

# 2026 County Council Candidate Questionnaire



## Smart Growth/the URDL

Established in 1967, the Urban-Rural Demarcation Line (URDL) is a smart growth tool used by planners to prevent sprawl and protect agricultural and environmentally sensitive lands in Baltimore County. As of 2023, about 90% of the county's population lives within the URDL<sup>1</sup>.

### 1. What is your position on maintaining the integrity of the URDL?

#### **Makeda Scott, District 3**

I strongly support maintaining the integrity of the Urban-Rural Demarcation Line (URDL) as a critical tool for protecting Baltimore County's rural landscapes, agricultural resources, and environmental health. Preserving the URDL ensures we prevent unchecked sprawl and the costly expansion of infrastructure into rural areas. At the same time, we must be intentional about how we grow within the URDL. That means prioritizing smart, sustainable redevelopment, not development for development's sake. We should invest in revitalizing existing communities, incorporating green space, and ensuring that growth enhances quality of life for current residents while protecting our natural assets for future generations.

#### **Nino Mangione, District 5**

I will not support moving the URDL. Additionally, I will be actively supporting the ballot referendum this fall to make it more difficult to move the URDL.

#### **Shawn McIntosh, District 5**

My position on the URDL is very clear: I strongly support maintaining its integrity and believe it remains one of the most important tools we have to protect Baltimore County's rural communities, farmland, natural resources, drinking water, and overall quality of life. The URDL was created to prevent sprawl and ensure that growth happens in areas with the infrastructure to support it. When we weaken or chip away at those boundaries, we risk losing the very things that make our communities special while also creating costly infrastructure and service challenges for taxpayers. We also put the source of much of our drinking water at greater risk by increasing development pressure in environmentally sensitive areas that help protect our reservoirs and waterways. That doesn't mean I'm opposed to growth. Baltimore County needs thoughtful, well-planned growth and redevelopment. But growth should happen in appropriate areas, with meaningful community input, adequate infrastructure, and a long-term vision for sustainability. We should be focusing on revitalization, redevelopment, transit-oriented development, and mixed-use communities where services already exist, rather than pushing sprawling development into our rural areas. Protecting the URDL is not just about land use. It's about responsible planning, fiscal sustainability, environmental stewardship, public health, and preserving the character of our communities for future generations.

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<sup>1</sup> "Growth Framework," Baltimore County Department of Planning, 2023, [https://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/files/Documents/Planning/HUB/Master%20Plan%202030/GrowthFramework\\_Draft.pdf](https://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/files/Documents/Planning/HUB/Master%20Plan%202030/GrowthFramework_Draft.pdf).

*What is your position on maintaining the integrity of the URDL?*

**David Marks, District 7**

I proudly sponsored Question A, the charter change that will appear on the 2026 general election ballot. If approved, Question A will require a supermajority of the Baltimore County Council to modify the Urban Rural Demarcation Line. After introducing the legislation, I organized support from key stakeholders, including land preservation and agricultural groups, and helped deliver a 5-to-2 bipartisan majority that will allow voters to decide this important initiative. For more than two decades, I've championed measures that strengthen land preservation in Baltimore County. I'm not new to this issue. The integrity of the Urban-Rural Demarcation Line should command bipartisan support from every elected official in Baltimore County.

**Cari Santiago, District 7**

The Baltimore County URDL isn't going anywhere; the Department of Planning uses it as their standard and it is widely supported by constituents. While I support Bill 19-25 (County Charter – Baltimore County Farmland Preservation Act) as it was amended, I am strongly opposed to how it was initially introduced: with the codification of 'Councilmanic Courtesy' and allowing what is akin to veto power to individual districts. Councilmanic Courtesy is the unwritten practice where the full Council defers to a single member's opinion on land-use in their district. If a representative can't support legislation with merit instead of courtesy, why would we, as a County, support it?

**Josh Sines, District 8**

I strongly support maintaining the integrity of the Urban-Rural Demarcation Line. It is one of the most important tools we have to prevent sprawl, protect rural areas, and ensure growth is directed where infrastructure already exists. Once that line is weakened, it is very difficult to restore. We need to hold it.

**Tim Fazenbaker, District 9**

The URDL has served as a tool to guide growth since 1967, and I support smart planning that prevents uncontrolled sprawl while directing development to areas with existing infrastructure. However, rigid adherence without flexibility ignores real pressures like housing shortages and economic needs in Baltimore County. I favor reviewing and updating the line where data shows clear benefits for residents—such as targeted infill or redevelopment—rather than treating it as untouchable dogma. Local elected officials, not outside coalitions, should have the primary say in balancing growth with preservation.

**2. Do you believe that Baltimore County should dedicate resources to support land preservation and neighborhood parks, both inside and outside the URDL?**

**Makeda Scott, District 3**

Yes. Baltimore County should make sustained, strategic investments in land preservation and neighborhood parks both inside and outside the URDL. Protecting open space, farmland, and natural resources is essential to our environmental sustainability, public health, and long-term economic stability. Equally important is ensuring that residents, regardless of where they live, have access to safe, well-maintained parks and green spaces. These spaces strengthen communities, support mental and physical health, and contribute to overall quality of life. This is an area where thoughtful public investment delivers long-term returns.

*Do you believe that Baltimore County should dedicate resources to support land preservation and neighborhood parks, both inside and outside the URDL?*

**Nino Mangione, District 5**

I believe so. I think that monies should be available for this and in conjunction with our overall budget.

**Shawn McIntosh, District 5**

Yes, absolutely. I believe Baltimore County should continue to dedicate resources to both land preservation and neighborhood parks, both inside and outside the URDL, because these investments directly impact quality of life, public health, environmental sustainability, and community well-being. Land preservation is essential to protecting farmland, forests, waterways, wildlife habitat, and the natural areas that help safeguard our drinking water and reduce flooding and runoff. Preserving open space also helps maintain the rural character of our communities and prevents costly sprawl-related infrastructure demands. At the same time, neighborhood parks and accessible green spaces inside the URDL are equally important. Residents in more densely developed communities deserve safe, well-maintained parks, trails, playgrounds, and recreational spaces close to where they live. Parks improve physical and mental health, strengthen community connections, support children and families, and make communities more attractive places to live. This should not be viewed as an either/or issue. Baltimore County needs a balanced approach that protects our rural landscapes while also investing in vibrant, healthy communities throughout the County. As we grow and redevelop, we must ensure that preservation, recreation, and access to green space remain central parts of our long-term planning.

**David Marks, District 7**

Absolutely—my record demonstrates my commitment to land preservation and neighborhood parks. Since 2010, I've helped advance more than a dozen new parks in communities that I represent, including three in Towson, seven in Perry Hall and White Marsh, one in Middle River, and the first new park along the Loch Raven Boulevard corridor in a half-century. We blocked development at the former C.P. Crane property, preserving more than 80 acres along Baltimore County's waterfront. We worked with NeighborSpace of Baltimore County to open Ridgely Manor Park and Adelaide Bentley Park. In 2024, I passed legislation that converted unused Baltimore County property into new parks in northeastern Baltimore County. In 2017, the Gunpowder Valley Conservancy named me one of its "Heroes of the Green," and I was awarded the Green Jacket Award by NeighborSpace of Baltimore County in 2018.

**Cari Santiago, District 7**

Absolutely. Nature provides a serenity that is essential for community wellbeing. Whether it is a vast rural tract or an urban "Pocket Park," we need green spaces where residents can reconnect and deepen their roots. However, creation is only half the battle; we need sustainable management plans. For example, converting a stormwater management area into a park shifts the maintenance burden from Public Works to Recreation and Parks. We must advocate for clear MOUs (Memorandums of Understanding) to ensure we don't overburden the departments and areas we are trying to protect.

**Josh Sines, District 8**

Yes. This is a core function of local government. We should be investing in land preservation, protecting open space, and making sure communities have access to parks. That includes both inside the URDL, where redevelopment is occurring, and outside it, where preservation is critical.

**Tim Fazenbaker, District 9**

Yes, but resources must be prioritized based on clear public benefit and taxpayer return. Neighborhood parks inside the URDL serve dense communities and should be maintained or expanded where needed for quality of life. Outside

*Do you believe that Baltimore County should dedicate resources to support land preservation and neighborhood parks, both inside and outside the URDL?*

the line, focus on protecting key natural assets like waterways (e.g., Gunpowder River) that provide drinking water for millions. I support voluntary, incentive-based preservation over heavy-handed mandates or excessive spending that raises taxes without delivering results for working families in districts like mine.

### 3. How would you promote redevelopment within the URDL to help ease the housing shortage?

#### **Makeda Scott, District 3**

To address the housing shortage, we must prioritize redevelopment within the URDL by focusing on underutilized and vacant properties, such as empty shopping centers, aging commercial corridors, and vacant buildings, and converting them into quality, affordable housing. This approach reduces pressure on rural land while revitalizing existing communities. I would support policies and incentives that encourage mixed-use development, adaptive reuse, and the inclusion of affordable housing units. Just as importantly, redevelopment must be guided by community input and aligned with infrastructure capacity, so growth is both equitable and sustainable. My perspective on this work is grounded in experience. During my time at the Enterprise Foundation, I learned the principles of smart development rooted in the Jim Rouse philosophy, building strong, sustainable communities block by block, with intention and long-term vision. That approach continues to shape how I think about redevelopment in Baltimore County today.

#### **Nino Mangione, District 5**

I believe we must allow for reasonable development from within the URDL. I will have an open mind to review projects in conjunction with close communication and input with/from our community associations.

#### **Shawn McIntosh, District 5**

I believe we can help address the housing shortage by focusing on thoughtful redevelopment within the URDL, where infrastructure, transportation, and services already exist, rather than pushing sprawl into rural communities. That starts with encouraging the revitalization of underused commercial properties, aging shopping centers, vacant office space, and surface parking lots into mixed-use communities that include housing, retail, green space, and community amenities. We should prioritize redevelopment in areas that already have access to transit, jobs, schools, and utilities, while ensuring that infrastructure keeps pace with growth. I also believe we need a wider range of housing options so people can remain in Baltimore County at different stages of life. That includes workforce housing, smaller starter homes, townhomes, senior housing, and appropriately scaled multi-family development. Too many young families, working professionals, and older adults are being priced out or unable to find housing that meets their needs. At the same time, redevelopment must be done responsibly and transparently. Communities deserve to be engaged early in the planning process, not after decisions are already largely made. We need development standards that protect neighborhood character, preserve green space where possible, improve walkability, and avoid overwhelming schools, roads, and public services. Redevelopment within the URDL is not about unchecked density. It's about smart planning, creating more housing opportunities in appropriate locations, reducing pressure on rural land, and building communities that are sustainable, connected, and livable for the long term.

#### **David Marks, District 7**

I support thoughtful land use policies that redevelop older communities without sacrificing other important public policies. As an example, Baltimore County's parking regulations should be modified to reduce unnecessary

*How would you promote redevelopment within the URDL to help ease the housing shortage?*

impervious surface and stimulate development, a concept supported by many environmentalists and developers. We should support strategies in the Master Plan and community plans that allow for clustering development where it makes sense, and we should expand transportation access so housing is linked to jobs. For more than a decade, I championed the idea of a circulator in Towson, a concept that can be replicated elsewhere. I have opposed weakening the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance to allow development in overcrowded school districts.

**Cari Santiago, District 7**

We must follow the Master Plan 2030 guidelines for smart development and focus on redevelopment and revitalization where the infrastructure supports it. When we hamstring ourselves with unnecessary red tape or single use legislation, we limit our tax base. A broader base of property owners helps lower the individual tax burden and generates the revenue necessary to help fund land preservation initiatives.

**Josh Sines, District 8**

We need to make it easier to redevelop underutilized properties and aging commercial sites. That means streamlining the permitting process, reducing unnecessary delays, and encouraging smart redevelopment in appropriate areas. At the same time, redevelopment must be paired with infrastructure improvements. Roads, schools, and public safety services need to be in place first.

**Tim Fazenbaker, District 9**

Redevelopment inside the URDL is often the smarter path—it leverages existing roads, sewers, and services. I would push for streamlined permitting, reduced red tape, and incentives for mixed-use or attainable housing projects that actually get built, rather than endless studies. At the same time, protect established neighborhoods from over-density that harms property values or character. Focus on practical solutions: attract private investment, cut bureaucratic delays, and ensure new development pays its fair share without burdening current taxpayers.

## **Land Preservation**

Voluntary, perpetual conservation easements protect the county's natural resources, such as agricultural land, wildlife habitats, scenic views, historic structures, and access to outdoor recreation and education. Currently, over 72,000 acres are protected in Baltimore County. Stream buffers and erosion control measures implemented by conservation easements offer cost-effective solutions to keeping the water that feeds our reservoirs clean and safe to drink. This is important because the Gunpowder River is a drinking water source for 1.8 million Marylanders.

### **4. What specific policies or funding commitments would you support to permanently protect remaining undeveloped land in Baltimore County, and which would you prioritize?**

**Makeda Scott, District 3**

I would prioritize strengthening and fully funding land preservation programs such as agricultural and conservation easements to permanently protect undeveloped land. That includes expanding support for programs that allow farmers and landowners to voluntarily preserve their land while maintaining its productive use. I would also support dedicated, consistent funding streams rather than one-time allocations for land preservation, including leveraging state and federal partnerships. In addition, I would prioritize policies that reinforce the integrity of the URDL, limit

*What specific policies or funding commitments would you support to permanently protect remaining undeveloped land in Baltimore County, and which would you prioritize?*

encroachment into rural areas, and direct growth toward redevelopment within existing communities. Preservation is not just about protecting land; it's about protecting our environment, food systems, and long-term fiscal health by avoiding the high cost of extending infrastructure into rural areas.

**Nino Mangione, District 5**

I believe ongoing support for Program Open Space is very important and I think we should continue this program. I like the general notion of conservation easements as another method, and I like the state programs such as the Rural Legacy Program which provides monies for easement purchases. Additionally, I am opposed and will continue to oppose any effort to move the URDL.

**Shawn McIntosh, District 5**

I support a multi-layered approach to permanently protecting Baltimore County's remaining undeveloped land, particularly agricultural land, forests, stream buffers, and environmentally sensitive areas that play a critical role in protecting our drinking water, reducing flooding, preserving wildlife habitat, and maintaining the character of our communities. One of my top priorities would be strengthening and fully funding agricultural and land preservation programs, including programs that purchase development rights and conservation easements to permanently protect farmland and open space. These programs are among the most effective tools we have to prevent sprawl and ensure that future generations retain access to working farms and natural landscapes. I also support prioritizing capital funding for parkland acquisition, greenway expansion, and watershed protection, especially in areas under increasing development pressure. Protecting land connected to reservoirs, streams, and forests is not only an environmental issue, but also a public health and fiscal responsibility issue. Equally important is maintaining the integrity of the URDL. Preservation efforts lose effectiveness if development pressures continue pushing outward through repeated exceptions, piecemeal changes, or poorly planned growth decisions. We need long-term planning policies that direct redevelopment and housing growth into appropriate areas inside the URDL while preserving rural and environmentally sensitive areas outside it. I would also support policies that encourage smarter redevelopment and infill within already developed areas so we reduce pressure to build on remaining open land. Protecting undeveloped land and addressing housing and economic needs are not mutually exclusive if we plan strategically. If I had to prioritize, I would focus first on protecting environmentally sensitive land tied to drinking water and watershed health, preserving agricultural land at risk of development pressure, and ensuring that preservation funding remains stable and reliable even during difficult budget years.

**David Marks, District 7**

Since my election to the Baltimore County Council in 2010, we have protected more than 14,000 acres of additional open space, according to Baltimore County Agricultural Land Preservation Advisory Board 2025 Annual Report. I will continue to support conservation easements and the purchase of land to meet Baltimore County's goal of 80,000 acres of protected property. In 2012, I sponsored the legislation that created Neighborhood Commons zoning, which allows for certain property—such as government-owned land—to be designated as open space. The Neighborhood Commons overlay means that if Baltimore County wants to sell publicly owned property, the zoning can only be removed following a year-long process that allows for community input. Thousands of acres of land have been preserved through the Neighborhood Commons zoning. In my district, we have applied the Neighborhood Commons zoning to many parks and publicly owned properties, including one parcel in Middle River eyed for development. We should also continue to support creative strategies with developers and other stakeholders that set aside green space. As an example, when negotiating for the purchase of the Gerst Road Park in Perry Hall, I successfully persuaded the White Marsh Recreation Council to help make up the difference between the appraised value of the land and what the property owners wanted to receive from Baltimore County.

*What specific policies or funding commitments would you support to permanently protect remaining undeveloped land in Baltimore County, and which would you prioritize?*

**Cari Santiago, District 7**

My priority is permanent protection through environmental easements and watershed preservation. We must protect individual property rights by bolstering programs like the Rural Legacy and MALPF (Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation). This should be a robust partnership between the government and residents, focusing on keeping rural spaces rural while actively improving the long-term health of our forests and waterways.

**Josh Sines, District 8**

I support expanding funding for agricultural preservation programs and conservation easements to permanently protect farmland and environmentally sensitive areas. This is something I believe in personally as well. I own a small farm that is under a conservation easement with Gunpowder Valley Conservancy, which reflects my commitment to long-term land preservation. I would prioritize protecting land that directly impacts our waterways, including areas feeding into the Chesapeake Bay, as well as preserving prime agricultural soils and contiguous open space.

**Tim Fazenbaker, District 9**

I support voluntary conservation tools like easements when they make sense for prime agricultural soils, wildlife habitats, or scenic/water resources—especially those protecting the Gunpowder River watershed. Prioritize cost-effective, targeted efforts over blanket “permanent” protections that lock up land indefinitely and limit future options for the county. Funding should come with strict accountability: measurable outcomes, no waste, and consideration for how it affects local farming viability or economic opportunity. Avoid policies that favor elite preservation interests over the needs of families and businesses trying to afford living and working here.

**5. How would you balance development pressure with watershed protection?**

**Makeda Scott, District 3**

Balancing development with watershed protection requires planning and firm standards. First, we must direct growth to areas where infrastructure already exists and can support it, primarily within the URDL, while avoiding environmentally sensitive areas. Second, I would support strong stormwater management requirements, green infrastructure, and enforcement of environmental regulations to protect our waterways from runoff and pollution. Finally, watershed protection must be part of every land use decision, not an afterthought. That means evaluating cumulative environmental impacts, preserving natural buffers, and ensuring that development today does not create long-term environmental and financial costs for residents.

**Nino Mangione, District 5**

I think we are going to need to focus on restoration and protection strategies which will help us create reasonable pollution reduction goals. We are also going to have to further explore productive common-sense options to protect our drinking water reservoirs as well. I believe it is possible to foster collaboration between developers, community members and county government to protect our water quality. I am learning about these issues, and it appears to me that there are productive strategies that focus on land disturbance, utilizing zoning to protect watershed areas and buffer zones.

**Shawn McIntosh, District 5**

Balancing development pressure with watershed protection starts with recognizing that protecting our waterways and drinking water sources is not optional. It is a core responsibility of local government and essential to public

*How would you balance development pressure with watershed protection?*

health, environmental sustainability, and long-term fiscal stability. I believe the best way to achieve that balance is by directing the majority of growth and redevelopment into appropriate areas inside the URDL where infrastructure already exists, while maintaining strong protections for environmentally sensitive land, forests, stream buffers, wetlands, and reservoir watersheds outside the URDL. We also need to strengthen how we evaluate development impacts. Too often, projects are reviewed individually without fully considering cumulative impacts on stormwater runoff, flooding, traffic, aging infrastructure, and water quality. I support science-based planning, stronger environmental review processes, and investments in modern stormwater management and green infrastructure to reduce runoff and protect waterways. At the same time, redevelopment inside the URDL should prioritize sustainability. That includes preserving green space where possible, encouraging tree canopy protection and restoration, improving walkability and transit access, and incorporating resilient infrastructure that can better handle increased rainfall and climate-related challenges. Community engagement is also critical. Residents deserve transparency and meaningful input early in the planning process, especially when projects could affect local waterways, flooding patterns, or environmental quality. Ultimately, I do not believe we have to choose between economic growth and watershed protection. But growth must be planned responsibly, with clear environmental guardrails and a recognition that once critical natural areas and water resources are damaged, it is often extraordinarily difficult and expensive to restore them.

**David Marks, District 7**

I will continue to oppose development near our reservoirs and along waterways. Zoning is an important tool that can be used to steer development toward sites that are less environmentally sensitive. From 2015 to 2022, I served as Baltimore County's representative to the Critical Areas Commission, which regulates development along tributaries and coastal watersheds, where I learned to value the recommendations of professional staff members trained in environmental management.

**Cari Santiago, District 7**

We must treat the Master Plan 2030 as a mandate, not a suggestion. Many of our Tier II watersheds have reached assimilative capacity (meaning they cannot absorb more runoff without permanent damage). To balance development and protection we need a shift in our mindset: watershed protection is not an obstacle to progress; it should be the framework for it. By integrating watershed protection into every land-use decision, we ensure forward progress doesn't come at the cost of our natural resources.

**Josh Sines, District 8**

Protecting our waterways must be a priority. Development should meet strong environmental standards and should not move forward if it threatens water quality or overwhelms existing infrastructure. We have seen the consequences of getting that balance wrong, and we need to do better moving forward.

**Tim Fazenbaker, District 9**

Watershed protection is non-negotiable—clean water is essential for public health and our reservoirs. I would enforce strong stream buffers, erosion controls, and environmental standards on any development. Balance comes from smart, site-specific decisions: encourage redevelopment on already disturbed sites first, require developers to mitigate impacts fully, and reject projects that pose real risks. Local control and transparency in the process are key so that decisions reflect community input, not just advocacy from one side.

## Baltimore County Agriculture

As of 2022, Baltimore County is home to 783 farms on 70,217 acres of land, accounting for \$92,699,000 in market value of products sold. 67% of these farms are under 50 acres in size, and 92% are family farms<sup>1</sup>. Financial and development pressure pose a constant threat to both generational farming and the protection of land with prime agricultural soils.

### 6. How would you take agriculture into consideration when making zoning or land use decisions?

#### **Makeda Scott, District 3**

Agriculture is a vital part of Baltimore County's economy, heritage, and sustainability, and it must be treated as such in zoning and land use decisions. I would prioritize protecting agricultural land through zoning that limits incompatible development and supports long-term farming viability. That includes supporting agricultural preservation programs while ensuring that policies reflect the needs of farmers, not just developers. I would also consider how land use decisions impact local food systems, environmental sustainability, and rural communities.

#### **Nino Mangione, District 5**

The 5<sup>th</sup> District has some of the most useful, productive farmland in Maryland. I think the various considerations of farmland must be a part of any decision on zoning matters.

#### **Shawn McIntosh, District 5**

Agriculture should be treated as a long-term economic, environmental, and community asset when making zoning and land use decisions, not simply as undeveloped land waiting for future development. Farming remains an important part of Baltimore County's economy, heritage, food system, and environmental health. When evaluating zoning or land use changes, I would prioritize protecting productive farmland from fragmentation and incompatible development patterns that make farming more difficult or less viable over time. Once farmland is lost to sprawl and development, it's gone. We don't get that land back. I support maintaining the integrity of the URDL, strengthening agricultural preservation programs, and encouraging redevelopment and smart growth inside the URDL so that development pressure is not constantly pushing outward into rural communities. At the same time, we should support the long-term viability of farming by encouraging agricultural innovation, agritourism, local food systems, and policies that help farmers remain economically sustainable. Land preservation alone is not enough if farming itself becomes financially impossible. Most importantly, land use decisions should involve meaningful engagement with the agricultural community and residents who are directly impacted. Farmers deserve a seat at the table when decisions are being made that could affect their livelihoods, infrastructure needs, or the future of rural communities.

#### **David Marks, District 7**

I cosponsored the legislation that allows voters to amend the Baltimore County charter to create a permanent Department of Agriculture. This charter change will consolidate agriculture-related functions and strengthen the position of farmers when all decisions are made, including on land use decisions. As a Councilmember, I have considered the viewpoints of all stakeholders when passing legislation or making zoning decisions. I have good relations with many farmers in eastern and northern Baltimore County. Their input is important because development

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<sup>1</sup> "Baltimore County Maryland," Census of Agriculture, 2022, [https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2022/Online\\_Resources/County\\_Profiles/Maryland/cp24005.pdf](https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2022/Online_Resources/County_Profiles/Maryland/cp24005.pdf).

*How would you take agriculture into consideration when making zoning or land use decisions?*

can squeeze agricultural operations and jeopardize the long-term viability of family farms. As an example, I recommended downzoning the Chapel Road corridor in Perry Hall to help preserve one of that community's last nurseries. Before introducing the legislation that led to Question A, I actively consulted with many farmers throughout Baltimore County. Several farmers testified in support of our legislation.

**Cari Santiago, District 7**

Maryland is an agricultural state, and our zoning must reflect that reality. My focus is not on "defending" the rural North, but rather on supporting its multigenerational residents in the greater framework of our County. When it comes to land use, there is a balance between conservation and property rights, and it starts with consistency. I support initiatives that prohibit overdevelopment and protect prime soils, provided they are applied uniformly. Our zoning and land use legislation should not be left to the whim of a District's representative; our residents deserve the stability of predictable land-use rules.

**Josh Sines, District 8**

Agriculture is an important part of Baltimore County's identity and economy. I would prioritize protecting farmland from unnecessary development, support zoning that keeps agricultural land viable, and ensure decisions do not gradually erode working farms. Once farmland is lost, it is gone permanently.

**Tim Fazenbaker, District 9**

Agriculture remains important to Baltimore County's heritage and economy, with hundreds of farms (many small/family operations). When zoning or land use decisions arise, I will weigh impacts on viable farming—protecting prime soils where practical, supporting agritourism or value-added opportunities, and avoiding rules that make it impossible for farmers to operate or pass land to the next generation. Decisions must also consider broader county needs: jobs, housing, and growth. No one-size-fits-all approach; case-by-case with input from actual farmers, not just planners or preservation groups.

**7. What is your view on the current state legislation allowing solar electrical arrays to be constructed on agricultural land and open space?**

**Makeda Scott, District 3**

I support the expansion of renewable energy, including solar, as part of a broader strategy to address climate change. However, I have concerns about placing large-scale solar arrays on prime agricultural land and open space without careful consideration. We must strike a balance by prioritizing solar development on already developed or underutilized sites such as rooftops, parking lots, brownfields, and industrial areas before using productive farmland. Energy policy should not come at the expense of our agricultural base or open space preservation. I would advocate for policies that encourage smart siting of solar projects, protect high-quality farmland, and ensure that local communities have a voice in these decisions.

**Nino Mangione, District 5**

I think Gov. Moore and the Democrat supermajority were a bit careless in their approach to this. I am much more focused on solar panels on roof tops, barn tops etc. as a way to expand solar. I think we want to do everything within the bounds of reasonableness to protect farmland.

*What is your view on the current state legislation allowing solar electrical arrays to be constructed on agricultural land and open space?*

**Shawn McIntosh, District 5**

I support Maryland's transition to renewable energy and believe solar must be part of our long-term energy strategy. However, I have serious concerns about current state legislation that weakens local zoning authority and allows large-scale solar arrays to be constructed on agricultural land and open space without sufficient local input. Prime farmland, forests, and environmentally sensitive land are finite resources. Once that land is lost, we do not get it back. These areas are critical not only for agriculture, but also for protecting watersheds, preserving wildlife habitat, supporting local food systems, and safeguarding the source of our drinking water. I believe local governments and communities should retain a strong voice in land use decisions that directly impact their environment, infrastructure, and quality of life. At the same time, I do not believe this has to be framed as a choice between clean energy and land preservation. We should prioritize solar development on rooftops, parking lots, brownfields, landfills, industrial properties, and other previously disturbed sites before converting productive farmland and open space. I also support exploring innovative approaches like agrivoltaics and dual-use solar where appropriate. Ultimately, I support a balanced approach that advances renewable energy while protecting farmland, watersheds, open space, and the integrity of local planning decisions.

**David Marks, District 7**

I opposed recent actions by the Maryland General Assembly that have reduced local decision-making and will allow for more solar facilities to be built on productive farmland. The General Assembly's actions are shortsighted and counterproductive to Baltimore County's land preservation goals. There must be renewed effort to place solar facilities in brownfields and urbanized areas that already have an impervious surface. I'm also concerned about the clustering of solar facilities in places like Kingsville, which is why I passed legislation establishing a distance requirement for these arrays where there is county regulation.

**Cari Santiago, District 7**

Do I think it's the best place for solar arrays? No. We should prioritize "Solar Canopies" (over parking lots and brownfields) rather than open-field designs on usable agricultural lands or forests, but it's a prioritization, not an absolute. Renewable energies and land preservation share the same end goal: long-term protection of our natural resources.

**Josh Sines, District 8**

I support renewable energy, but not at the expense of productive farmland. Large-scale solar projects should be directed to appropriate locations such as rooftops, brownfields, and industrial areas, rather than prime agricultural land. We need a balanced approach that protects both our environment and our food supply.

**Tim Fazenbaker, District 9**

I am concerned about state overreach that limits local control and pushes largescale solar onto productive farmland or open space. While renewable energy has a role, prime agricultural land should primarily stay in food production, not industrial energy installations that can alter landscapes, affect neighbors, and tie up acreage for decades. I support farmer choice on their own property with proper local oversight, setbacks, and decommissioning requirements—but I oppose mandates or incentives that prioritize solar quotas over preserving working farms. Baltimore County should fight to retain zoning authority and protect our ag base from being converted wholesale.

## Governance

### 8. How would you ensure that your decisions, particularly with respect to land use, are open and transparent, and have considered all relevant views?

#### **Makeda Scott, District 3**

Transparency and public trust start with how decisions are made, not just the outcome. I would ensure that land use decisions are open and inclusive by proactively engaging residents early in the process, not after plans are already formed. That means holding accessible community meetings, providing clear and timely information, and creating multiple ways for people to participate and be heard. I also believe in consistent, proactive communication, sharing updates, explaining the “why” behind decisions, and making sure materials and data are easy to access and understand. Too often, residents feel decisions are made behind closed doors. I am committed to changing that by making the process more visible and accountable. I will ensure that my decisions are informed by data, community input, environmental impact, and long-term planning, not short-term pressures.

#### **Nino Mangione, District 5**

I will tell you for my part I believe in complete transparency. Many members of the current council have been less than transparent about their decisions. My operating procedure will be to review any project or proposal with any community association or other group of interested citizens before any actions are taken. I believe public, open meetings are essential in these matters regardless of differing opinions.

#### **Shawn McIntosh, District 5**

Transparency and accountability are core reasons I’m running for office. I believe residents deserve not just to be heard, but to know that their input is genuinely being considered before decisions are made, especially on major land use and development issues. Too often, communities feel brought into the process after plans are already largely shaped. I would prioritize early and meaningful public engagement by ensuring residents, community associations, environmental advocates, agricultural stakeholders, and other impacted groups are included at the beginning of conversations, when their feedback can still influence outcomes. I also support making land use decisions more accessible and understandable by improving public notice requirements, expanding access to meetings both in person and online, and ensuring that development proposals, supporting studies, timelines, and decision-making criteria are easy for residents to find and review. Good decision-making also requires looking at the full picture. That means carefully considering environmental impacts, infrastructure capacity, traffic, school overcrowding, watershed protection, fiscal impacts, housing needs, and community character. Years of coalition building and advocacy work have taught me the importance of bringing diverse voices to the table and finding common ground wherever possible. Even when people disagree, they deserve a transparent process, honest communication, and confidence that decisions are being made in the public interest, not behind closed doors.

#### **David Marks, District 7**

I pride myself on accessibility and openness. I constantly meet with community groups and other stakeholders. Our office created a Fifth District Community Advisory Council that brings together many neighborhood leaders to discuss issues and legislation. When making land use decisions, I actively consult documents such as the Master Plan that were developed after extensive input from the public.

*How would you ensure that your decisions, particularly with respect to land use, are open and transparent, and have considered all relevant views?*

**Cari Santiago, District 7**

Transparency begins with ending Councilmanic Courtesy; we need a Council that does not accept unopposed land use decisions. It's time we recognized that if the County fails, what happens in our individual districts will be irrelevant, so it is in our best interests to not only work together, but have a system that our residents have access to and can navigate. Secondly, we must overhaul public notification for land-use changes. Residents and property owners adjacent to proposed legislation/petitions deserve direct, timely notification that allows for meaningful dialogue and mediation before decisions are finalized.

**Josh Sines, District 8**

Transparency in land use decisions is critical. Residents should be informed early and have a meaningful opportunity to be heard. I support stronger public notification requirements, earlier community engagement, and clear access to information. I have been involved in situations where the process lacked transparency, and that needs to change.

**Tim Fazenbaker, District 9**

Transparency is fundamental. I will hold public meetings, respond directly to constituents (especially in District 9), publish clear positions online, and ensure all stakeholders—including residents, businesses, farmers, environmental groups, and taxpayers—have a fair chance to be heard before votes. No closed-door deals. As someone who's already attended council meetings and spoken out, my record shows willingness to challenge the status quo and put local people first. All relevant views matter, but final decisions must prioritize the well-being, safety, and prosperity of Baltimore County residents and taxpayers—not special interests.