

Montgomery County 2026 Candidate Questionnaire



Personal Information:

Name Scott Goldberg

What Office Are You Seeking in the 2026 Election? Montgomery County Council At-Large

Where Can Voters Learn More About Your Positions Or Contact Your Campaign?

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Please Answer the Following Questions- responses will posted in their entirety and will not be edited. There are no word limits but please try to be concise.

(pictured above: One Acre Farm)

Please share 3 sentences that help us to know you better:

When my son didn't have a teacher in his classroom one day, I signed up to serve as a substitute teacher in our public schools.

When I started a small business, I didn't go a bank to get a loan; I waited tables at the Austin Grill to fund a startup that now employs 20 people.

I'm just a regular dad, husband, attorney, small business owner and substitute teacher who wants to make sure there's a thriving democracy with unlimited opportunities for future generations.

When we recently surveyed residents throughout the County, they shared that their top priority was a lack of government transparency - How can Montgomery County ensure transparency in their legislative and land use decision making? How would you grade current public engagement? Do you support re-establishing the Office of the People's Counsel?

At the end of a process, it's OK if people are dissatisfied with an outcome but felt heard, understood, treated fairly and respected. It's a failure when people are angry because they were ignored by their government.

Land use is complicated, nuanced, and can have impacts that regular people like us need to have a non-biased, neutral party to help us understand. I do support some entity being available to the public at large who will scrutinize plans and proposals, who will go into the community to present what the Planning Department and Council are considering, and be available to answer questions from anyone who wants to ask them.

Public engagement grade: Incomplete (like many public engagement processes)

Do you believe that the way that local government branches (executive, legislative and planning), and state entities currently interact can be improved? If so, what steps would you take to bring better collaboration?

Government isn't some amorphous thing. It's a compilation of regular people trying to make things better. When it comes to collaboration, the proof is in the pudding. That's why within Montgomery County, 8 state Senators, 12 delegates, 5 mayors, 13 municipal councilmembers , and 6 county level officials have endorsed my campaign for the County Council At-Large.



Source water protection is a priority for County residents. Rural residents are served by wells drawn from a federally designated Sole Source Aquifer. What specific actions will you take to protect groundwater quality and ensure a sustainable supply of drinking water for residents, farms and businesses? And what do you propose with regard to protecting the Potomac River, a drinking water supply for more than 5 Million people in the Washington DC metropolitan area. Given increasing drought conditions, growing data center water consumption, and projections that the Potomac River may not meet future demand, how will you plan for a water-constrained future? What policies or investments would you prioritize during your term?

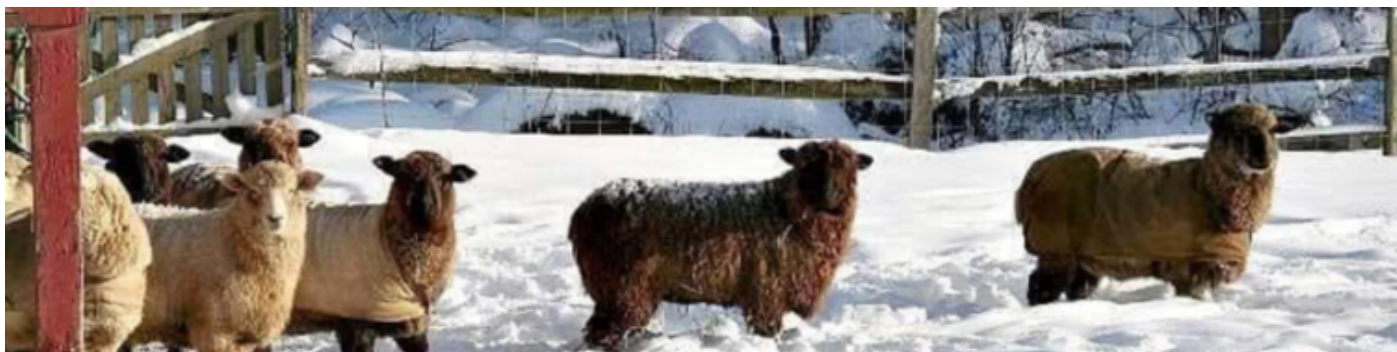
Protecting source water begins with keeping groundwater clean and reducing pollution before it reaches wells and streams. I would support stronger limits on impervious surfaces in sensitive areas, more investment in stream and wetland restoration, and regular well testing with help for residents and farms when problems appear. These steps keep rural water supplies safe and stable. The Potomac River needs similar care because it serves millions of people. I would focus on land conservation in its watershed, better controls on runoff from farms and construction sites, and close coordination with regional partners on drought planning and water quality monitoring. This protects both supply and safety. A future with tighter water limits requires honest planning.

I would support water efficient building standards, expanded use of water reuse systems, and clear rules for high demand facilities such as data centers so that their consumption does not strain the system. I would also invest in green infrastructure and modern water and sewer systems to reduce waste and improve long term reliability.

What role can the Ag Reserve play in helping our County address Climate Change? Do you have plans to bolster the county's funds to address climate change, i.e. expanded grant making, review of energy tax structure for high energy consumers such as data centers?

The Maryland General Assembly in partnership with the Public Service Commission should 100% create a separate rate for high energy users like data centers. At the same time, we should make it easier and create incentives for clean energy production at home so we're not reliant on the 40% of out of state energy, some of which is produced by burning coal.

As a candidate for public office, I've completed 30+ questionnaires like this one from organizations participating in our democracy from groups who care deeply about our county and our country. In each one, there are incredibly important causes that require more funding. Our county is at a financial crossroads: continue the path of squeezing more money out of people, or expanding our economy so we have more taxpayers. I vote for more taxpayers. As the founder of a small business I'm going to take that experience to the County Council so we have more jobs, more opportunities and more tax revenue for the high level of services and amenities the people of Montgomery expect and deserve.



Do you support the long planned closure of the trash incinerator in Dickerson? Please provide some details as to why or why not. (pictured above: Shepherd's hey Farm)

Close that damn thing down! The facility is aging and costly to maintain, and it creates environmental burdens that fall most heavily on nearby rural communities.

That being said, closing it overnight would simply shift our waste to other places, which is neither fair nor sustainable. A deliberate transition allows the county to expand composting, improve recycling, reduce

overall waste, and build the infrastructure needed to manage what remains. It also gives our workers and surrounding communities time to prepare for the change and ensures that the county does not export its environmental responsibilities to other places. My goal is a future where we protect public health, reduce pollution, and create an equitable waste system that does not leave any community behind.

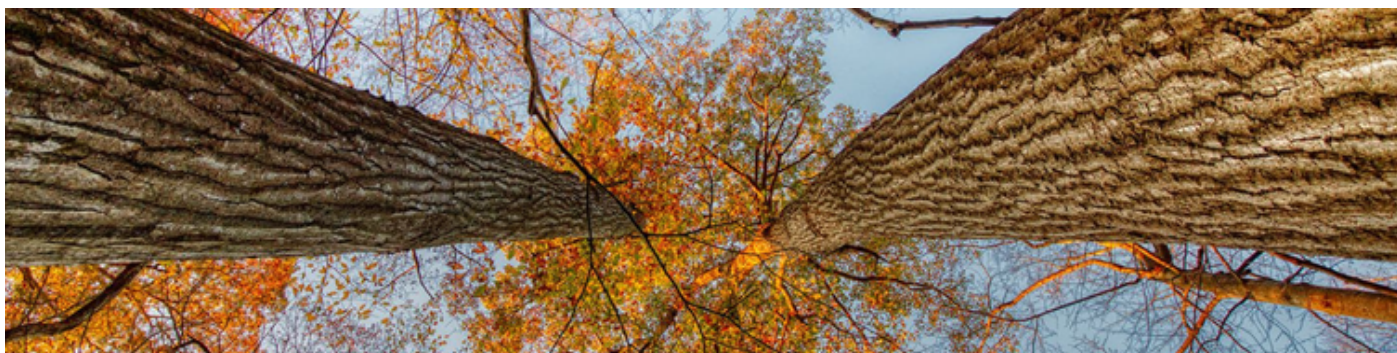
Should Montgomery County host hyperscale Data Centers? If so, what zoning standards and regulations should be established? Have we gathered all the necessary information to make an informed decision at this time?

Montgomery County should only allow very large data centers if we set strong rules that protect residents, natural resources, and the long term public interest. Many of these protections are in the zoning text amendment that is working its way through the Council right now. These facilities are coming to the region whether we host them or not, and it is better for the county to regulate them directly rather than leave the impacts to neighboring jurisdictions. If they locate here, they must meet strict standards that prevent harm to water quality, air quality, and the surrounding environment. I also support a portion of the tax revenue generated should go directly back into the community that it impacts.

Any proposed data center should be required to generate its own energy so that residential ratepayers are not forced to absorb higher costs or grid strain. It must also avoid any use of local drinking water sources and rely on cooling systems that do not threaten groundwater or the Potomac River. In addition, data centers should be located only in appropriate industrial areas and kept away from residential communities so that noise, traffic, and visual impacts do not affect quality of life.

The goal is to ensure that if these facilities come to Montgomery County, they do so on terms that protect residents, protect the environment, and reflect the values of the county.

These are billion-dollar corporations building and benefiting from the data centers so they should be the ones paying enormous sums of money to guarantee communities are unharmed.



Forests are a key tool for climate protection and protecting public health. How would forest protection and control of non-native plant species factor into your administration's goals? (Picture above - Wib Middleton)

Forests are one of the strongest tools we have for climate protection, clean air, clean water, and public health. Protecting them means not only preserving existing tree cover but also addressing the rapid spread of invasive plants that choke out native species and weaken entire ecosystems. My goals would include stronger forest conservation, active restoration of degraded areas, and a coordinated effort to control invasive plants that threaten the health of our woodlands.

Invasive species such as bamboo, Japanese maple, mugwort, and others spread quickly, outcompete native plants, and reduce habitat for wildlife. I would support clear county standards for removal and containment, along with education and assistance for property owners who need help managing these plants. I would also expand partnerships with community groups, nonprofits and conservation organizations to restore native understory plants and improve long term forest resilience.

Where do you stand on synthetic turf playing fields for school and community use?

Earlier this year, my son's soccer coach sent out an email that all grass field permits were cancelled until April 1st. That left tens of thousands of kids sitting at home instead of going to practices and games.

These are the same kids who spent a year out of school and not in places where they could socialize and have fun. This is going to have long term social, emotional, and mental health consequences that we're only beginning to understand.

Synthetic turf fields come with concerns for heat, microplastic pollution, and long term environmental impacts, so I support a gradual phase out and a return to high quality natural grass fields. This transition will take time, and it has to be planned carefully so that students and community teams do not lose access to outdoor play. Children should be able to play outside whenever weather allows, and that means keeping fields in good condition throughout the year.

To make this possible, the county can invest in better drainage, improved soil, and consistent maintenance so that natural fields stay usable after rain. We can also schedule fields more efficiently and add lighting where appropriate so that more teams can share well maintained natural surfaces. By improving natural fields while slowly reducing reliance on synthetic turf, we protect public health and the environment and still give children and families the outdoor recreation they deserve.



Challenges to current and future farmers are increasing. The average age of County producers is 59. The cost of leasing farm acreage (60% of farms are leasing) is skyrocketing while a diverse new crop of farmers struggle to afford farmland. Have you got any plans for how the County can help keep the industry healthy and promote expansion– with an understanding that resilience depends on local food and fiber production? (Pictured above: Afrithrive Farm)

Farming in Montgomery County faces rising costs, aging producers, and pressure from development, so the county needs a long term strategy that keeps the industry healthy and opens doors for the next generation. A strong local farm economy supports food security, climate resilience, and the character of the Agricultural Reserve, and it depends on policies that make it possible for farmers to stay on the land and earn a stable living.

I would support expanded access to land for new and small scale farmers through conservation easements, long term leases, and partnerships that match unused acreage with growers who need it. The county can also help by improving farm to market infrastructure, supporting local processing and storage facilities, and strengthening programs that connect county institutions with local producers. Reducing regulatory barriers, improving permitting for farm operations, and offering technical assistance can make it easier for farmers to adapt to changing markets and climate conditions.

A resilient farm sector also requires investment in soil health, water conservation, and climate smart practices that reduce costs and protect long term productivity. By helping farmers adopt these practices and by keeping farmland affordable and accessible, the county can support both current producers and the next generation of farmers who will carry local food and fiber production into the future.