



AIM County Council Candidate Questionnaire

Responses from Kevin Harris candidate for District 5

Affordable Housing

How would you work with AIM to increase the Housing Initiative Fund to \$100M by the year 2022? The Housing Initiative Fund (HIF) helps the County reach critical housing goals and maintains affordable neighborhoods. More dedicated funding sources for the HIF would help achieve these goals. I support requiring a payment to the HIF for smaller projects not subject to the MPDU program requirements (less than 20 units). Second, we should evaluate requiring property owners to pay a fee for every demolished unit. Third, we should consider a fee on short term rentals that would go toward the HIF. The increasing number of short term rentals may have a negative impact on units available for long term rental.

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

The County should evaluate each public property for affordable housing before selling or leasing the property for another purpose. The County should also consider co-location of affordable housing on existing properties as has been done for the senior housing projects at the Third District Police station and at the East County Regional Center. The VIVA White Oak project provides another opportunity for some affordable units since a portion of that is public property in a joint partnership. In addition, public parking garages may be good candidates to evaluate for redevelopment for affordable housing with some replacement public parking in kind.

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?

First, I strongly support and will advocate for the proposed Maryland constitutional amendment directing that casino proceeds go to education. Since 2009 almost \$2 billion in casino revenue has gone to uses other than education. Montgomery County needs to receive a higher portion of education funds than it currently receives from the State, as we have the highest student population. An increase in education funding will allow us to expand other programs such as Excel Beyond the Bell. I would also work with AIM, the Collaboration Council, local leaders and community based groups to encourage more grants and contributions from local private entities to support and expand this very important program for youth development.

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 would work with AIM to find private funding for these efforts and to encourage attorneys to provide pro bono services. I would support some funding for non-profits that would provide legal services.

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

Yes

Transportation

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

Yes

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

As a member of the CAC, we recently learned that some local routes in District 5 may be eliminated, reduced, or truncated to force transfers, due to the cost of the BRT and the number of buses that can be accommodated. Studies showed over 70% of the BRT ridership coming from existing bus service, mostly from WMATA's Z buses. So if WMATA services are cut, many of the riders who can't walk or drive to one of the 11 BRT stops (out of over 80 existing bus stops) may end up with reduced service. I'd work to make sure those services are maintained. I'd also work toward providing fare free Ride On service for all. This would cost an additional \$21 million/year which is the current farebox recovery rate for the Ride On system. This important investment would break down barriers to access, increase ridership, & reduce trip times for riders by eliminating fare collection. We should also continue work to improve access to transit stops with better, safer shelters, crosswalks & bike amenities.

Democracy with Accountability

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

Yes