

GAN surveys County Executive candidates about positions on key issues



Responses were requested on a 10 question survey.

THE GROWTH ACTION NETWORK has asked the five candidates running for County Executive to complete a survey of their positions on topics important to Anne Arundel voters. The full survey questions and answers can be viewed at [this link](#) and will be published in the print and e-news editions of the Capital Gazette on Sunday, May 24 and on their website thereafter.

These questions have been stimulated by comments from our GAN members, our ongoing conversations with the County Council and County Executive, and the results of the [Spring 2026 survey](#) of Anne Arundel County residents by the Center for Study of Local Issues at AACC.

This is the first in a series of newsletters we will publish over the next few weeks to inform voters who the candidates are and to allow side-by-side comparisons of their positions.

Question 1:

Overdevelopment remains among the top concerns among Anne Arundel County voters. In your opinion, how well has the County balanced the need for growth with the adequacy of infrastructure to support it? What actions will you take to achieve balance?

The following four candidates, listed alphabetically, are running in the Democratic primary:

James Kitchin

The Pittman Administration has made good progress in balancing the need for growth with the adequacy of infrastructure to support it. When County Executive Pittman took office there was a backlog of infrastructure projects due to decades of underinvestment by previous administrations. I am proud of the work we have done to begin to catch up and am honored to have been part of the team to do it. In his first budget we created the Permanent Public Improvement fund to make real investments in catching up our school, public safety, and road infrastructure. We are better off today because of those investments. But there is still more work to be done. We have not done a good enough job

at ensuring that private, for-profit developers contribute adequately to the infrastructure upgrades that their projects make necessary. This means that even as the county invests in projects to catch us up on where we need to be, the new growth that is happening is disrupting the balance even further. It doesn't have to be that way, and getting this balance right - so we grow in a sustainable, smart way that works for the people of this county - will be a year one priority of my administration.

My administration will work to: (a) create a true no-net-loss of forest policy, (b) bring traffic studies in house so that the engineers performing the work are paid by the people instead of the developer, (c) require bike, pedestrian, and transit upgrades when new development occurs, (d) repeal the "adjacency" loophole that allows market-rate housing to be built in school districts where the schools are already overcrowded, and (e) update our impact fee schedule (if this hasn't happened yet) to make sure the development that is happening pays for itself and isn't being subsidized by the taxpayers.

Kyle Nembhard

The County has a history of poorly balancing the need for infrastructure to support development.

One of the first actions I would take is to impose a moratorium and assess the infrastructure needs relative to all development proposals. Based on that assessment, development proposals will be allowed to advance based on their compatibility with associated infrastructure capacity. Other development proposals will be re-evaluated and assessed for developer impact.

Allison Pickard

Anne Arundel County has tried to strike a middle ground between accommodating growth and protecting infrastructure. But make no mistake, we are facing a housing affordability crisis that is pushing young people out of the market while making it incredibly difficult for older adults to downsize and remain in the community. There is no other candidate in this race with a stronger track record or clearer commitment to making housing more affordable and accessible for the families and workers who call Anne Arundel County home. We cannot give in to the NIMBY politics of yesteryear that created the crisis we find ourselves in. But many residents understandably feel the balance has tilted too far toward approving development before roads, schools, and utilities are fully ready.

We have one of Maryland's strongest Adequate Public Facilities (APF) systems. New projects are tested against school capacity, traffic impacts, water/sewer availability, and other infrastructure benchmarks before receiving approval. I have also been a strong advocate for revitalization efforts in already-developed corridors and town centers which is a much more sustainable long-term strategy instead of continued greenfield sprawl. Traffic, overcrowding in schools, strains on our infrastructure and more are all legitimate concerns that must be addressed. That requires action. Unfortunately, because the conversation around Housing is so difficult, many politicians choose to do nothing. I believe doing nothing will only exacerbate these challenges. I've spent 8-years having the hard conversations and forging ahead on Housing, championing clear best practices like transit-oriented development that gets cars off our roadways, promoting redevelopment of underutilized spaces so that we can fight blight and preserve greenspace, and implementing mixed-use developments that create more walkable, safe communities where residents have access to the services that make for vibrant communities. Every step on that path to progress has required tremendous care and many emotional conversations with residents who are deeply invested in their neighborhoods. I believe it is essential we continue moving the ball forward, rather than taking the easy way out and choosing to do nothing. Whether it's our children trying to purchase their first homes, or our parents hoping to retire in dignity, we owe them progress.

I have been the leading advocate for building more affordable housing in Anne Arundel County, particularly workforce housing, transit-oriented development, and community

revitalization efforts. Most recently, I fought off Republican attempts to repeal our Workforce Housing policies — policies designed to ensure that the people who work here can actually afford to live here. As County Executive, I will create a Housing for All plan that cuts unnecessary red tape and reforms the permitting process so residential, commercial, and redevelopment projects can move forward more efficiently, without sacrificing community input or smart planning.

Streamlining approvals is critical to delivering housing faster, reducing costs, and making projects financially viable. I will also pursue housing solutions, including expanding workforce housing set-asides, creating down-payment and rental assistance programs, and partnering with nonprofit developers and the state to pilot educator housing initiatives near schools and transit. These targeted strategies will help ensure that our workforce can afford to live close to where they work, strengthening school communities and improving student outcomes, while also serving as a much needed pressure release on our transportation grid.

We also need to build a more resilient and sustainable future for every community and ecosystem here in Anne Arundel County. As County Executive, I will invest in climate resilience and flood prevention, work to protect our incredible green spaces and waterways, improve our stormwater management systems, expand clean energy and sustainability initiatives, as well as strengthen our disaster preparedness planning. As the Trump Administration pulls back, it is squarely on us to protect our communities and tackle environmental issues head on. I will prioritize the long-term protection of existing natural areas through strategic land conservation, strong zoning and land-use policies, as well as continued investment in park maintenance and stewardship. Preserving what we already have is just as important as acquiring new land, and that means ensuring our parks and forests are properly funded, staffed, and managed for long-term sustainability and public access. I am also committed to expanding natural areas by investing in green space acquisition, restoring degraded lands and waterways, and advancing tree planting and forest conservation efforts to meet our long-term canopy goals. We must be creative and committed to facilitating public access to our natural waterways when so much of our shoreline is privately owned.

Developing public-private partnerships and utilizing our Department of Recreation and Parks is vital to creating public access to enjoy our incredible waterways and greenspaces. Partnerships with state agencies, land trusts, and community organizations will help maximize these impacts and leverage outside funding to create and maintain resources and public access

Pete Smith

Infrastructure building and development take place over decades-long timeframes, and the condition that Anne Arundel now finds itself in will take years to remediate. Over several decades, the source of funding for infrastructure has shifted. Where once Anne Arundel received significant resources from the State of Maryland for schools, roads and more, the state has cut back its commitment and the burden has fallen more heavily on the local level. The predominant philosophy in Anne Arundel during that time has been to keep taxes low, and to consider caps on taxation which limit revenues and investment. Over the last few years, Anne Arundel leaders made some attempts to bridge the gap, including by altering funding mechanisms for capital programs. We changed the terms of our general obligation bonds from 20 years to 30 years, lowering annual payments and making more money available for borrowing. But still, many residents feel frustration over traffic, and the recent announcement of a sewer moratorium in the northwest portion of the county including Hanover shows that elements of our infrastructure are lagging behind our needs. Overall, Anne Arundel County remains a highly livable community with an excellent quality of life for all, but there is without doubt room for improvement in balancing residential and commercial growth with infrastructure needs.

Our past actions have constituted only a small investment to correct the imbalance we face. To move forward, we must take creative steps and turn to some solutions that we have not done previously. As County Executive, I will review our tax rates and make

recommendations for appropriate levels to meet our needs. I also know that we can leverage private-sector investment through Public-Private Partnership arrangements for roads, sewage and other investments. Other Maryland counties have used this funding mechanism more aggressively and creatively than we have, and we can make progress in our backlog by using it more. We must also leverage our state partners to bring more investment back to Anne Arundel.

Housing and commercial development will continue to take place in Anne Arundel, and growth in our economic base is needed to provide the resources that will fund our needs in education, public safety, and other areas. Much of that growth should come from redevelopment of our aging commercial areas. Anne Arundel County must catalogue underutilized properties with high-impact redevelopment potential and compile a project pipeline that includes older shopping centers and commercial districts, so that redevelopment is facilitated in areas with existing infrastructure. My administration will fully support transit oriented development designed to take advantage of existing rail networks and provide community benefits and commercial activity that is walkable

Dave Crawford – Running unopposed in the Republican Primary

Frankly, the County has not balanced growth and infrastructure adequately. For too long, development has outpaced the roads, schools, stormwater systems, and public services needed to support it. The result: overcrowded classrooms, congested corridors, and flooded neighborhoods. Residents feel the consequences every day — and they're right to be frustrated.

As County Executive, I will enact a rigorous Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) with real teeth — no project moves forward unless schools, roads, and stormwater infrastructure can demonstrably handle the new demand. I will tie development approvals directly to infrastructure capacity metrics, commission annual infrastructure adequacy reports, and publish findings publicly so residents can hold their government accountable. Redevelopment of underutilized sites within existing infrastructure footprints will be prioritized over greenfield sprawl. Growth can be good for our county — but only when it serves existing residents, not at their expense.

Next GAN Board meeting is May 27, All members are welcome to observe and comment. See calendar for link.

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