



AIM County Council Candidate Questionnaire

Responses from Brandy H. M. Brooks candidate for At-Large

Affordable Housing

How would you work with AIM to increase the Housing Initiative Fund to \$100M by the year 2022?

We are facing a deep crisis when it comes to safe, affordable housing in Montgomery County. We are not producing enough housing that is affordable to all income levels. We are not sufficiently preserving existing affordable housing.

As a member of the County Council, I would work closely with AIM and affordable housing advocates in the county to ensure that affordable housing is built in all areas of the county, not concentrated in certain neighborhoods. This includes increasing the required MPDUs for development and supporting measures that increasing payments to the Housing Initiatives Fund for developments under 20 units and promotion of family-sized units.

How would you work with AIM to put 200 units of affordable housing on public land, in the development pipeline each year?

Whenever we are doing public land deals, the priority should be on affordable residential and commercial development that supports community members and community business owners - not on projects where the primary beneficiaries are wealthy developers. I would work with AIM to seek out community developers whose main mission is affordable development and prioritize those partners when considering development deals on public land. In cases where a for-profit developer who doesn't have affordability is seeking to do a residential development deal involving public land, I would push for a 15% affordability target in that development - requiring the developer to build the units on-site, not move them to another location or make a payment to the Housing Initiative Fund in lieu of actually building the units.

Equity in Schools

How will you work with AIM to expand the Excel Beyond the Bell Elementary program to four additional Title I elementary schools each year so that the program serves 2,400 students by the year 2022?

The achievement gap is highlighted by many county residents as our most critical educational issue; but our current approach to education makes it impossible to solve. To truly serve our students, we must move beyond creating good test-takers or emphasizing a single type of educational pathway. Instead, we must prepare them with the learning, relationship-building and civic skills that will be necessary for them to tackle the most pressing issues of the 21st society.

We need to build strong partnerships with organizations that can help build our community and invest in our young people. I would be a strong advocate on the Council working to identify new potential partnerships and schools and making sure the County provides adequate resources to students, teachers, and community members looking to build the EBB program.

Protecting Immigrants and Refugees



Many Montgomery County families are living in fear of one or more parent being separated from their children because of deportation. How will you work with AIM to include funding for deportation defense and family preparedness in the county budget, as well as work with AIM to find private funding for these efforts?

We must support and protect immigrant families, many of whose members have varying immigration status. I want to pass legislation at the county level that prohibits local agencies from engaging in civil immigration enforcement, and then go on to pass similar legislation at the state level. Police and other local agencies must not become agents of ICE; it makes our communities less safe and destroys any hope of trust between immigrant communities and law enforcement. I also strongly support allocating funds for legal assistance with immigration status and for defense against deportation proceedings. Immigrants are our family members, friends and neighbors, and are valued members of our communities. We need Montgomery County to be safe and welcoming for all who live here.

Will you commit to work with AIM and Montgomery County landlords to house refugees in Montgomery County?

Yes. We are a majority people of color county with many foreign-born residents who own businesses and make the county their home. I am committed to making our county a welcoming place for anyone seeking refuge from violence, terrorism, or economic inequality.

Transportation

Will you work with AIM to protect good transportation jobs from privatization?

Yes. More often than not, privatization has been a tool of the anti-democracy and anti-union movement to attack labor, destabilize government, and convince us to abandon public agencies and public oversight. The market is not the best place for administering public services. For-profit business are typically more concerned with improving their bottom line, not providing a public good. For this reason, I am very cautious about privatization because of how it is used as a tool to destabilize our economy and democracy, disguised as cost-saving or “free market” solutions.

How will you hold WMATA accountable to prevent cutting bus service in the county, particularly to low-income areas?

Dedicated funding for WMATA is an absolute necessity. I commit to working with our county delegation to the General Assembly - as well as building relationships with progressive legislators in Prince George’s County, DC and Virginia - so that we have a strong coalition of public officials advocating for dedicated Metro funding from all jurisdictions served by the system. Our economy and our communities depend on a well-functioning regional transit system.

That regional transit system includes not only light and heavy rail, but also buses. We need to hold WMATA accountable to properly investing in bus service, not continually cutting services to the communities that need it most. And we have to do the same with RideOn: I support only fully implementing BRT on Rts. 29, 355, 586 and the Corridor Cities Transitway, but also ensuring that standard RideOn bus users have adequate service (especially in places like Clarksburg, Damascus and Tobytown) and facilities (like bus shelters).



Democracy with Accountability

Do you commit to meeting with AIM within a month of taking office, and on a quarterly basis subsequently?

Yes. My goal is to develop regular processes for community members and organizations to be full participants in policy development and implementation. I believe that democracy should include all of us. My campaign is actively reaching out to communities that have been ignored and overlooked by the political establishment but represent the new emerging force of diverse voters. I intend to continue this approach when in office, by creating structures that empower residents to play an active role as advocates and ambassadors who are setting and implementing public policy. Rather than viewing resident engagement in government processes - even protest - as a nuisance, we need to welcome and support it as the essence of democratic self-governance.