



Royce Hanson (D), Montgomery County Council District 2 Candidate

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:

Increasing Montgomery's share of payments to WMATA to further fund the needed infrastructure improvements and maintenance backlogs.

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.

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.

The Council could do a lot more to support the growth of green businesses and green jobs.

I guess I am too committed to nuance. When one says the council is too committed to development, we need to ask of what kind? I do not think it has been sufficiently committed to better-designed development. Most seem to want more non-residential development in strategically important locations. I have been critical of some decisions that have failed to stage development concurrently with infrastructure, and of decisions to delay infrastructure that is needed for smart growth. I think some gains have been made, but not enough in balancing infrastructure and growth. On the question of fiscal responsibility, it is again a mixed picture.

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 perfected a disappearing act on a lot of environmental issues and done some good things on others. Good appointment to head DEP but the department helped filibuster improvements to the Forest Conservation Law. It has taken forever to get the BLT regs approved, and they leave a lot to be desired. AWOL on Ag preservation, except for photo ops.

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 am particularly interested in introducing sustainability elements in the revised zoning code, strengthening the reforestation and afforestation requirements in the FCL, and extending the bonded period for maintenance of plantings. I will also continue to urge better design standards that include energy and environmental incentives that exceed regulatory standards. I will introduce legislation to strengthen protection of the Ag Reserve.

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?

The best approaches are 1. provide both minimum requirements and incentives for more planting in parking areas and redevelopment projects. 2. keep expanding the coupon program started by MNCPPC to encourage homeowners to plant more trees. 3. Provide strong support for street trees. I would like to turn street tree responsibility to the Parks department. It would save both money and trees. 4. lengthen the tree protection period under bond. 5. fully fund the invasive species eradication program 6. eat more venison.

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

It was a mistake to split the watershed. Very strong environmentally sensitive design standards must be established for the east side of the creek. The only effective way to do it is with a MP amendment, which I proposed.

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.

We can always do more, but it ain't easy. I am particularly interested in working with Frederick county to see if we can persuade it to provide complementary protection for its ag lands around Sugarloaf and with Prince George's, Howard and Anne Arundel on the Anacostia and Patuxent.

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.

No

Not good enough. No one does. There is no integrated regional planning. The most likely source would be the state, which every county will resist. One thing that could be done that would help some is for the 2 councils to agree that MNCPPC should produce an integrated Green and Blue infrastructure plan for the Regional District. WE have a mechanism for doing that. Much of the preliminary work has been done.

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

It is not feasible environmentally or fiscally to build it. We should take it off the master plan of transportation and use the money it would cost for BRT in the 355 corridor from Clarksburg to Shady Grove. That could be running by the time we finish the next 5 studies.

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?

1. Realistically addressing the implications of climate change, which will involve a major shift in behavior and figuring out how to retrofit many existing buildings to reduce carbon emissions, & changing travel behavior. 2. Planning and building mixed use communities that facilitate walking and biking, heavy transit use and walking and biking to school.

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 should advise the County Executive more closely than in the past.

IF WE EVER HAVE ONE THAT IS MORE INTERESTED IN THINKING THAN MAKING DEALS.

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.

Establish a dedicated street tree fund through a one cent per ___ local tax on (name your favorite revenue source).

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.

Adding and improving sidewalks

I am not interested in cutting any of the above. I would like them expanded and made as efficient as possible.

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 businesses and homes				X
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	X		
Increasing the county tree canopy			X
Developing alternatives to reduce the number of daily car trips in the county			

Other (please specify): Dealing with climate change will include reduction of car trips. DEALING WITH CLIMATE CHANGE WILL INVOLVE INCREASING CANOPY AND SOME OF THE OTHER ITEMS, SO WILL WATERSHED PROTECTION.

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.

No Response

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
Implementing county-wide requirements for teleworking; requiring that local businesses allow teleworking for employees as appropriate to the type of business involved
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

I am not sure tax credits are the way to go. If all above are done, we will still not achieve the 80% reduction.

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

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.

20,000 square feet or more

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): I am not an incumbent, but your form requires that I answer this.

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 do not think a tree ordinance is feasible if it deals with trees on residential property. I think it will be an enforcement nightmare and will produce a backlash against more effective measures. I estimate it would take about 60 inspectors to enforce, and that is not going to happen. The silly proposal to handle enforcement through desk audits at DEP is not feasible and is deeply flawed from both technical and environmental perspectives. I would concentrate on street trees where public responsibility is clear and on incentives to encourage people to plant trees on their own property and to care for them. I favor regulations to require planting trees with new development or in redevelopment projects.

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

Yes

MARYLAND LAW IS QUITE GOOD RE NATURAL RESOURCES. THERE IS PLENTY OF JURISDICTION. IT JUST TAKES ENOUGH VOTES IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO DO IT.

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

ASIDE FROM THE USUAL APPROACHES, TAXES ARE VERY STRONG EDUCATIONAL DEVICES. THEIR VIRTUE IS THAT THEY WORK EVEN IF THEY PRODUCE NO REVENUE.

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

THE SIZE OF THIS BOX LOOKS LIKE YOU DON'T EXPECT MUCH. THE SOLUTION IS TO RADICALLY REDUCE THE FLOWS OF NUTRIENTS FROM THE SUSQUEHANNA, MORE STRICTLY REGULATE THE CHICKEN INDUSTRY, ENFORCE NEW STORM WATER REGULATIONS AND STRENGTHEN THEM, PRE-TREAT ROAD RUN OFF BEFORE RELEASING IT INTO BAY TRIBUTARIES, ETC. MONTGOMERY RESIDENTS COULD PLAY A SIGNIFICANT ROLE BY CHANGING THE WAY THEY MAINTAIN THEIR YARDS, REDUCING SIGNIFICANTLY THEIR LIQUID WASTE PRODUCTION, AND IMPROVING THE WATER QUALITY OF POTOMAC AND PATUXENT TRIBUTARIES.

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

Regulations that would reduce use of high nitrogen fertilizers on yards and generation of yard waste.

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

1. The problem is less lack of power than lack of will and gumption. 2. I support a metro-wide tax for infrastructure and providing more funds for Metro. I do not want to waste time supporting a payroll tax. It is not going to be approved. And it is not feasible or good policy to support jobs instead of housing. I have and will support more jobs, but it is also important to provide sufficient housing for workers. Moreover, we have to get rid of exclusive commercial zones, replace them with mixed use zones so more people can walk to work. The assumptions that creation of more jobs in Montgomery will balance the flows on the red line are likely to be unfulfilled. There will be a marginal increase, but the world does not work quite that way. 3. We need to bring more citizens into the public square and develop strong civic institutions that cut across specific interests. I would be lying to say I rely on activists. For one thing, they don't always show up when they are needed. I want to hear from them, consider their views and information, but I tend to rely on research and information from a wide array of interests and sources, my own experience and judgment. 27. It has been lowered to 20,000 by state law. I supported a conforming local amendment to the FCL.

37. Please fill in your name.

Name - Royce Hanson