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**Gaithersburg Germantown Upcounty Chamber
County Council At-Large Candidate Questionnaire Response:
Jim McNulty**

Please respond with a short answer to the following questions:

TRANSPORTATION :

- **Transportation is critical to our economic growth. How are you going to work with the County Executive and the Governor to address the congestion on the Upper I270 corridor?**

Jim McNulty's Answer: Montgomery County and The Maryland Department of Transportation have been studying the congestion problems in the I-270 corridor for decades, so the good news is we know what we need to do. The bad news is, we're not doing it. That lack of investment is severely limiting our economic growth, and spending all those hours stuck in traffic is ruining our quality of life. We need an outspoken advocate on the County Council to get us moving again, and I am running to be that advocate, not just for the Upcounty's needs, but for the entire County. There's a long list of projects we need, and I'll work with the County Executive and the Governor, and press them – repeatedly and relentlessly – to start making these investments NOW. Every dollar we spend on infrastructure brings back three dollars in economic growth, so making these investments is a great way to create jobs and get our economy moving too.

As the only challenger in this race from the Upcounty, I understand that what meets our transportation needs in Silver Spring may not be the right answer for Clarksburg or Damascus. Some of my opponents are only talking about transit,

but when it comes to congestion in the I-270 corridor, transit alone is not going to cut it. The Upcounty needs an “all of the above” approach – road improvements, expanded transit service, bike and pedestrian improvements and more – to reduce congestion and improve access, starting with long-overdue improvements to I-270 itself. We can add new capacity to reduce delays on I-270, while staying within the current right-of-way, and without impacting homes or businesses. We also need expanded MARC service, a more connected bike trail network, local road and intersection improvements (including M-83) to reduce bottlenecks, and improved bus transit and microtransit solutions.

What we need most of all is an advocate on the Council who understands this issue and who will push, and push, and push to make these things happen. I will be an outspoken advocate for this “all of the above” approach and make transportation investment a priority if elected to the Council.

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND TAXES:

- **Our County budget is outpacing growth of our population and growth of our business economy. What concrete steps will you take to invite investment to Montgomery county – for both small and large businesses – to grow the economy, allowing us to maintain the level of services in our county budget? Where does the Upcounty fit into your plans?**

Jim McNulty’s Answer: Montgomery County is at a crossroads when it comes to our economy and the budget. The County’s budget has gone up 44% in the last 8 years, while job growth has flatlined. We need to get our economy back on track, and raising taxes is not the answer. Instead, we need to focus on inviting more businesses to invest here and expanding our tax base.

As a Councilmember, I will focus on practical reforms that make it easier to do business, strategic redevelopments that provide real opportunities for job growth and housing with the infrastructure to support it, and a focused effort to attract jobs and investment in key industries. Specifically we need to:

- Streamline permitting and set clear timelines for approvals
- Overhaul our planning agencies’ culture and processes to prioritize getting to “yes” on quality projects instead of defaulting to “no”
- Benchmark our tax and regulatory policies against competitor jurisdictions and adjust our policies to make our business climate more competitive

- Provide more housing at a range of price points so employers can attract workers and more young families can afford to live here
- Prioritize strategic redevelopment in key locations like White Flint, Lakeforest and the Comsat property in Clarksburg—prime opportunities for mixed-use development that brings jobs and housing at scale to expand our tax base
- Promote transit-oriented development maximizing value around Metro stations, and adaptive reuse of obsolete office space into lab, light industrial, mixed-use, or small business flex space
- Use Tax-Increment (TIF) financing for catalytic projects that require upfront infrastructure investment but generate substantial future tax revenue
- Empower the Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation (MCEDC) as a "nurse navigator" for business projects—shepherding them through the permitting and approval pipeline with the authority to identify and resolve bottlenecks across departments and utilities.
- Make sure MCEDC has the resources and tools to recruit and retain employers, targeting key industries like federal contractors, life sciences and biotech, cybersecurity, and advanced manufacturing
- Invest in infrastructure, including long neglected road improvements, transit services, fiber and 5G deployment, and key utilities.

Upcounty must be central to our strategy. We should actively market Germantown, Gaithersburg, Clarksburg, and surrounding communities as places for office, research, light industrial, retail, and mixed-use investment, not just housing, so people can live closer to their work, while finally making the transportation and infrastructure improvements these communities have been promised for years. If we want stronger revenues without higher tax burdens, we have to grow the economy in every part of the County, and that absolutely includes the Upcounty.

- **In one sentence, what is the biggest mistake the current Executive and Council has made regarding the county's economic growth?**

Jim McNulty's Answer: Their biggest mistake was adopting the County's failed rent control law, which was drafted with good intentions to protect tenants, but has failed to keep rents from rising, caused major financial institutions and investors to pull out of Montgomery County entirely, and virtually eliminated new

multifamily housing starts. The results are putting more upward pressure on rents, and making our already serious housing shortage even worse.

- **The Germantown Master Plan previously called for over 60,000 jobs in Germantown, which did not come to fruition because Upcounty infrastructure needs have been ignored for decades. How would you reverse this result to grow Upcounty job centers?**

Jim McNulty's Answer: To grow job centers in Germantown and the broader Upcounty, we need to match our land-use ambitions with real infrastructure investment. That means improving I-270 and key local connections, expanding transit options, supporting reliable utility capacity, and making sure schools, retail, and other community amenities keep pace with growth so employers see these communities as complete places to invest. I would also push the County to target business attraction efforts specifically to Germantown's existing assets—including the life sciences corridor, Montgomery College, NIST and the Universities at Shady Grove. Pair that with faster approvals for employment-generating projects and we can make sure more of the jobs and commercial space in our plans is realized. Upcounty has the space, the educated workforce, and the location to be a major economic engine, but only if County government finally treats it like a priority and provides both the infrastructure and the marketing support.

PUBLIC SAFETY:

- **Businesses are increasingly concerned about juvenile crime trends in the Upcounty. What changes, if any, would you pursue in addressing crime, particularly among juveniles?**

Jim McNulty's Answer: Public safety is a top priority of mine. In 2010, Montgomery County Police saved my life during the attempted suicide bombing at Discovery Channel in Silver Spring. Having lived through an active shooter event, I pray that none of our students or parents ever have to experience what my family and I did. The current County Council has fractured its relationship with MCPD. With vacancy rates nearing 20%, a looming retirement wave, and officers feeling unsupported by elected leadership. I hope to repair that relationship and am proud to have been endorsed by the Fraternal Order of Police.

In addressing juvenile crime, we need a balanced approach that combines accountability, prevention, and stronger support for families. Restoring School Resource Officers (SROs) to County schools would also help. We should make sure law enforcement, schools, social services, and community organizations are

coordinating earlier when young people show warning signs, while also ensuring there are real consequences for serious repeat offenses. That means investing in diversion and mentoring programs for first-time or lower-level offenses, expanding access to mental health and family support services, and improving the speed and consistency of interventions when juveniles are arrested.

One issue we may want to look at changing relates to current Maryland state laws that prevent juveniles under 13 from being prosecuted or even detained for most crimes. Many in law enforcement feel this is preventing young offenders from facing any consequences at all, even when they've been arrested multiple times for things like car theft. This may be worth revisiting. While they should not be charged as adults, there should be some consequences for bad behavior, as any parent knows, for the child's own benefit. Business owners and residents deserve to feel safe, and young people deserve a system that helps redirect them before they become chronic offenders, so we need to find the right balance.

HOUSING:

- **Employers cite workforce housing as a barrier to attracting talent. How would you expand diverse and attainable housing options—especially near Upcounty job centers?**

Jim McNulty's Answer: First, we need to repeal the County's failed rent control laws so we can build more housing, in more forms, and in the right places. I support adding workforce housing, townhomes, duplexes, apartments, and mixed-use redevelopment where appropriate, near transit, major roads, and job centers so more people can live closer to where they work. But we also need to protect the precious rural legacy of our Agricultural Reserve and the neighborhood character in purely residential communities that are not in those key corridors or job centers, so we need to be context-sensitive. In the Upcounty, that means focusing growth around places like Germantown, Shady Grove, and other employment corridors, while also reducing barriers in the permitting and review process that slow new home production and make it more expensive. We should encourage redevelopment at scale where infrastructure can support it, like the Lakeforest, White Flint, and Comsat properties. Providing more housing of all types is the best way to bring down pressure on rental rates and housing costs for working families.

Second, we need to make homeownership more attainable for younger workers and families. That is why I have proposed a \$40 million Workforce Housing Downpayment Assistance Fund which would provide zero-interest, zero payment loans for first time homebuyers so that our teachers, nurses, first responders and

long-time renters can realize their dream of homeownership. This program is based on Gaithersburg's existing program, scaled to the county level, funded through Housing Bonds, federal housing grants, recordation taxes, and private partnerships.

EDUCATION:

- **Attracting and retaining the next-generation workforce is a top Chamber priority. The Chamber supports investment in Montgomery College, The Universities at Shady Grove, and MCPS. What is your vision for partnering with these institutions to strengthen the county's talent pipeline? What strategies will you pursue to keep young professionals in Montgomery County, especially in Upcounty communities?**

Jim McNulty's Answer: We should treat Montgomery College, the Universities at Shady Grove, and MCPS as core economic development partners, not just education institutions. My vision is to better align academic programs, career and technical education, internships, apprenticeships, and employer partnerships so students can move more directly into local jobs in fields like health care, biotech, IT, public service, and the skilled trades. In the Upcounty especially, we should strengthen the link between our schools and the major employers and institutions already located there, while also creating more reasons for young professionals to stay—more housing they can afford, shorter commutes, vibrant mixed-use communities, and a stronger local job market. If we want to keep talent in Montgomery County, we have to make it easier for young people to build a career and a life here.

- **Under Maryland's 'Maintenance of Effort' (MOE) law, the county is legally prohibited from ever spending less per student than it did the previous year. This creates a 'ratchet effect' where every emergency increase or one-time bonus becomes the permanent, mandatory floor for the future—even if performance metrics drop. Would you be willing to hold the budget at the absolute legal minimum—effectively a 'no-growth' budget—until the Board of Education agrees to a third-party forensic audit of their central office management? And if so, how will you defend that decision to the teachers' union (MCEA) when they label it an 'attack on educators' during your next budget cycle? If not, what strategy will you employ to ensure the return on the taxpayer's investment to MCPS.**

Jim McNulty's Answer: I support stronger accountability and greater transparency from MCPS, including an independent review of central office operations, because taxpayers and families deserve confidence that every dollar is being

used effectively. My approach would be to meet the County's legal obligations, and insist on measurable improvements in management, transparency and performance before approving any budget request that goes above MOE levels. I would also tie any funding growth above the minimum to a clear demonstration that there are extraordinary circumstances that justify locking in County taxpayers into a permanently higher rate of spending per pupil, and that those resources are reaching students, improving outcomes, and addressing real classroom needs, not simply adding layers of administrative cost down at the central office. I would push back on those who might try to frame this as an attack on educators, emphasizing that: (a) teachers are not the problem and our classrooms are getting the investment and support they need; and (b) other jurisdictions are spending less per pupil and outperforming our school system, so this is not about spending too little, it's about needing more transparency, efficiency, innovation and accountability from MCPS.

Please respond YES or NO to the following questions:

Education:

- Do you support the reinstatement of uniformed School Resource Officers to local high schools?

Jim McNulty's Answer: Yes.

- Do you support funding MCPS above the Maintenance of Effort?

Jim McNulty's Answer: No - not until we have better transparency on how the budget is being spent.

- Do you support holding MCPS to higher account for their portion of our County budget, particularly those funds above MOE?

Jim McNulty's Answer: Yes.

- Would you support opening a conversation with the State Board of Education about oversight of the MCPS budget and accountability?

Jim McNulty's Answer: Yes.

Public Safety

- Do you support the expansion of the Drone as a First Responder program further into the Upcounty?

Jim McNulty's Answer: Yes.

- Facial Recognition: Will you support the Montgomery County Police Department's use of facial recognition technology for investigating violent crimes?

Jim McNulty's Answer: Yes.

- Police Retention: Will you commit to a one-time "retention bonus" for all sworn officers with 5+ years of experience to address the current staffing vacancy crisis?

Jim McNulty's Answer: Yes.

Housing:

- There were approximately 2000 housing permits filed in the county for new projects in 2024, and fewer than 50 in 2025. Do you support repeal of the Rent Stabilization legislation, which has resulted in a nearly 100% drop in permits filed for rental housing construction?

Jim McNulty's Answer: Yes.

- Missing Middle Zoning: Do you support allowing duplexes and triplexes to be built in neighborhoods currently zoned strictly for single-family homes?

Jim McNulty's Answer: Yes, but only in targeted growth areas and along major transportation arteries outside planned communities with HOAs, where there is adequate infrastructure to support the additional density.

- Developer Incentives: Would you support "Transit-Oriented Development" that grants automatic enterprise zone status to developers building near Metro or Purple Line stations?

Jim McNulty's Answer: Yes.

- Eviction Notice: Do you support the 2026 requirement that landlords must provide a minimum of two weeks' notice before an eviction can proceed, even in cases of non-payment?

Jim McNulty's Answer: Yes.

Economic Development & Taxation:

- Tax Limit Bypass: Will you pledge to vote no on any property tax increase that utilizes the "school funding loophole" to bypass the County Charter's requirement for a unanimous Council vote?

Jim McNulty's Answer: Yes.

- Special Taxing Districts: Do you support the creation of new "Special Taxing Districts" for residents and businesses to fund infrastructure projects?

Jim McNulty's Answer: Yes - depending on how it's funded.

Oversight & Quality of Life:

- Leaf Blower Enforcement: Do you support the use of "noise code inspectors" to issue the maximum \$500 fine to homeowners and landscapers still using gas-powered leaf blowers?

Jim McNulty's Answer: No.

- The gas-powered leafblower ban last year has cost our small landscaping businesses thousands of dollars each in equipment and lost time. Some of our larger landscapers have had to reinvest tens of thousands of dollars in equipment and infrastructure. Did you vote for (or for those of you not on the council, would you have voted for) the onerous legislation that banned the use of gas-powered leafblowers for our landscaping community?

Jim McNulty's Answer: No.

- Will you vote yes or no on any capital project that adds new lanes of travel for gas-powered vehicles (excluding dedicated bus lanes)?

Jim McNulty's Answer: Yes.

- The decision to remove M83, the long-planned and never-funded eastern arterial to I270 and Great Seneca Highway's eastern counterpart, from the transportation master plan was detrimental to the growth and needs of our Clarksburg community. Did you vote to remove (or for those of you not on the council, would you have voted to remove) M83 from the transportation master plan?

Jim McNulty's Answer: No. I lobbied to have the City of Gaithersburg support keeping M83 in the County's plans.

- Do you support the recent charter amendment that reduced the County Executive's term limit from three terms down to two?

Jim McNulty's Answer: Yes.

One last question –

What do you feel is the most important issue for Upcounty business owners and residents to consider during this election season?

Jim McNulty's Answer: The most important issue to consider is which candidates are most committed to getting our economy moving again. As a City Councilmember in Gaithersburg, I have a track record of supporting investment in transportation, public safety and vital social services, attracting new jobs and business investment, and balancing our budgets without raising taxes. As a result, we've added hundreds of new jobs, grown our tax base, and seen economic growth in the City. The County is headed in the opposite direction, once again raising property taxes and passing overly restrictive regulations that limit new housing construction, drive up housing costs, and drive out new business investment. Our County government keeps coming up with new ways to make it harder and more expensive to live, work and play here, when they should be doing the opposite. Montgomery County is at a crossroads and Upcounty business owners and residents should consider which candidates are best prepared to meet this moment and make economic growth a real priority. I promise to be that kind of leader, and humbly ask for your support. The most important thing you can do is get out and vote by election day on June 23rd. Thank you.