

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?
 - 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)?

The first step to getting businesses and the economy back is to follow the science to prevent the spread of COVID. Over the long term, we need a healthy population to maintain economic growth. Temporary inconvenience is a small price to pay for the recovery we all want and need. I am prepared to support businesses and nonprofits that have been harmed by COVID in financial or regulatory terms that make sense to keep things afloat until we are back to normal. That can include rent support, allowing for time off to get vaccinated or other items as needed.

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?
 - What will you do to revitalize our daytime economy in Silver Spring?

We definitely need a vital CBD in Silver Spring. We must use all of the incentives we can to make Silver Spring an attractive place to work and to create incentives for office construction and relocation, depending on the needs of businesses. We can market Silver Spring aggressively as a CBD well served by transportation (Metro and plenty of parking) with lots of unique amenities (Silver Spring Library and Fenton Village restaurants and shops).

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?

That’s certainly a start, but more is needed. Creating incentives to restore or replace older buildings with newer, more attractive and energy-efficient ones is another option.

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?
 - 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?

The Third District is already one of the most heavily staffed of our Police Department districts. It’s unlikely we have the money to create a new district, however a satellite station may be useful. We should study police deployments to determine if that’s needed. I would want to consult with merchants and others before endorsing closing-time legislation.

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.
 - 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)?

I have spent 16 years as a business outreach liaison for Montgomery County, working to support and encourage businesses, particularly in the East County. I brought the Gilchrist Center, which provides job training, to the East County. Such training, particularly for newer residents, is one key to business creation and the increase of the tax base. We should do more to support and encourage training, in partnership with local businesses. We have learned that businesses not only look for tax incentives when deciding where to relocate to start up – they also look for the availability of an educated and trained work force. That should be our emphasis.

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.

We have seen the devastation a large multinational company can have when the new CEO was installed at Discovery and decided to move executive and creative staff to New York and back-office operations to Tennessee. That's why, while we should encourage large companies to move here, we should also nurture local small businesses, something I have done throughout my career. One, I would work with our Chambers of Commerce, MCEDC and, our Business Resource Partners to set up Small Business Assistance Hubs throughout the county. Two, I would work to improve governmental processes that support businesses and community growth through expansion, development and building a robust transportation infrastructure network. Three, I would work to develop and retain a skilled talent pipeline for our 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?

As the Council representative from the East County, I would devote much of my time and energy to revitalizing that part of our community, focusing needed resources and policies to make up for years of benign neglect.

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.
 - 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 an all-of-the-above approach to transit. While not eliminating individual autos, we should have a policy built around getting people to use mass transit and electric vehicles. Such a policy would ease traffic concerns and protect the environment. We should also help businesses that may be harmed temporarily by construction of the Purple Line. When the Metro was being built, business owners complained vociferously about the harm to their businesses from the torn up streets downtown. After stretches of Metro were finished, these same business owners were very pleased with the increased customer base that resulted from people being able to get to their shops and restaurants more easily.

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?
 - 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?

An economic impact analysis should take into account any type of relevant data and it should seek out not only anecdotal but also analytical studies and forecasts from relevant parties.

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?

I want to see a vibrant, growing Silver Spring and Montgomery County. There is no one magic policy that will accomplish that. We need to do all of the things we discussed. My three leading issues would affect all of Montgomery County: education, economic development, and housing. All contribute to the quality of life here. Our educational system not only prepares our children for life, it is also a reason people move here or start businesses here. Economic development creates a robust private sector that helps support government. Affordable housing gives everyone a chance to take advantage of what Montgomery County has to offer.