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2 Someone new to Montgomery County may ask, "What's the Ag Reserve and why is it important?" What's your answer?

The Montgomery County Agricultural Reserve is a 93,000-acre designated land use zone that preserves farmland and rural open space in the northwestern part of the county

It has been a pioneer in innovative land conservation, creating a model that has been emulated across the United States. As our planet, country, and communities face the crippling threat of environmental and climate change, the Montgomery County Agricultural Reserve planning model provides an example to our country of how urban development and conservation need not always be opposing forces.

The Agricultural Reserve supports local agricultural and farming businesses, protects our local water supply, is a site for historic conservation, is a wildlife preserve for local flora and fauna, provides employment, gives county residents access to fresh and sustainably grown produce, and increases the well being of all county residents by creating a healthier environment and providing much needed open spaces.

3 What are your priorities regarding stewardship of the County's natural resources (water, forests, open spaces) and parkland?

Stewardship of the county's resources is managed by the Montgomery County Council, and will not necessarily fall under my purview as a state delegate. If elected, however, I will work to protect funding for programs that support conservation efforts and will fight infrastructure and other development projects that may negatively impact the Ag Reserve.

4 What is your vision for the future of the County's Agricultural Reserve? Briefly, how would you achieve that vision?

As the pressures on our natural resources grow exponentially, the Montgomery County Agricultural Reserve will face increasing challenges. Therefore, it is critical that we put our energies into doing what's necessary to protect the Ag Reserve and the purposes for which it was designed.

As a citizen, and legislator, what I would most like to see for the Ag Reserve is increased agricultural activity. I would also like to see the agricultural reserve remain an area dedicated to conservation and agricultural activity and not be usurped by private players' either for large farms or for land development.

5 Can you identify some of the top challenges to the Reserve's local agriculture and what actions you would take, if elected, to address them?

The greatest challenge to agriculture is that many people no longer find it attractive or financially viable to work the land in an area that has an increasingly high cost of living. We will need to provide fair tax

incentives to local farmers so that they are able to start and run their businesses. Montgomery County is working towards providing support to Ag Reserve farmers through its Farm Incubator Program. Providing a social security net in terms of secured access to affordable health care and avenues for credit is something that I will work toward in the Annapolis.

6 What more can be done to support our local farm businesses and rural communities?

The movement toward supporting and buying locally produced food offers many opportunities for farm activities. Partnerships can be developed with local restaurants and outlets that incentivize and reward sourcing from 'local' farms, and the County Council/Office of Agricultural Services should drive that.

7 How should our County manage its solid waste? What role should incineration, composting and recycling play?

The top priority for the County should be active efforts to reduce solid waste generation as far as possible. Current efforts such as banning styrofoam and polythene are positive first steps, but we need to evaluate how we can go farther. If possible, the county should provide in-home composting kits and/or pick up of biodegradable waste for composting and not limit compostable materials to garden debris. Montgomery County has seen a steady increase in recycling recently - with a 20% increase of the amount of the waste stream recycled in the last 15 years. The county, and residents, need to continue those efforts so that we are minimizing the waste stream that goes into landfill. Incineration requires careful monitoring for it to be a safe form of waste disposal. This may be an avenue for industrial waste management but is usually hazardous to be used elsewhere.

8 How can we expand the role the County's schools play in the support of a healthy local food system and the success of local agriculture? Do you support a rural schools' policy that provides equity for Reserve cluster schools acknowledging the unique nature of schools in region set aside for farmland and open space preservation?

We need to create awareness in schools to support a healthy local food system. A policy that supports schools in farmland and open area space preserves is a win-win environmentally, for future sustainability and for a healthy economy.

9 Currently the County is exploring how best to support a strong agricultural economy through agritourism and new farming enterprises such as on farm breweries and wineries. What are your thoughts about how best to advance on farm activities within the context of the master plan?

The need for new revenue and innovative streams for farmers, and to make agriculture an attractive and viable business proposition is essential. At the same time we need to ensure that core agricultural activities are not driven out of the Ag Reserve. Farm activities such as community farming and picking, overnight farm visits, wellness programs, heirloom seed and plant production may be some ways that farmers who are engaged in cultivation can bring in additional revenue.

10 **What are your regional transportation priorities? Do you support M83 and an additional Potomac bridge and outer beltway through the Reserve or adjacent rural zones?**

I believe, strongly, that the last thing our area needs is more car traffic. The current need of the region is better and more reliable public transit options, and so I do not support the M83 or the Potomac bridge. Current public transit proposals such as Bus Rapid Transit, and the Transit City Corridor are much more likely to serve our county's needs.