



GSSCC Questionnaire
Montgomery County Council Candidates

Name: Evan Glass

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Council District for Which You Are Seeking Election: At-Large

Number of Years Lived in that District: 23 years

Party Affiliation: Democrat

Relevant Non-governmental Professional Experience/Positions Held: CNN journalist, communication professional, Executive Director of Gandhi Brigade Youth Media

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

1. 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?
 - During the pandemic, I passed legislation that dramatically reduced decades old “trader fees” for businesses doing business in the county and cut red tape for contractors to operate with government agencies to provide vital services for residents. We need to continue cutting red tape and updating our systems to adapt to the new normal and make it easier to conduct business in the county.
 - What will you do to support business should the COVID pandemic remain with us?
 - I have and will continue to support the use of federal, state and local funds to supplement lost wages and business for our small businesses. In addition, I also led the effort to support our arts and humanities organizations, like AFI and the organizations that occupy the Black Box Theater, and led the successful efforts to change liquor laws in Montgomery County to assist restaurant and brewery owners. I also helped Parks receive a clarifying response from the Office of the County Attorney, which helped restart the successful “Alcohol in the Parks” program.
 - 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)?

- I will continue to support grants for businesses and nonprofit organizations that allow them to make the financial decisions necessary to keep their doors open and lights on.
2. 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?
 - As a resident of the downtown Silver Spring for 20+ years, I have seen the ebb and flow of businesses in the area. While office vacancies may be high, we need to capitalize on the United Therapeutics and the diverse array of small businesses that exist. I strongly believe that better marketing, as we used to do, will help employers recognize the unique nature of Silver Spring, where plentiful transit options are coupled with cultural diversity and office availability.
 - What will you do to revitalize our daytime economy in Silver Spring?
 - More businesses moving into downtown Silver Spring will help with daytime foot traffic. In addition, it remains to be seen how the new remote working conditions will help improve the daytime economy.
3. 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?
- The Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan plan does a good job of adding needed pedestrian and bicyclist safety infrastructure that will improve mobility for residents, employees and customers while also helping to achieve our Vision Zero goals. The plan also does a good job incentivizing increased density near our transit centers. I also support the plan’s expansion of bio-science, technology, and educational uses to increase employment opportunities in the downtown area. To help aid this expansion, I was an original cosponsor of the Biohealth Opportunity Zone Incentive Program.
4. 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 believe we are long overdue to update our police districts and the current police station in White Oak is too far from downtown Silver Spring. Looking at today’s situation, I have spoken with County Executive Elrich and MCPD Chief Jones about the inadequate staffing levels in DTSS and MCPD’s need to offer overtime to officers in other districts — which informs me that we need to reevaluate and reorganize our current MCPD districts. We need to staff and support the areas with highest public safety needs. I have also spoken with many residents and business owners who have expressed their concerns about public safety. As background, I founded the South Silver Spring Neighborhood Association and held its first meeting in 2007 to address a spike in crime at the Days Inn motel. By working with then State Senator Jamie Raskin, we were able to apply pressure to the motel to clean up its act. We need to coordinate with our businesses and county officials to come up with a solution together.

- 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?
 - Yes. The incidents we have seen in Silver Spring have been occurring late at night. We need to ensure that all businesses are working with us and contributing to the harmonious balance of our community.
5. 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.
 - During my first term I passed The Oversight and Small Business Investment Act and legislation that reduced “Trader Fees” for small businesses from over \$700 in some cases to just \$15. I have also supported legislative initiatives that support the redevelopment of WMATA stations in Montgomery County, expansion of biotech opportunities, and improved transportation options for residents, employees and patrons. I was also an original cosponsor of the Biohealth Opportunity Zone Incentive Program, which would create a new Economic Development Fund program to incentivize biohealth in opportunity zones.
 - Please describe your plan for increasing the tax base – rather than tax rates – in the County.
 - The best way to increase the tax base is to support and nurture our small businesses so that they grow into medium and large sized businesses. We need to improve our economic development efforts so that we truly grow and retain our small businesses.
 - 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)?
 - We need to utilize all tools available to us to attract and retain businesses, including tax incentives, subsidies, streamlining the development approval process and cutting bureaucratic red tape.
6. 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.
- At the height of the pandemic I introduced legislation that reduced trader fees on small and medium sized businesses, recognizing the undue burden placed upon them. I agree that not enough attention is paid to our small businesses, which is why I introduced the Oversight and Small Business Investment Act. I also support the relaxation of the county liquor laws to help our retailers and hospitality businesses.
7. 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 am highly optimistic about East County's future. With BRT along the Route 29 corridor, the new Adventist Healthcare Hospital, the planned Viva White Oak development around the FDA headquarters, and the anticipated redevelopment of the Burtonsville shopping center – I will continue supporting economic growth and opportunity in East County.
8. 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.
 - As more residents move to downtown Silver Spring, the nature of how they travel also changes. There is an undeniable demand for multimodal transportation options, and there is also a necessity for access to certain roads and alleys for business purposes. Each of these must be weighed against the backdrop of our transportation infrastructure, our environmental goals and the realities on the ground.
 - What is your proposal to balance this equation -roads, trains, buses, roads, parking garages? Need all to get people to work?
 - As a member of the Transportation and Environment Committee, I have focused an incredible amount of attention to improving our public transportation system, particularly our public buses. By improving our public buses – which is how a disproportionate amount of front line workers get to their jobs – we are improving the quality of life for our hard working employees. Until recently, the commute of bus riders has largely been ignored, which is why I have focused my energy on balancing the equation for this underserved community. We should expand public transit and make investments on our roads to help get more people to work in a timely manner.
 - 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?
 - In 2021 I introduced a special appropriation from the State to support small businesses negatively impacted by the Purple Line. I have long called for Governor Hogan to provide financial support for those impacted by the mismanagement of the state project and will continue to work with the county's state delegation to ensure those impacted businesses continue to prosper.
9. 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?
 - The unfortunate reality of the Council's impact statements — all and any of them — is that they are one more dataset for Councilmembers to consider when making a decision. I support any changes that would provide greater context and information for decision making purposes.
 - Would you require this analysis to include formal input from the Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation? Why or why not?

- No. MCEDC and its leadership, like other engaged leaders in the county, are always welcome to testify to the impact of legislation.
- 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?
 - No. Chambers of Commerce, like MCEDC and other engaged leaders in the county, are always welcome to testify to the impact of legislation.

10. 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?

- Silver Spring has been my home for more than 20 years. Over the next five years, I am excited about a future where the Purple Line is completed and operating, helping shuttle residents and employees between Bethesda, College Park and New Carrollton. I am confident that the opening of the Purple Line will usher in a new age of Silver Spring – where transit and walkability will be the driving force for businesses to relocate here. This will help grow daytime foot traffic, increasing stores and restaurants, and foster a true community where individuals can live, work and play.