

Name: **Ed Amatetti**
Address: North Potomac
What office are you seeking?: County Council District 2
Where can voters learn more about your positions?: www.edamatetti.com

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

The Ag Reserve is one of the most far-reaching and successful programs to protect agriculture and promote land conservation in the entire country. This is done by restricting density, preventing division/fragmenting of farmland and open space, and promoting the economic viability of agriculture. It is an area with which I am familiar from my many, many bicycle treks from Discovery Soccer Plex to Sugar Loaf Mtn and down Comus Rd. It is crucial for conserving the beauty and agriculture of Montgomery County. Given its proximity to the Washington, DC area, it is under considerable development pressure that promises to only become more intense in the future. Because of this, those charged with managing the program have had to employ innovative ways to safeguard its objectives, including BLT easements to compensate landowners who relinquish development rights, transfers of development rights away from the Ag Reserve.

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

My priorities for the Ag Reserve are:

1. Studying and promoting ways to utilize the agricultural reserve to maintain, and enhance, its economic viability. This will be an important justification for keeping the Ag Reserve intact long into the future in light of continued development pressures. This may be tourist/recreational or agri-commercial.
2. Developing a plan for designating parklands and future undeveloped areas, as tourist, recreational, agri-commercial, and low-density residential development continues.

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

My priorities are as discussed in Question 3 above. As a Council member who believes in resident/citizen input as opposed to acting as a ruler, my vision is not as important as that of those who are involved in maintaining the Ag reserve and those who live there. Therefore, I intend to ensure participation of stakeholders in the process for achieving my priorities in Question 3.

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?

I strongly believe that to maintain the Ag reserve long-term, it will be important to continually enhance its economic viability and contributions to the county, even as it conserves open space and parkland. I know efforts in this regard are already underway and I will strongly support them, and would be honored to contribute anyway I can. Looking long-term, I believe it will require input from the County's new

Economic Development Corp to look commercial and recreational potentials that can contribute to the county for years to come. More tourist/recreational visits and more agricultural and agricultural processing activities will keep its viability as development pressures continue.

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

I know there will be advocates who are knowledgeable in the types of programs and services that would best support farms businesses and rural communities -- we have an enormously talented and committed populace. I look forward to working with, and learning from, them.

As Council member, my priorities will be to improve our economic and fiscal prospects through:

1. Making our County more business-friendly to bring back jobs and end economic under-performance.
2. Controlling Costs in Government by improving spending decisions and focusing the county budget on its core services.
3. Making Montgomery County more affordable to live in by reducing taxes and lowering housing costs to help farmers, business owners, and retirees, as well as teachers, fire fighters and law enforcement officers live and prosper in the communities they serve.

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

Over the developed world, incineration, recycling and composting are playing the largest roles in managing solid waste in that order, although recycling is catching up to incineration. I personally compost all of the food and yard waste at my home to use as fertilizer for my garden and lawn.

However, a search of the literature concerning the economics of these competing methods turns up very little in the way of reliable, quantitative information and is often biased. I have personally been involved in quantitative analysis of solid waste options, but this was more than two decades ago -- a lot has changed since then.

As a member of Council, I would seek documentation, perhaps on a project-by-project basis, that compares costs (financial, health, and environmental), and benefits (energy generation, reusable final product, and other).

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?

I know there will be advocates who can provide recommendations on the potential role of schools. I look forward to working with, and learning from, them.

In our schools, our main focus should always be to ensure we do a better job in providing the academic background that our students need for college and careers. However, I believe that, especially given our county's commitment to the Ag Reserve, there is a need and a demand for coursework and specialized programs in our high schools, at Montgomery County Community College, and for post-school job training in our local agriculture, and that there a rural schools' policy should reflect that this need/demand would be greatest in schools located within the Ag Reserve.

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?**

As I state in my responses above, I strongly believe the best way to maintain the Ag Reserve long-term will be to continually enhance its economic vitality and its contributions to the county. I also state above that I strongly support efforts to strengthen new farming enterprises and agritourism, and would be excited to contribute to this effort. I believe the best way to advance this is the following:

1. Make the county more business-friendly through lower taxes and fees, and by streamlining business permits; and
2. Encourage agricultural and food entrepreneurs and businesses to locate in Montgomery County. I would like to utilize the County's new Economic Development Corp in this effort.

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?**

As Councilman, my priorities will be:

1. Development of a long-term/regional transportation plan for the Montgomery-PG-Frederick-NOVA region, which is long overdue.
2. Prepare for autonomous vehicles: which will impact traffic patterns, parking, lane markings, road sensors, and the economics of competing transportation solutions.
3. Construction of M-83 in order to relieve I-270 and provide Damascus/Clarksburg residents passage to points south and east.
4. Implement inexpensive, simple solutions to improve transportation such as: Real time traffic signalization control to reduce travel times upwards of 15%.

I support M-83 and a quantitative economic cost-benefit study of an additional Potomac bridge and outer beltway. While over-development is certainly detrimental to goals of the the Ag reserve, a two-lane freeway (each direction) through the Ag Reserve would not be any more than the highways that go across national parks and natural treasures all across the nation.