



Duchy Trachtenberg (D), Montgomery County Council At-Large Incumbent

Environmental Views

1. Do you believe that the county is in a position to meet the challenges that growth has placed on our natural resources and neighborhoods?

Yes

2. Given that the pressures on Metro's Red Line have become severe in recent years, with the growth in Montgomery County's residential sector creating big increases in Metro ridership, which of the following policies will you actively support and promote:

Supporting a region-wide gasoline tax to create a dedicated infrastructure fund for Metro.

3. What is your perspective regarding citizen activists in the county and their role in governance? Check all answers that apply.

We tend to see the "regulars" at hearings and meetings and it would be good to see more new faces.

They are the backbone of the County.

I rely on them.

I would like to see more of them.

I am one of those people.

4. How would you rate the performance of the current Council over the past four years? If you are an incumbent, give your most candid assessment and supply comments to suggest ways the Council could improve as a body over the next four years. Also, please provide examples for your answers whether you are an incumbent or a challenger.

Overall, the Council made tough decisions in a highly unfavorable economic situation.

This County Council has made very commendable progress in protecting the public interest. We have made significant accomplishments in protecting the public's safety and health, protecting the environment, addressing transportation issues (particularly with regard to mass transit options), in addressing critical fiscal challenges, and enhancing the foundation of Montgomery's economic future, through our work on master and sector plans for Twinbrook, Shady Grove, White Flint, and most recently the Great Seneca Science Corridor. I am proud of the work that I have done as Chair of the Management and Fiscal Policy Committee with regard to compensation and benefits issues, reserve policy, and a long term balanced fiscal plan.

5. Please provide a brief assessment of the performance of the County Executive over the past four years related to environmental and quality of life issues. Supply comments if desired.

The Executive has a record to be proud of in regard to environmental or quality of life issues like growth, abating traffic congestion or pedestrian safety.

6. If you are elected, will you introduce and support legislation geared toward quality of life issues as they relate to natural resource conservation? If so, describe in the comment field what you have in mind.

Yes

I will continue my strong advocacy for environmental protection and natural resource conservation. I am proud of the support that I have received from several of the County's environmental organizations, including the Sierra Club and Green Democrats. I will continue my support for initiatives in energy efficiency, public transit, stormwater management and support for our park system.

7. Roughly 2/5 of the land that drains into the Anacostia River is in Montgomery County. The Anacostia is one of our nation's most polluted rivers. There is a plan to clean it up that recommends 3,000 specific restoration projects, including 1,700 "low-impact," green infrastructure projects like rain garden retrofits for parking lots. Will you support Montgomery County's role in the Anacostia Restoration Plan, including in allocating necessary

funds from the County budget, along with working for State and Federal funding, in order to ensure that these crucial retrofits will be built?

Yes

8. The 2010 stormwater permit issued to Montgomery County by the Maryland Department of the Environment is the result of a four-year collaborative effort on the part of the Stormwater Partners, DEP and other agencies. In order to ensure the success of this important pollution clean-up mandate, will you support annual increases in the Water Quality Protection Charge (now at \$45.50 per household per year)?

Yes

9. Our region has experienced a record number of water main breaks in recent years, some of them catastrophic, and WSSC has warned repeatedly that this trend will accelerate unless we approve the funding increases necessary to fill the massive backlog of deferred maintenance. WSSC has for many years, requested that both of its counties, Montgomery and Prince Georges, support and enact an Infrastructure Renewal Fund. While Montgomery has traditionally supported higher rate increases for WSSC than has Prince George's, neither County has yet supported or achieved establishment of the absolutely crucial Infrastructure Renewal Fund at the levels requested by WSSC. Will you support establishment of the WSSC Infrastructure Renewal Fund at the level required to rebuild and maintain our water and sewer infrastructure?

Yes

10. Montgomery County faces a conundrum when it comes to future land use. We have residential green wedges and the Agricultural Reserve to protect. In the 1980s, the county lost a significant amount of forests to development. The Forest Conservation Law has made some progress in terms of protecting or replanting forest in the Up County. However, with shifting development patterns and about 6% of land left in the county for new development, there is a need to protect trees in urban areas. What approach would you recommend increase the tree canopy in the Down County?

I support an aggressive tree replacement policy in the Down County, for both private and public property. I support initiatives to encourage residential and commercial property owners to replace trees onsite, as well as to foster the planting of new trees in other areas of the County.

11. What types of development would you be most supportive of from the list below? Choose two.

New residential development clustered around mass transit with adequate ratios for workforce or affordable housing

Redevelopment/adaptive re-use of previously developed land (Downtown Silver Spring is a good example.)

12. Ten Mile Creek in the Clarksburg area, straddles the Agricultural Reserve, and is the last best creek in Montgomery County, according to surveys by both County biologists and citizen stream monitors. Ten Mile Creek has more diversity and abundance of fish, aquatic bugs, and amphibians than other creeks throughout the County, and it is part of our Little Seneca Reservoir backup Drinking Water Supply. Montgomery County has proposed a huge bus depot and transportation equipment maintenance facility for the Ten Mile Creek watershed, near the existing County Jail. Environmental and civic groups have called on Montgomery County to find another location for the depot and to split up the dual-purpose facility if that is what it takes to protect Ten Mile Creek. Do you support moving the proposed County Bus Depot to a location outside of fragile Ten Mile Creek watershed?

Yes

13. As called for in the 1994 Clarksburg Master Plan, Montgomery must now apply the lessons learned from Clarksburg Town Center development, including the pollution of streams and loss of groundwater, in deciding how to proceed for Ten Mile Creek. The Ad-Hoc Water Quality Working Group report was issued in July 2010 to the Council. In this report, members of civic, environmental groups and county agencies called for a Master Plan amendment (already recommended by the Planning Board in the summer of 2009) that will enable the County to apply protections proven to work in Upper Paint Branch and Upper Rock Creek. Will you support a Master Plan Amendment in order to apply necessary protections to Ten Mile Creek? Please explain why or why not.

Yes

I believe that we must have strong protection of our key natural resources, and effective enforcement of laws to protect these resources.

14. Do you believe Montgomery County goes far enough to work collaboratively with adjacent jurisdictions (meaning other counties, cities and towns and state and federal parkland) to address environmental/quality of life concerns? Use the comment field to be more specific about our current efforts.

No, we can do more and should reach out to our adjacent counties more for information-sharing and best practices.

I support Montgomery County's efforts to coordinate with other neighboring jurisdictions on these issues, and our cooperation with regional and national organizations for information sharing and best practices. I think that our work with the NACO, MACO, and COG has been beneficial to the County.

15. Does Montgomery County do a good job of integrated regional planning when it comes to setting the policy agenda for natural resource issues? Please explain your answer in the comment field and provide ideas as to what more we can and should be doing in this regard.

Yes

I think that Montgomery County does a good job of integrated regional planning, but it can do more. I believe the COG and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC) are valuable partners for our regional planning, particularly in the areas of transit, water quality and air quality. I support enhanced collaboration with these organizations, and the dissemination of more public information about our work and joint programs.

16. M-83 is a proposed highway project that could slice across parts of the Montgomery County Agricultural Reserve, increase sprawl in the Up County, and otherwise wreak havoc on our remaining high-quality rural streams in its path. Environmental groups including Audubon Naturalist Society and local landowners, including Day Spring Silent Retreat Center, oppose M-83 and want it removed from the plans. Do you support or oppose M-83? Please state your reasons in either case.

Oppose

I think that this proposed project would increase sprawl and adversely affect the environment. I have supported the use health impact assessments to provide more information about major road projects such as M-83, and have introduced a Board of Health regulation to require such an assessment.

17. What do you think are the two most pressing issues facing Montgomery County in terms of quality of life and protection of our natural resources?

There are many pressing issues facing the County in terms of our quality of life and protection of natural resources, including forest protection and tree conservation, protecting the Agricultural Reserve, improving air and water quality, stormwater management, improving energy efficiency and reducing our carbon footprint, increasing transit and managing vehicular traffic, among others. I think that the next County Council should give even more attention to public transit and stormwater management issues.

18. What role do you see the Maryland-National Capital Parks and Planning Commission in regarding the relationship to the Council in the future? Would you like to see changes at M-NCPPC? If so, please explain in the comments field.

M-NCPPC role should be a strong partnership with Council.

M-NCPPC should advise the County Executive more closely than in the past.

Planning Board should communicate more closely with the Council.

I support the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, and look forward to continuing cooperation and collaboration with it.

19. Montgomery County has been losing its street trees at a rapid pace, with the rate of replacement far below the rate of tree removal. Which of the policy options listed below do you support to replant and support a vibrant street tree program? (Check all that you support):

Reorganize: Take the street tree program out of DOT and move it to the Parks Department or back to DEP.

Increase the funding level of the street tree program.

Change the current default situation: When a street tree is cut down, a tree is replanted only at the owner's request. Change this to a requirement for automatic replanting where a street tree has been taken down.

20. If you were to recommend budget cuts and could make cuts in one of the following program areas, which would it be? And please tell us why in the comments field.

Environmental education in county schools

I believe that all of these program areas are important, and would encourage the Board of Education to increase their investment in environmental education for all students.

21. Please rate your level of concern on each of the following environmental issues:

| | Not concerned (1) | Somewhat unconcerned (2) | Somewhat concerned (3) | Very concerned (4) |
|--|----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Watershed protection and stormwater management | | | | X |
| Loss of tree canopy in the County | | | | X |
| Impacts of climate change and the need for county action | | | | X |
| Condition of street trees in County neighborhoods | | | | X |
| Sustainable transportation | | | | X |
| Parks and green space preservation | | | | X |
| Energy efficiency in Montgomery County | | | | X |

| | |
|---|---|
| businesses and homes | |
| Smart growth land use planning | X |
| Citizen involvement in environmental and quality of life issues | X |
| Walkable and bike-friendly neighborhoods | X |

Other (please specify):

22. If you were to rank and prioritize the following in order of the top three most important, how would you rank these areas?

| | 1 (1) | 2 (2) | 3 (3) |
|---|-------|-------|-------|
| Watershed protection | | X | |
| Climate change impacts | | | |
| Increasing the county tree canopy | | | X |
| Developing alternatives to reduce the number of daily car trips in the county | X | | |

Other (please specify): I believe that addressing all of these issues are important goals for County policy, although we have limited tools at the County level to address the broader climate change issues.

23. Montgomery County has an award-winning park system of nearly 35,000 acres. The Parks Department, under M-NCPPC, has demonstrated a strong commitment to stewardship of the wide range of natural resources within our parkland. But the County Council recently made budget cuts severe enough to endanger the continued maintenance of these resources. Do you support restoring vital funding to maintain our parks?

Yes

24. If you have any other environmental concerns/issues, please list them below.

I am a strong advocate of recycling. I think that the County has a good track record in increasing the amount of materials we recycle, but we can do more. I am also a proponent of health impact assessments for new transportation and development projects, and hope that the County will adopt this best practice for environmental and health planning.

25. What will get Montgomery County to the target of 80% in reduction of greenhouse gases by the year 2050 that is cited in our county Climate Action Plan? Choose the following policies that you will commit to supporting.

| |
|--|
| Increasing tree canopy to a healthy countywide percentage |
| Preservation of mature tree cover throughout the county, including protection of street trees in the right of way |
| Going full scale on community and business education on energy efficiency |
| Implementing county-wide requirements for teleworking; requiring that local businesses allow teleworking for employees as appropriate to the type of business involved |
| Offering tax credits as incentives to businesses and residents reducing energy consumption |
| Encouraging pedestrian and bicycle commuting |
| Working with adjacent cities and counties on a regional plan of action |
| Pressing for more state and federal funding for mass-transit projects |

26. Are you supportive of the carbon tax recently passed in Montgomery County? Please tell us why you are or are not supportive of the legislation?

Yes

I believe that, as a County, we need to do what we can to reduce pollution and increase regional air quality. Reducing carbon emissions is an important part of that strategy.

27. The current Montgomery County Forest Conservation Law only applies to tracts of land that are 40,000 square feet or larger, approximately one acre. Would you consider lowering the threshold to protect more forest?

Yes

28. Please tell us what you would consider to be a reasonable threshold for triggering a forestry law.

10,000 square feet or more

I would like to have more information about optimum forest conservation thresholds. That said, I believe that Montgomery County should have a tree conservation law that recognizes and protects "urban forests," and that provides protection for "significant" trees on private lots.

29. Have environmental concerns changed your voting patterns in the areas listed below? If you are not an incumbent, then please skip to the following question.

| | Yes | No |
|----------------------|-----|----|
| Watershed protection | X | |

| | |
|--|---|
| Green building and Low Impact Development or LID | X |
| Climate change impacts in and around Montgomery County | X |
| Increasing tree canopy | X |
| Energy efficiency | X |
| Land use planning | X |
| Pedestrian safety | X |

Other (please specify):

30. Please rate your agreement with the following statement:

| | Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|
|--|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|

I would vote to support legislation that would strengthen tree and forestry laws in Montgomery County. X

31. If you are not in favor of adopting stronger tree and forestry legislation, please explain your position and how you have come to this conclusion.

I am in favor of stronger tree and forestry legislation.

32. Should the State have more jurisdiction to regulate natural resources in Montgomery County?

Yes

While I think that Montgomery County has a good overall record of accomplishment with regard to protecting our natural resources, increased state jurisdiction in some areas, particularly with regard to air and water quality, might be appropriate. I believe that there has been inadequate State attention paid to both environmental and health factors when preserving resources and the development and redevelopment of communities.

33. Does the county need to be more active in terms of educating residents about energy consumption? If yes, please provide ideas as to how.

Yes

I believe that we can do more to educate Montgomery County citizens about energy consumption through our schools, businesses, and our county's internet resources.

34. What are the solutions to addressing the cleanup of the Chesapeake Bay? What role should Montgomery County residents play, if any?

We need to increase our successful recycling efforts, and improve stormwater management. County residents can help in both of these program areas.

35. Can you recommend a proposal for action within the legislative and Executive branches of government in Montgomery County to address Chesapeake Bay restoration?

We should continue our successful recycling programs and stormwater management initiatives, including greater use of rain gardens, permeable sidewalks and driveways, and onsite retention of stormwater.

36. Please provide any additional comments you care to provide.

I look forward to continued strong advocacy for effective environmental protection and natural resource conservation, as well as continued cooperation with and support of environmental organizations on the municipal, county, state and federal levels.

37. Please fill in your name.

Name - Councilmember Duchy Trachtenberg