zoning close to the metro (about a ¼ mile around it) and then focus housing in a ring from ¼ mile to ½ mile around a Metro. Metro proximity is more important for commercial than housing because people will walk a little farther to home than they will to work and that’s why the national standard for a walk shed is ½ mile.

Since being elected County Executive, I have worked on identifying the issues that make businesses want to come and stay in Montgomery County. After the 4Business effort (which I wrote about in question 1), I implemented both procurement and permitting changes and increased contracts with local

businesses. The policies of the last decade, simply increasing zoning, have failed to produce both the jobs and the housing - and especially the affordable housing that its advocates touted as its benefits. It is ironic to hear my opponents who championed this zoning now campaign on the lack of jobs and housing that have failed to materialize as a result of their policies - and blame me for the problem.

Montgomery County has some 10 million square feet of vacant office space and has had that for more than a decade now. Montgomery County has the lowest taxes on commercial property in the region. I looked at these two things and asked why we do not attract more businesses when we have favorable taxes and have lots of empty space. The fact is that other jurisdictions had deliberate economic development strategies while our strategy was just to increase density. My economic development efforts in the county have focused on intentional targeted strategies.

Another factor that favors NoVa is the difference in how we tax commercial property. Fairfax County's property taxes are much higher than ours, but we have one tax that disfavors Montgomery County. Fairfax County relies on development districts to fund their infrastructure development and they do things that we can only dream about. Much of that infrastructure is transit, and transit is cited as the one of the biggest impediments to economic development. (See <https://www.washingtonpost.com/transportation/2018/09/18/business-leaders-warn-that-washington-regions-inadequate-bus-system-is-stifling-growth/>) Fairfax's taxing districts create a long term flow of revenue that allows them to fund expensive transportation improvements. Their taxes are tied to projects where the money is reinvested in the areas that generate the taxes. What they don't have are impact taxes.

Montgomery County has impact taxes, and they are paid on the front end of the project in a lump sum. It adds to the cost of the project, to the amount that needs to be financed, and the increases in the costs of projects require higher rents to generate targeted ROI's. Invariably, two identical projects in Fairfax and Montgomery, would cost more to deliver here than there. And to make it worse, just because a developer pays an impact tax doesn't mean the county will build the master planned infrastructure that is supposedly the reason for the tax - instead that money goes into a big pot that isn't targeted on specific locations of projects. I have proposed swapping impact taxes for special taxing districts akin to what Virginia does, and I've talked to a bunch of developers who've said that doing this would be very positive for attracting projects here. The higher taxes on property paid over 20 or 30 years is better than loading the costs on the front end. The county can bond and build infrastructure with development districts that would benefit the development and residents but that cannot be done with Impact Taxes. And I'm also willing to look at TIF's in order to encourage investment and generate revenues for infrastructure.

4. The Planning Board's Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan's sole answer to reviving and expanding Silver Spring's office market is to simply "improve the public realm (i.e., build more sidewalks, bikeways, parks, etc.). Please explain why you agree or disagree that this is an effective and appropriate strategy for returning economic prosperity to the downtown Silver Spring business district?

I believe a multi-pronged approach is needed to improve the economic prospects for the downtown SS business district. The best economic development concentrates commercial development in the larger urban areas, including Silver Spring. Unfortunately, Thrive 2050 dilutes that development and sprawls it all over the county. We need to focus on our urban centers and what makes them appealing to businesses and residents - with access to quality transportation and services. The Planning Board commissioned a report specifically for downtown Silver Spring and the report included an update of the current situation and some recommendation; the plan should include a wider range of recommendations, not just improvements in the public realm.

<https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Downtown-SS-Mrkt-Final-2-22-2021.pdf>

Additionally, we need to improve the county's dysfunctional system for development review. As County Executive, I have been addressing some of the issues faced by businesses at the Department of Permitting, but I currently do not have any control over the development approval process, which is a much bigger obstacle. Thrive should have recommended a study to merge all functions of the development approval and permitting process under departments within the County government. It's pretty straight forward: the developer would submit his plan for review by the county, they would forward their analysis and recommendations to the Planning Board, and when the planning Board was done, the plan would return to the county agencies for action. I recommended this last June in a letter to the County Council.

[https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OPI/Resources/Files/pdf/2021/CE\\_Stmt\\_Thrive-Montgomery-2050.pdf](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OPI/Resources/Files/pdf/2021/CE_Stmt_Thrive-Montgomery-2050.pdf)

5. In recent months, Silver Spring has experienced a dramatic increase in violent crime, which threatens our economy, our business owners, and our residents. The expansion of our "nighttime economy" has been accompanied by some unintended consequences. Two recent surveys show that the top concern of most residents is crime and safety.
  - Will you support bringing either a police substation or creating a new district police station in downtown Silver Spring? Why or why not?
  -

I generally think that the police districts in the county are too large and the department is now evaluating how best to reconfigure the districts, including adding one or two districts. I think that because of the size of Silver Spring and the surrounding neighborhoods, a sub-station is the minimum we should. The additional stations will more evenly balance staffing and the workload among all stations. I hope to be able to begin making changes over this coming year.

But even with the current system, we have taken a number of steps to address crime concerns in downtown Silver Spring and we have created a Silver Spring task force to bring a multi-faceted approach to addressing issues in downtown Silver Spring. We have increased police presence in the area on foot and in patrol cars and we have begun occasional checks at area establishments that have been the subject of complaints of alcohol and other violations. We are also addressing unacceptable behavior on the civic plaza and providing mental health support to individuals in need. We have also been working with a number of the business owners in the area. We have received favorable reports and appreciation from businesses and residents for our efforts because they have seen some improvement.

- Would you support legislation that requires a set closing time for restaurants operating as bars and nightclubs as well as hookah bars (as is done in Prince George's County and D.C.)? Why or why not? I support closing hookah bars at 2 am, at a minimum they should not be open later than bars (which should also have uniform closing times). Baltimore County seems to have been able to justify it based on impacts of the lounges and I think we'd have to be able to make similar findings that the negative

impacts were greater than from other establishments allowed to stay open as later or later than the lounges are. We have increased inspections and involved the state over the last couple of months to insure that lounges are complying with the law and enforcement will continue.

6. GSSCC believes that a thriving business community brings prosperity for all of our citizens by increasing the number of good private sector jobs and expanding the tax base to support necessary public services.
- Please list all the initiatives/legislation you have supported/or would support to foster the growth of existing businesses and encourage new business creation.
  - Please describe your plan for increasing the tax base – rather than tax rates – in the County.
  - What is your plan for making Montgomery County more attractive to businesses looking to expand or relocate (i.e. increased tax incentives, subsidies, streamlining the development approval process)?

As I have written above since being elected County Executive, I used the information from my 4Business listening tour to implement important changes in Procurement and Permitting. We have streamlined processes in our Department of Permitting as I outline in question #1 and businesses have thanked us for the changes. I created a preference for local business procurement, which has increased dollars spent on local businesses and the procurement process has become more accessible and transparent (and has won awards). I have created a Business Advancement Team to coordinate outreach to businesses around the county.

I have also been focused on intentional economic development. The attempt to bring Amazon to the county in the White Flint area showed me that we have the ability to bring together resources that would make an area very attractive for business and development. So I have begun intentional economic development with a vision - to make Montgomery County the destination for life sciences and the biohealth industry. I have negotiated a MOU with WMATA to work together on a shared vision for the development of their 14-acre property at the White Flint/North Bethesda Red Line metro station. That shared vision is to develop a Life Science focused, mixed use development anchored by a high level academic research center, and an analysis by JLL determined that the highest and best use and the most financially viable use for that property is a Life Science focused mixed use development. I have also signed a MOU with the University System of Maryland and Montgomery College that would help address the shortage of trained talent for the Life Science companies. The academic research at this new center would complement, not supplant, the work being done at Universities at Shady Grove.

This is the type of economic development work that we need to do - build on our strengths and it grows the tax base with well paying jobs. The REACH report highlighted what I've been saying: our strongest lane forward is through life sciences. JLL's report showed, and a recent report from CBRE concurred, that we have among the most life science assets in the country. We have some outstanding resources in this county, including high quality schools, great neighborhoods and a highly educated workforce. We have NIH, NIST, FDA and multiple other federal agencies that are important to businesses. We have a thriving Life Sciences sector, and although much of it is concentrated further north in the county, United Therapeutics is one of our crown jewels, and we have been working with them closely as they grow in Silver Spring.

I am also working with EDC to improve our incubators. We've begun that work but more is needed to help businesses develop and grow here in the county.

Additionally, as I mentioned above, the lack of transit is an impediment to economic growth.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/transportation/2018/09/18/business-leaders-warn-that-washington-regions-inadequate-bus-system-is-stifling-growth/> I have funded multiple Flash transit lines and we're in the process of implementing real bus rapid transit on multiple routes. The Flash line on New Hampshire Avenue is being redone to provide service in its own lane, which is key to reliable, efficient transit.

7. Many of our small- and medium-sized business members feel that the policies adopted by County government reflect a lack of appreciation for the contributions they make to our community. Please describe your understanding of the difference between the challenges faced by large multinational companies and small locally owned/operated businesses. (For example, the County requires small business owners to pay a recordation tax when they use their personal home as collateral for a business loan that is more than \$3 million. Yet large business owners don't have to personally guarantee anything, let alone put their personal property at risk for access to capital.) Please provide three specific examples of how you will support small businesses and ensure opportunities for them to grow and expand.

I know that small businesses are at a big disadvantage compared to large, multinational corporations. They have less access to capital, a harder time attracting talented employees, slimmer margins with which to absorb rising costs, and more difficulty dealing with confusing and burdensome regulations.

As I have written above, since becoming County Executive, I did an extensive listening tour with Councilmember Sidney Katz to hear from businesses all around the county about what was working and what wasn't - many of them were small businesses. After that tour concluded, I have continued to visit a variety of local and small businesses around the county. Here are three things I have done since being elected County Executive:

1. I have implemented a procurement preference for local businesses, which increased contracts for local businesses by 20% in one year alone.
2. I have also created a Business Advancement Team to provide better resources for our smaller businesses.
3. I have improved the Department of Permitting Services to make it more user friendly and responsive as I outlined in question #1.

But let's not stop at 3, I have also:

4. I have sent legislation to improve C-PACE to give businesses more resources to implement energy improvements on their properties
5. I have improved and am continuing to improve the County's incubator system (as I explained in question #6)
6. I have also completely revamped WorkSource Montgomery with an Executive Director and Board committed to helping the unemployed find jobs now and also improving training for our residents so that they can find better jobs in the future. At the same time, we are trying to understand the needs of our businesses so that they can find the employees they need.

Also prior to becoming County Executive, as an at-large Councilmember, I worked with small businesses, helping them navigate obstacles related to county government and was able to stop misapplication of code requirements. I also convinced the then-Executive to remove the final fire inspection and associated fees from new construction projects.

8. The Route 29 Corridor in Eastern Montgomery County has suffered from a lack of commercial and other development for many years. Few, if any new employment opportunities have been created to provide jobs that would address complaints about traffic congestion (that is taking employees to Silver Spring or D.C.) or bring economic prosperity to this area. What are you going to do to ensure economic development that brings new businesses and jobs to the East County/Rt. 29 Corridor?

I have been focused on a variety of ways to support the East County. East County has some great opportunities and I'm working with the businesses and residents in many different ways to support the development there:

- I have worked with property owners and county agencies to resolve obstacles in two important developments in East County - at the White Oak Town Center and the Hillandale Gateway Project.

- I have been working to combine use of the Burtonsville Park and Ride lot with development on the site, which will encourage reactivation (or redevelopment) of the adjacent commercial property.
- I have been working with Edens, which owns that adjacent commercial property, to encourage them to move forward on improving their property.
- Because reliable transportation is important for employees to access jobs and to help reduce congestion, I have also funded the first Flash line on Route 29, and the Burtonsville Park and Ride is the northernmost station for the Flash. I have also provided funding for BRT on New Hampshire Avenue, including a redesign to separate buses from general traffic.
- We have recently hired a White Oak Planning Manager who will work with businesses and residents to advance development for the area.
- Additionally, I have included funding to begin the creation of an East County campus for Montgomery College, which is an important source of workforce training.
- And I have continued to provide funding in the capital budget (\$40 million) for the Viva White Oak development; that funding will be used to begin work on transportation infrastructure when the developer/owner of the site begins their infrastructure work.
- And I continue to fund the Friends of White Oak, which is a committee of community members and local businesses that provides advice on the implementation of the White Oak Science Gateway Master Plan and helps with placemaking for the area.

9. The Chamber supports a balanced approach to transportation policies that takes into account the needs of our member businesses, their employees, their customers, and their vendors. That balance must accommodate those who use public transit, drive on our roads, travel by bicycle and on foot, and need sufficient parking options at their destination.
- Please describe your approach to finding the right balance of transit, roads, parking, and other transportation options.
  - What is your proposal to balance this equation -roads, trains, buses, roads, parking garages? Need all to get people to work?
  - What will you do to address the needs and concerns of businesses that expect to be harmed financially during the continued construction of The Purple Line?

We need a combination of transportation solutions. We need improved public transit to give people a real alternative to cars - we need reliable, efficient transportation. Not everyone will ride public transit so we need parking even in our urban areas, especially short-term parking for people who want to use retail and restaurants in our urban areas. We also are improving our pedestrian and bike access and I especially like the low-cost solutions that use flexible cones on some streets that don't have sidewalks and to create bike and pedestrian paths. We've also begun the Ride On Flex to provide another transit alternative that is an on-demand service and is designed to attract more transit riders. Covid has certainly changed work patterns and I think we still don't know the full extent of what that means for commuting patterns and transportation needs.

We need to help our businesses during the Purple Line construction. We have provided some assistance to businesses currently impacted by construction and we are working with the Purple Line Coalition to know what else can be done.

I first designed the proposed bus rapid transit (BRT) network in 2008 because we need a real solution to the traffic congestion across our county and we need to give people a real alternative to cars - we need transit that works and is affordable. As County Executive, I have begun moving the precursor to the BRT network forward - the Flash service. We have opened a Flash line on Route 29 and I have provided funding for the New Hampshire line, which would actually have a dedicated bus lane, and we are also having the BRT on 355

planned and design. We're also working to evolve Ride On to more intensely serve neighborhoods and connect them to the main BRT lines so that we can move transit closer to people's doorsteps, and so we won't need to use Ride On for the long convoluted routes that the buses run today.

In general, I think we need to focus less on on road construction and more on changing "mode share" (the percent of commuters using different modes of transportation for their commutes; a 50% non-auto mode share means 50% of commuters are not traveling by car). We need to implement a combination of improved transit and policies that support transit, including comprehensive parking policies, with the goal of reducing trips by single-occupancy vehicles. We can build within the existing footprint of the roadways and minimize new construction by using the highly directional nature of traffic in Montgomery County to our advantage, using reversible lanes that provide capacity during the time of day and in the direction that needs traffic relief; doing so reduces both capital costs and environmental impacts. As I've said before in [commentary](#) on Governor Hogan's proposals, it makes neither environmental nor economic sense to use a sledgehammer where a scalpel will suffice.

10. In 2019, the Council passed legislation to require an Economic Impact analysis to determine a proposed bill's potential positive or negative effects, if any, on the County's workforce, taxation policy, property values, incomes, operating costs to businesses and non-profits operating in the County, capital investment from the private sector, economic development, and the County's competitiveness. The Chamber believes that this effort has not always focused sufficiently on impacts to existing businesses and the economy as a whole.

- Would you require that this analysis include interviews and discussions with actual business owners? Why or why not?
- Would you require this analysis to include formal input from the Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation? Why or why not?
- Would you require this analysis to include formal input from the County Chamber of Commerce, and the individual area Chambers (rather than just the Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation? Why or why not?

I feel very strongly that everyone should have a voice, input and a seat at the table. I have always spoken to and will continue to speak with anyone who wants to talk to me - small business owners, big businesses, and chambers of commerce included. I spoke with lots of businesses during both efforts to raise the minimum wage and added some provisions to address some of their concerns. As County Executive, I have been in regular contact with a wide variety of businesses all over the county, large and small, and I have monthly meetings with the EDC. I think it's fine to ask the EDC and the Chambers to comment on legislation, and I would also want to include unions and communities because legislative decisions involve and impact many different parties and processes. I think it would be helpful to make sure that the different groups are aware of the legislation being considered.

The public hearing and entire legislative process should encompass all these different views, and that is ultimately the issue - the decisions should not be rushed. I have pushed hard for a more deliberative and inclusive process. For example, the General Plan, known as Thrive 2050, has been done too quickly and with insufficient input, and I raised this concern from the beginning. The Silver Spring plan also needs to be a deliberative and inclusive process. Decisions should not take forever but they also shouldn't be rushed.

A lot of the economic growth in the county stems from our improvement in permitting processes and our deliberate outreach to the life science sector to assure them that we'd be responsive to their needs. We need regular conversations with all our residents and businesses and be willing to discuss our different opinions.

11. What is your vision for the future of greater Silver Spring and Montgomery County, and what is needed to accomplish this vision, over the next 5 years?

We need to preserve and build on the strengths of this county. We have outstanding public schools, beautiful neighborhoods, and vibrant urban centers. We have talented and highly educated residents, tremendous diversity and remarkable businesses large and small. Going forward, we need intentional economic development that will help bring well paying jobs and support for our existing businesses. We need a general plan that has equity at its core, that addresses fundamental issues of affordable housing, economic development and the environment. Thrive 2050, the current plan does none of that. I have tried to outline in my answers the work I have been doing to address these many issues, including support for local and small businesses, improved permitting processes, increased transit, and intentional economic development. In my second term as County Executive, I intend to continue work to make the government more responsive, implement the economic development vision, provide better transit alternatives, continue implementation of the Climate Action Plan and support our educational system from Early Childhood through graduate research.