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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 Ag Reserve is a 93,000 acre swath of land that - in a stroke of genius and incredible foresight - planners and County leaders decided to protect and preserve as open agricultural space in the 1980's. The Ag Reserve is important for so many reasons. For one, it provides open green space with vegetation that traps carbon from entering the atmosphere; the land also provides a clean, natural filtering system for water in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The Ag Reserve is also an important economic engine for the County, providing thousands of jobs and valuable, locally grown food for restaurants and individual consumers. And finally the Ag Reserve helps Montgomery County preserve its rural culture and natural beauty, much of which, unfortunately, has been paved over by greenfield development in other parts of the County. If Montgomery County had not created the Ag Reserve decades ago, we would look like Loudon County in Virginia, which is on the verge of wiping out its rural character.

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

I have three main priorities regarding the County's natural resources and parkland. First, I want to ensure that there is absolutely zero additional greenfield development in the County. We are fortunate that our past leaders had the foresight to establish the Ag Reserve, but they should have preserved even more open space, and there is constant pressure to chip away at the Reserve itself. Second, I will push as hard as possible to completely change how we do storm water management to improve the water quality in all of our subwatersheds. I recently saw a map of water quality across all of the 150 subwatersheds, and there are areas, especially downcounty, with severely degraded water quality. We can change our development practices to do better in this area. Third, I want to convert as many impermeable surfaces as possible back to natural surfaces. Impermeable surfaces, like abandoned strip mall parking lots, rob us of vegetation to trap carbon and soil to filter water.

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

I have two main goals for the future of the Ag Reserve. First, I want to protect every single acre of green space that we can from development. If Montgomery County is going to add residential development, it should be infill development downcounty, far away from our protected areas upcounty. I will work with my fellow Councilmembers to ensure that our zoning policies reflect that vision, that the Ag Reserve is our last great bastion of green space, and that it should stay that way. At the same time, I think the County should be doing much more to promote local farming and proper agricultural uses of the land in the Reserve. The budget for the County's Office of Agricultural in FY18 was right around one million dollars, out of a more than \$5 billion budget. We can do much more to help make land affordable, help potential and current farmers get the equipment and land that they need, and help food producers find private buyers or contracts directly with the County.

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 think the main threats to the Reserve's local agriculture are interconnected: because of constant speculation on the potential development of land in the reserve, current farmers face pressure to develop nonagricultural uses for the land and potential farmers are often priced out of obtaining land to work on in the first place.

I would approach these problems in two ways. First, I would work to eliminate the pressure the develop land in the Ag Reserve through zoning. We could severely restrict the ability of farmers to build additional residential housing on their land, including "child houses," which would ease some of that pressure. And to address the difficulty for potential farmers to enter the industry, the County should significantly expand the budget of the Office of Agriculture to include no interest loans to help new farmers get their operations up and running. Farmers need practical assistance, in addition to softer forms of assistance like agricultural education.

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

I've mentioned some of these ideas in previous answers, but I would like to see more direct contracting between the County government, our large anchor institutions (MCPS, Universities at Shady Grove, Montgomery College, and our hospitals), and local farm businesses. In some cities around the Country, local governments are shifting their economic development strategies away from giving massive subsidies to large corporations to stay or relocate, and instead they are helping ensure that local dollars stay local. One way to do that is to make sure that large institutions are contracting with local small businesses, and I think we have an incredible opportunity to do that in Montgomery County by linking our food producers with our large institutions.

I'd also like to expand the budget of the Office of Agriculture to provide more technical assistance for farmers; assistance in setting up equipment sharing seems like an incredibly valuable program that could use further investment.

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

Montgomery County should move to completely shut down the incineration facility in Dickerson as quickly as possible, preferably by declining to renew the contract at the next available opportunity. To replace the incinerator, the County is going to have to put serious energy and resources into a zero-waste plan, which I hope will include door-to-door composting, a massive expansion in the amount of material that gets recycled, and an effort to move towards banning single use plastics. We can look to other jurisdictions in the region and around the country for guidance on these issues: Prince George's County next door is far ahead of us on composting, and San Francisco has businesses based at their recycling facilities to immediately reuse materials, thereby giving an added incentive to divert as much recyclable solid waste as possible. Shutting down the incinerator and putting a viable alternative plan in place is one of my top priorities.

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?

Montgomery County Public Schools should contract directly with food producers in the Ag Reserve. One of the biggest mistakes MCPS has made in the last few years was the construction of the new centralized food distribution center in Gaithersburg. The Distribution Center is now used as an excuse for why we can't afford to build actual functioning kitchens in new schools, as we've already invested in the centralized food preparation facility. So instead of investing in local farmers and contracting with local food producers, we contract with companies all over the country to ship in disgusting, processed food that many of my high school immigrant students won't even eat. They are used to eating home-cooked meals prepared by parents in the kitchens of their schools in their countries in Central America.

We should absolutely have a rural schools policy; I know many students who are severely disappointed that the only Future Farmers of America program is at Damascus High School.

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?

I think the County should support limited development of on farm breweries and wineries, as long as the owners are primarily food producers, and not simply looking to open a brewery on an open plot of land in the Ag Reserve. I think we can find a balance that will allow some Ag Reserve farmers to benefit from agritourism without flooding every road in the Ag Reserve with people every weekend. I think we should stay away from extremely large facilities that would cater to weddings and large events, and make sure that any new construction maintains the rural character of the community and the ultimate purposes of food production and natural preservation.

One idea that I've learned about from a wine producer in the Ag Reserve is the creation of a shared grape press facility that Ag Reserve wineries could use to process their grapes. This kind of facility would allow producers to share costs and make their products more competitive.

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?

My regional transportation priorities are centered around mass transit and doing basic maintenance on our current road network. I support adding capacity to the MARC train system, I support the Corridor Cities Transitway, and I support the proposed Bus Rapid Transit network.

I'm strongly against any major new road projects, including M83 and the proposed Potomac bridge crossing. These projects would do serious environmental damage to the areas in and around the Ag Reserve, and they would create even more pressure to develop land within the Reserve. Imagine if we took just a fraction of the public dollars that would go into those projects and instead invested them in support and infrastructure for local farmers.