



AIM County Council Candidate Questionnaire

Responses from Jim McGee candidate for District 1

Affordable Housing

How would you work with AIM to increase the Housing Initiative Fund to \$100M by the year 2022? First, make the case for the need and the cost benefit. The need will be acute, along the purple line especially, as market forces could potentially force many affordable housing units into the unaffordable range.

Second, propose a solution – whether to increase dedicated funding or the county appropriation, inject outside funig.

Third, develop the messaging and communication strategy to push the case through county council

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

200 units of affordable housing seems like a very modest request. Our son, until recently, worked for a non-profit in Michigan that converted abandoned housing into housing for the homeless. A similar strategy in MoCo might provide a small piece of the 200

Again, the first part is to identify which pubic lands? Are they currently county property or would the county need to acquire them? If the latter, how would the county raise the money for the purchase?

Who are the stakeholders that would benefit from the additional housing besides the tenants? How would they benefit the local community?

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?

My wife is a retired early education teacher and instructor who also worked for Head Start for a number of years. From her I have learned the connection between social support systems and educational achievement.

We would have to identify targeted schools, targeted partners in each school, and potential outside funding assistance

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?



The county has acknowledged the threat to our immigrant community from the anti-immigrant rhetoric and action of the current federal administration. However, without concrete support in the way of actual funding to counter deportation threats, the rhetoric is meaningless.

The county would need to step forward in part because the threat is too great for private sources to handle themselves, and partly county funding could leverage additional private funding.

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

Our church has supported a refugee family from Afghanistan. For reasons I don't fully understand, it seems that most of the refugees live in either Virginia or Prince George's county. Where the family is currently housed required them to have a car so the father could work. To expect a newly arrived refugee to be able to afford a car is preposterous. There should be housing available close to public transit and yes, I would be eager to work with AIM on that.

Transportation

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

My job is to provide the health care benefits for the members of ATU Local 689. I speak with the union officials who are trying to organize and secure contracts for employees of these private companies. The biggest nut to crack is health care. And yet NIOSH has demonstrated that public transit workers have the highest rates of hypertension, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and depression of any industry. It is not just in the interest of the employees to have good wages and benefits, it is in the interest of the public whose safety they are tasked to protect.

So the answer to your question is yes

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

The only way to hold WMATA accountable will in the public domain, with public protests and participation in events designed to make the point.*

Democracy with Accountability

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

I have absolutely no problem making that commitment. I firmly believe that our political system works best when there are people in the community knocking loudly on the doors of power and people on the inside to open those doors. If I am on the inside, I will gladly open those doors.