

Name: **Shelly Skolnick**
Address: Silver Spring
What office are you seeking?: County Council At-Large
Where can voters learn more about your positions?: by contacting me at shelly.skolnick@starpower.net

- 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 prevents future urban sprawl -- which is very important in view of the current traffic congestion that reduces the quality of life of many residents in Montgomery County.

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

Future growth should be limited to areas that have adequate infrastructure for that growth. For example, new developments should be encouraged within a 1/2 mile radius of MetroRail stations.

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

My vision is an increase in family farms by our younger generation. I would support reductions in real property taxes and real property transfer taxes to encourage farming by our younger generation.

- 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 income from a farm must compete with the many high income jobs that are available in the non-agriculture industries in Montgomery County and the Washington Metropolitan Area. I would seek to reduce the cost of farming by selective reductions in the farms' real property taxes. Also, to increase the income of local farms, I would encourage the Montgomery County Public Schools, and the cafeterias in County buildings, to purchase food from Montgomery County farms.

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

See my answer to question 5.

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

Highest priority should be given to expanding, and encouraging, recycling. Next would be composting. And last would be incineration.

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- 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?**

The Montgomery County Public Schools should be encouraged to purchase food from our County's farms. All of Montgomery County Public Schools, whether rural, suburban or urban, should have equitable treatment.

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- 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?**

Since Washington, DC attracts millions of tourists, agritourism would be an ideal way to support Montgomery County's farms.

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- 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?**

First, we need to fix Metro by transferring MetroBus, MetroAccess, Metro's parking lots and Metro's parking garages to the local governments. Metro should be limited to fixing and operating MetroRail. Second, we need to stop the \$1 billion, 100 miles Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) program. Instead, I have proposed a Bus Lane Toll (BLT) program that would convert the left lane on 3 lane roads and 4 lane roads to a reasonable variable toll lane during rush hours. The BLT would be paid from the tolls -- not by taxpayer funds; and the BLT can be quickly implemented. Also, some of the tolls can be used to reduce the bus fares during rush hours.

Third, to encourage local and commuter bus ridership, I have proposed the construction of Bus Rider Buildings (BRB) at the MetroRail stations in Montgomery County. The BRB is like a Starbucks or Dunkin Donuts, but expanded to seat at least 100 people. Thus, when waiting for a bus, the bus riders wait in a safe and comfortable building.