



# AIM County Council Candidate Questionnaire

Responses from Andrew Friedson candidate for District 1

## **Affordable Housing**

How would you work with AIM to increase the Housing Initiative Fund to \$100M by the year 2022? Significant strides have been made since AIM and others first worked with CE Doug Duncan in 2002 to increase HIF funding and with strides made in recent years under CE Ike Leggett. But the reality is that we haven't been able to meet the magnitude of our affordable housing needs. Budgets are about priorities and affordable housing is a top priority of mine, as is economic development. We cannot and will not come close to reaching the \$100M goal unless we can significantly increase our county revenues by creating new jobs and growing higher wages. I also support a 15% countywide MPDU standard and believe we can do more to leverage public dollars to build more affordable housing by partnering with faith and non-profit community-based organizations and better utilizing and dual-purposing county land and existing facilities for affordable housing. AIM's track record advocating for affordable housing has been extraordinary. I would hope to build off of that progress as a partner.

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

We need to look at the county's existing stock of public land and facilities and seize opportunities to dual-purpose. Like the private sector gets significant benefits from mixed-use development, so can the public sector -- better utilizing facilities like libraries and fire stations to serve critical social needs, starting with affordable housing. We should also be partnering with faith-based community organizations that have land and a social mission to create partnerships to leverage public dollars to build additional units. AIM can, has, and should continue to be a leader on these issues.

## **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?*

This is an issue near and dear to my heart. I currently serve as the Chair of the Montgomery County Collaboration Council for Children, Youth & Families which serves as a key partner with the Department of Recreation for the EBB Program. Expanding and improving upon this crucial important program is something I've dedicated myself to as Chair, and is the actual program that attracted me to get involved in the organization originally. I will work with AIM as a Councilmember as I am currently and have previously worked with all stakeholder groups to ensure that this program continues to grow and thrive to serve 2,400 in 2022 and beyond.

## **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?*

I formerly served as a National Board Member of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, an organization founded to be a voice for the organized Jewish community after 900 refugees aboard the MS St. Louis were turned away from our shores in 1939 and sent back to Nazi Germany to Death and Concentration Camps. It was an early embodiment of the phrase "Never Again," not only for Jews, but for all those facing persecution and seeking refuge from it. Interfaith work in and outside the Jewish community on this issue is something I've been intimately involved in. It informs not only my political philosophy, but my personal faith and morality. I will do everything in my power to protect families from being separated, to provide deportation defense funding, and to work with AIM to locate private funding opportunities to ensure that we protect the values of welcoming, of tolerance, and of protecting the vulnerable that have always been the hallmark of the Montgomery County Way.

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

Yes. I believe this is an area where our faith communities will lead, and I will be a partner standing right by the sides of AIM, individual faith leaders, and others to ensure that those who seek refuge can find it, and those who want to provide it can offer it.

## **Transportation**

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

Yes. Transportation is a core government function, and those services like transportation and education that are core government functions should not be privatized.

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

As a senior advisor and deputy chief of staff to the Comptroller of Maryland, I have a background in holding public agencies accountable and scrutinizing billions of dollars of public contracts. That is the type of oversight I believe we need on the County Council and it is what I intend to provide as a Member of the County Council representing District 1. I was proud to testify for the first-ever dedicated funding source for Metro this past session, and will use my background and that credibility as an advocate for the system to ensure that service to our most vulnerable residents is protected and continued.

## **Democracy with Accountability**

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

Yes. Throughout my career in public service, I have emphasized transparency, accountability and accessibility. Regular, proactive communications with key stakeholders has been a core reason for my success in every public position I've held, and I intend to work with AIM and all other stakeholder groups to ensure that continues. That's the only way I can be an effective representative and advocate and ensure good governance.