**BACKGROUND**

Anne Arundel County is a great County and a great place to live, for most of us.

There is one thing we lack - affordable, quality housing units to serve our County’s low and moderate income population and our homeless. Currently, the Housing Commission of Anne Arundel County has over 4,600 families on its waiting list for public housing and almost 6,000 on its waiting list for assistance in the payment of rent. The waiting lists are now closed because the Commission cannot meet the existing need with existing resources.

To rent a two-bedroom apartment in this County, a family needs to earn an annual income of $56,440, which for a single income producer means an hourly wage of over $27.00. A minimum wage worker would need to work 107 hours each week to afford a two bedroom apartment.\* More than half of our low and moderate income households are paying more for housing than they can afford.\*\* These households are just one unexpected event, such as a medical issue, reduced work hours, or a car breaking down, from eviction and homelessness. Affordable housing is an important tool in preventing homelessness.

For additional information, see <https://www.aaahcoalition.org>.

\* Source: National Low Income Housing Coalition Out of Reach 2018. <http://nlihc.org/oor/maryland>

\*\* Source: American Community Survey, PUMS, 2012-2016.

**CANDIDATE QUESTIONS**

**Question 1:**

What is your view of the need for affordable housing in Anne Arundel County?

**Question 2:**

If elected, will you support an increase in affordable housing in Anne Arundel County? If so, what priority will you give it?

There are many different types of tools to address the unmet need for affordable housing. Jurisdictions across Maryland and the nation have successfully used some of the following to increase the supply of affordable units:

**Funding to encourage the development of affordable dwelling units.** Examples includecreating a local housing trust fund and increasing the amount of money from the general fund designated specifically to developing affordable housing.

**Tenant rental assistance to make housing more affordable.** Examples include increasingthe amount of money available to help families lower what they must pay out of pocket for rent and providing funding to pay for down payments for purchases and security deposits for rentals.

**Land use and zoning incentives.** Examples include requiring the inclusion of moderately priced dwelling units (called MPDU’s) in residential developments and allowing affordable housing in more zoning districts, with increased density provided for the use.

**Reduced or waived fees to reduce development or operating costs.** Examples include reducing the cost to obtain permits, reducing or eliminating impact fees for affordable units, and providing for agreements to allow for a set payment in lieu of otherwise applicable taxes for a specified time frame (called PILOT’s).

**Question 3:**

Which tools, these or others, do you believe are the most effective and which would you use?

Many people support the concept of affordable housing in theory, but when a particular site is chosen for the housing, one with good schools, public transportation, and employment opportunities, the surrounding neighborhood comes out in force to argue against it. They do not want affordable housing in their backyards. NIMBYism presents a particularly difficult obstacle to producing affordable housing. Local elected officials are often inundated with protests from their constituents.

**Question 4:**

If elected, how will you deal with neighborhood opposition to an affordable housing project?

**Question 5:**

The homeless in our County typically earn less than $19,950 a year. Providing affordable housing for this group is just part of the challenge. In addition to an inability to pay, homeless individuals and families face a myriad of other challenges, including credit issues, background check obstacles, mental health issues, substance abuse problems, disabilities, lack of transportation and child care, and more.

If elected, what would you do to get more of our homeless into a stable home environment and how would you address the other challenges they face?

**Question 6:**

Is there anything else you would like to say about affordable housing or homelessness in Anne Arundel County?