



# AIM County Council Candidate Questionnaire

Responses from Danielle Meitiv candidate for At-Large

## **Affordable Housing**

How would you work with AIM to increase the Housing Initiative Fund to \$100M by the year 2022?  
The need to create more affordable public housing is a top public priority for Montgomery County and my campaign. We must use funding and our regulatory power to create additional, low cost housing, even as the developers focus on high-end luxury housing. The HIF is one important means to do so, and I will work with AIM to restore the funds cut by Executive Leggett and increase the HIF to \$100M by 2022 or as soon as possible. To fund the HIF in the long term, we need to impact fees on development, particularly around Metro -- not because to discourage that development near transit, but because builders no longer require those incentives. We should also adopt a more progressive tax structure, which taxed expensive properties at a higher rate. I am also committed to developing a public bank in this County, which can be used to support the housing fund, as well as direct financing for low-income families -- renters or residents interested in home ownership.

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

Given the crisis in affordable housing, the County government has to take a much more aggressive posture in terms of developing affordable housing on public land. The County has for far too long crossed its fingers and hoped the market, through the MPDU program, would provide an adequate level of affordable housing. That hasn't happened - what has been built to date is far from adequate and isn't really affordable. AIM has been looking at this issue for years and can offer constructive insights on possible approaches and on suitable locations. I would work cooperatively with the staff there as we develop a policy and as we prioritize locations to either acquire or develop existing public land to provide a regular pipeline of new, affordable housing in the County. For example, the old Silver Spring library site would be better put to use if it held affordable housing for seniors in addition to the childcare facility that has been proposed.

## **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?*

As I conduct this campaign, I have been talking about ways the County could make better use of schools to serve community needs. Turning them into more general community centers that deliver a number of services after school hours is one approach. Excel Beyond the Bell is another, positive approach -- one that might even be integrated into the community school effort. I would work to recruit additional members to the Collaboration Council, creating more engagement and investment in the program. PLAs might be another vehicle to create investment in the program to expend beyond the schools currently in



the program. But, again, AIM has been focused on this effort, and I will consult with AIM on plans to expand beyond the four schools already in the EBBE 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?*

Other jurisdictions are coming up with resources to provide counsel to those caught up in the immigration/deportation enforcement system. In those jurisdiction, the percentages of deportations is far lower, and the legal services provided help support residents and maintain families, without enforced separation. These individuals and families are often important members of the community. I believe that Montgomery County should be trying to replicate these efforts. I would look to the experience of these other jurisdictions, but I would also welcome AIM's input and would regularly consult with the group to identify funding sources.

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

YES. My husband and his family were once political refugees as were my grandparents. Concern for those seeking refuge or asylum is simply part of the ethic in my family. If there are opportunities for me to assist AIM in finding housing for refugees, it will be my pleasure and my personal obligation to do that.

### **Transportation**

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

YES. Absolutely. Developing a robust public transportation network is a cornerstone of my campaign and it is crucial that that system and jobs be truly public. That includes finding public ways to offer first mile/last mile transportation, and not rely on private rideshare companies. I challenge the idea that privatization saves money. Instead it results in jobs with poorer benefits, wages, and security, as well as programs that lack of accountability and transparency.

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

The criteria in assessing need for bus service should not be the ridership numbers, it should be the need of County residents and the availability of alternatives. If a route serves a population that is heavily dependent on that bus, then maintaining it should be a priority. I will be a strong advocate against any cuts that will deprive residents of their connection to the wider transit network. I would demand WMATA fully research the needs of riders so that we have data to show who would be affected and what alternatives exist if any before proposing to cut services. If necessary, I would ask the County to conduct its own surveys of passengers on routes that would be affected by proposed service cuts. Where it appears these cuts would impact service to low-income areas, I would use my office and platform to publicly



pressure WMATA and the County to fully investigate the needs of residents in those areas, and I would insist that they offer an adequate, accessible alternative.

**Democracy with Accountability**

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

YES. I would be happy to meet with AIM at least that often -- more often, if pressing questions will need more collaboration or input from AIM.