



Montgomery County 2022 Candidate Questionnaire - Troy Murtha

Personal Information:

Name Troy Murtha

What Office Are You Seeking in the 2022 Election? Montgomery County Council, District-4

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.

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

The Agricultural Reserve is the northwestern third of the county that is mostly protected farm land. This land keeps us connected to our historical roots, protects small and local businesses, and benefits the environment, while providing jobs and recreation to the broader community. It is one of the best examples of agricultural preservation in the country.

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

When deciding the future of the Ag Reserve, it is important to communicate with the people who work and live there – the residents, farmers, and conservationists – who make it such an amazing place. I want to see the Reserve continue to prosper and to become a greater resource to the rest of the County. As your representative there are two ways I want to achieve this: 1) give the residents the latitude and discretion they need to succeed. 2) Create opportunities for intercounty commerce, education, and transport.

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

I want to build a county where everyone has a fair chance to succeed; where opportunities for education, employment, recreation are available to everyone who works hard and lives honestly. That means making sure that resources are utilized appropriately and sustainably in order to create good jobs and a healthy environment.

What role will you play with regard to ensure that we safeguard our drinking water supply both surface and groundwater?

One of the more important roles of the government is making sure that the information is accessible and that malfeasance is punished. In order to confront the county's economic challenges, we need common sense water regulations, but this can never come at the expense of drinkable water. Every person in the nation should know that their water is safe for consumption.

What are your top priorities to help the County address climate change? What role will the Ag Reserve play?

Climate change is a global challenge that will require international cooperation to address; we cannot fix this alone. However, Montgomery County can lead the way, serving as a model for conservation in action. In a way that is what the Ag Reserve has been doing for the last forty years.

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

The people of Montgomery County are an innovative and hardworking bunch; creating a competitive business environment that doesn't favor large interests is essential to the future prosperity of the Ag Reserve. Making sure that communities have access, through public and private transport, to good jobs and education is critical.

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?

Generally, I favor alternatives to the car. While the automobile is great in some contexts, building our infrastructure exclusively around it, at the expense of mass transit, was a mistake. You should have multiple options for how to get somewhere. Not just the car. Investing in alternate forms of transport (and getting them built in years not decades) is my priority.

One of the areas where the automobile works well, and is a practical necessity, is low density zones, like the Ag Reserve. While my priority is building good public transport that allows commuters across the county to access jobs, education, and recreation, it's important to recognize the special needs of agriculture with respect to transportation.

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

Waste management should be handled in a way that incorporates externalities. For far too long the consumer, not the corporation, has born the cost of recycling; and the environment, not the manufacturer, has born the cost of incineration. We need a system of waste management that holds people accountable. Only then can we ensure the long-term viability of our county, our economy, and our environment.

What are your views on the general plan update "Thrive 2050," both the process and the draft now before the Council?

The plan has a lot of good elements. We need to address the housing crisis, create a more competitive business environment, and invest in transportation. Thrive 2050 has a lot of components that work towards these goals. However, the planners failed to recognize that the people who best understand the needs of communities are the members of those communities: citizen input is essential and was neglected in the process.

County residents will have to make some short-term sacrifices for the long-term good of the county. Montgomery County is filled with generous and caring citizens who will make that trade-off. It is the governments responsibility to make sure that their sacrifices are worth it. Too many times the county has wasted its citizens hard work on poorly thought out projects. Respecting the effort of our citizens is key. We need to make sure that Thrive 2050 is building a future that is better than today.

Do you believe that the way that local government branches, state entities, and the public currently interact can be improved? If so, what steps would you take?

Yes, things can always be improved. Creating non-traditional ways for citizens to interface with the county -- people who work and don't have time to attend mid-day meetings -- is essential in creating trust and efficiency in the government.