



Montgomery Housing Alliance County Executive Candidate Forum

May 18, 2026, 6PM

Silver Spring United Methodist Church

Introductory Remarks - David Bowers, Enterprise

Topic 1: HIF/Resources for Preservation and Development

Erin Lee, AHC

Neeka Samimi, AHC

Montgomery County needs more affordable rental housing. Even before the current national affordability crisis and the reduction of federal jobs and investments in our county over the past year and half, a quarter of Montgomery County renter households were paying more than half of their income toward rent. We know that to address housing need, Montgomery County needs to develop at least 2,100 affordable rental homes each year.

Right now, we know that in Montgomery County, there are projects in the pipeline, ready to begin construction in the next 12 months, that need county funding of at least \$169 million. If elected County Executive, how would you work to ensure that the county can adequately fund the pipeline, whether through bonds, leveraging private wealth and investment, or other funding mechanisms?

In a difficult budget environment, where it is a challenge to fully fund the pipeline, how would you prioritize projects to be funded?

Topic 2: Affordable and Equitable Homeownership

Jeff Dee, Habitat for Humanity Metro Maryland

Mary Hunter, Housing Initiative Partnership

Access to homeownership is a national problem, in fact the median age of a first time homebuyer is 40. With a traditional 30 year mortgage, homebuyers will be 70 before paying off their mortgage. Buying a home is even tougher in Montgomery County, with the average cost of a home in 2025 around \$800,000 and the average cost of a detached, single-family home at over \$1 million. Too many individuals, disproportionately people of color, are locked out of the ownership market blocking them from building generational wealth.

For those that already own homes, preserving those homes is also a challenge. With costs rising faster than wages and for those with lost income or on fixed income, affordable health and safety repairs, accessibility modifications, climate resiliency measures, and increasing property

taxes and homeowners insurance makes remaining safely, affordably and stably housed a challenge.

If elected County Executive, would expanding and preserving affordable homeownership opportunities be a priority? If so, what solutions would you expand or implement to address root causes. If not, why not and what would you prioritize instead?

Topic 3: Zoning and Land Use

Carrie Kisicki, Coalition for Smarter Growth

Todd Dorrien, Victory Housing

Zoning and land use decisions are crucial in shaping the overall housing landscape. Since most affordable housing developments are multi-family, these policies can especially affect affordable housing and impact the number of homes providers can produce. In Montgomery County, it is the County Council's responsibility to approve most land use and zoning changes. Even so, the County Executive is an influential voice in shaping public discourse and informing county residents about planning and zoning efforts.

In your view, how can land use and zoning changes be a tool to support housing affordability? As County Executive, how would you use your platform to approach and talk about land use and planning issues?

Topic 4: Housing for People with Disabilities

Tracy Wright, Deputy Director of People on The Go

Nonprofit organizations play a critical role in supporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the community.

How will your administration ensure that people with disabilities are intentionally included in new housing production, particularly through set-asides and partnerships with nonprofit organizations?

Topic 5: Homelessness, Cost Burden, Services, Rental Assistance

Liz Krueger, Interfaith Works

Derek Simpkins, Interfaith Works client

While the 2026 Point-in-Time Count showed a decrease in the number of persons experiencing homelessness in Montgomery County, we cannot overlook the ongoing crisis of housing instability that continues to affect thousands in our community. Alarming, from 2020 to 2025, there was a 634% increase in families experiencing homelessness. Additionally, evictions have

risen by 20% over the past three years, with approximately 2,200 families facing eviction annually.

Given these pressing challenges, what do you see as the root causes of homelessness? As County Executive, what solutions would you propose?

Rental assistance has proven a cost-effective way to improve housing stability, however the amount of funds available for these programs falls far short of the need. As County Executive, how would you approach rental assistance and/or other prevention resources?

Topic 6: Housing in Relation to Purple Line Development

David Bowers, Enterprise Community Partners

Just a few weeks ago, the final track for the Purple Line was laid, putting us one step closer to its opening. The threat of displacement is real. What anti-displacement tools do you think Montgomery County needs to ensure existing residents can benefit from this major infrastructure investment?

Closing Question: Legacy

Pastor Will Ed Green, Silver Spring United Methodist Church

Carolyn Taylor, Emory Grove United Methodist Church

Introductory remarks about the legacy left to their communities and the legacy they see their churches leaving for future generations, particularly as it relates to reconciliation and housing.

If elected County Executive, what would you want your legacy to be?

Closing Remarks, David Bowers

Thank You and Goodnight, Rob Goldman