

**Gaithersburg Germantown Upcounty Chamber**  
**County Council At-Large Candidate Questionnaire**

**Radwan Chowdhury**

Candidate, County Council At-Large

Instructions: please respond to the questions below. Please save your completed file as a PDF file that includes your name in the filename, and email back to [pross@ggchamber.org](mailto:pross@ggchamber.org). Responses will be posted *verbatim with your formatting* as 1) PDF linked on our website primary election page, and 2) PDF linked on our social platforms, in the order in which they are received. Thank you for your candidacy and for your attention to Upcounty concerns.

**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?**

**Response:** I will prioritize an "infrastructure-first" approach by advocating for immediate, shovel-ready projects that address the I-270 bottlenecks rather than relying on long-term studies. I will push for a bi-partisan coalition with the County Executive and the Governor's office to secure state funding for capacity improvements and smart-traffic management technologies, ensuring the Upcounty is no longer left behind in regional transportation planning.

**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?**

**Response:** I will streamline the permitting process to reduce the regulatory burden on small businesses and incentivize large corporate investment through targeted economic development zones. By focusing on commercial tax base expansion, we can generate the necessary revenue to maintain high-quality public services without increasing the burden on existing residents and business owners.

- **Where does the Upcounty fit into your plans?**

**Response:** The Upcounty is the engine of our future growth. My administration will shift the focus away from a centralized-county model to one that actively directs high-tech and biotech investments into the Germantown and Clarksburg hubs, leveraging existing land availability to create self-sustaining local economies.

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

**Response:** The current administration's failure to prioritize essential infrastructure has effectively throttled economic development, causing job centers like Germantown to fall significantly short of their potential.

- **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?**

**Response:** I will reverse this by integrating infrastructure development—specifically transportation and utilities—directly into our economic master plans, ensuring that infrastructure is built in tandem with commercial development rather than as an afterthought.

#### **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?**

**Response:** I will pursue a balanced approach that combines increased law enforcement presence in identified crime hotspots with targeted, community-led intervention programs to address the root causes of youth delinquency. Ensuring our business corridors remain safe and welcoming is a prerequisite for economic stability.

#### **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?**

**Response:** I support transit-oriented development that permits diverse, attainable housing stock near major job centers. By cutting red tape for developers who commit to workforce housing, we can attract and retain the talent needed to sustain a vibrant, growing economy.

## **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?**

**Response:** My vision involves creating a direct feedback loop between Montgomery College, The Universities at Shady Grove, and local industry leaders to ensure that curriculum and vocational training are aligned with the immediate needs of Upcounty employers.

- **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.**

- **Question: What is your vision for partnering with these institutions to strengthen the county’s talent pipeline?**

**Response:** My vision involves creating a direct feedback loop between Montgomery College, The Universities at Shady Grove, and local industry leaders to ensure that curriculum and vocational training are aligned with the immediate needs of Upcounty employers.

**Response:** We must create a "live-work-play" environment by fostering job growth, improving local transit, and increasing the supply of attainable housing to ensure young professionals find both career opportunities and a high quality of life right here in the Upcounty.

**Question:** What strategies will you pursue to keep young professionals in Montgomery County, especially in Upcounty communities?

**Response:** We must create a "live-work-play" environment by fostering job growth, improving local transit, and increasing the supply of attainable housing to ensure young professionals find both career opportunities and a high quality of life right here in the Upcounty.

**Question:** 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?

**Response:** Yes, I would support holding the budget to the legal minimum until a comprehensive, third-party forensic audit is completed to ensure that every tax dollar is being utilized efficiently and effectively.

**Question:** 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?

**Response:** I will clarify that this is not an attack on our educators, but a necessary defense of our taxpayers; ensuring that administrative bloat is cut *before* classroom funding is considered protects the resources intended for our students and teachers.

**Please respond YES or NO to the following questions:**

**Education:**

- Do you support the reinstatement of uniformed School Resource Officers to local high schools? **YES**
- Do you support funding MCPS above the Maintenance of Effort? **NO**
- Do you support holding MCPS to higher account for their portion of our County budget, particularly those funds above MOE? **YES**
- Would you support opening a conversation with the State Board of Education about oversight of the MCPS budget and accountability? **YES**

**Public Safety**

- Do you support the expansion of the Drone as a First Responder program further into the Upcounty? **YES**
- Facial Recognition: Will you support the Montgomery County Police Department's use of facial recognition technology for investigating violent crimes? **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? **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? **YES**
- Missing Middle Zoning: Do you support allowing duplexes and triplexes to be built in neighborhoods currently zoned strictly for single-family homes? **YES**
- Developer Incentives: Would you support "Transit-Oriented Development" that grants automatic enterprise zone status to developers building near Metro or Purple Line stations? **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? **NO**

#### **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? **YES**
- Special Taxing Districts: Do you support the creation of new "Special Taxing Districts" for residents and businesses to fund infrastructure projects? **NO**

#### **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? **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? **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)? **NO**
- 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? **NO**
- Do you support the recent charter amendment that reduced the County Executive's term limit from three terms down to two? **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?**

**Response:** The most critical issue facing our community is the urgent need to restore fiscal discipline and prioritize infrastructure-first governance. We must elect leaders who are committed to the economic vitality of the Upcounty by holding public institutions accountable for their spending and planning for long-term, sustainable growth that serves both our residents and our business community.

Thank you sincerely for this opportunity to share my vision and for the Chamber's continued dedication to the Upcounty's prosperity. I am grateful for your leadership in fostering these important conversations, and I welcome the chance to engage further on how we can build a stronger, more efficient Montgomery County together.

For more detailed information on my policy platform and the "blueprint" for our future, please visit my website at [www.radwancampaign.com](http://www.radwancampaign.com).

With gratitude,

**Radwan Chowdhury**

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