

2023 County Board Primary Candidates Questionnaire: Climate Change and Sustainability

Name: Natalie U. Roy

- 1. Addressing Climate Change:** *In its March 20 report, the International Panel on Climate Change stated, "There is a rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a livable and sustainable future for all (very high confidence)." The scientific consensus is that GHG emissions must be reduced by 50% by 2030 to avoid the worst consequences of climate change. As a County Board member what policies and initiatives would you pursue to ensure that Arlington rapidly reduces its GHG emissions?*

Climate change poses an existential threat to humanity. Reducing the County's contribution to climate change is one of my top priorities.

I began my career with the Clean Water Action Project and the League of Conservation Voters. Later, I ran the Pollution Prevention Roundtable (nine+ years) and the Clean Water Network (seven years), and spent six years as a recycling planner and advocate at the state and municipal level and in industry. I have a deep commitment to a wide range of environmental priorities. Climate change, however, presents an even higher level of threat not only to public health and our environment, but to the survival of human civilization and perhaps even our species.

Environmental Justice communities in the United States and around the world are being impacted first and worst, and this will only accelerate. At the same time, people will not be denied heat in the winter, air conditioning in the summer, light at night, mobility on demand, and access to electronic media at all times. Moreover, low-income households pay a disproportionate share of their budgets on their electricity and heating bills and for gasoline. Maintaining affordable energy services while eliminating greenhouse gas emissions is arguably the most important challenge of our time.

I would work with the other Board members and staff to take the following actions:

- Convert all of our county fleets from gasoline and diesel to electric drive;
- Make transportation more affordable by improving public transit, expanding environmentally-sound bus service, increasing protected bike lanes, and improving pedestrian routes; and
- Expand electric vehicle charging for multi-unit buildings.

- 2. Sustainable Development:** How would you advance urban development in Arlington that supports less energy intensive lifestyles and helps advance our housing affordability goals while protecting tree canopy, providing equitable access to open spaces and nature, and effectively managing stormwater runoff?

My action oriented and comprehensive environmental agenda would include:

- Protecting and advancing transit-oriented development;
- Advancing bicycling and pedestrian friendly neighborhoods and commercial areas;
- Exploring stronger tree canopy and open space requirements;
- Studying and implementing lot coverage reform; and

- Bringing back curbside glass recycling.

Arlington has been a national leader in its implementation of transit-oriented development, the creation of bike and pedestrian friendly neighborhoods and commercial areas, and the protection of our tree canopy and open spaces. Arlington's work in these three areas is under constant threat of reversal due to development.

I will work to maintain and improve transit-oriented development by fighting for the affordable 3- and 4-bedroom units near transit corridors, especially needed by low- and moderate-income families in the County. I also will explore the feasibility of converting empty commercial space for residential and other purposes. I will also work to add more protected bike lanes and safer pedestrian routes throughout the County.

I will explore programs that provide incentives to developers and to homeowners to protect our County's precious tree canopy. In addition, I will push to leverage the creation of new parks and open space from all new large developments.

Finally, I will work to bring back curbside glass recycling. As a long-time recycling planner and advocate, I strongly believe we should be recycling glass county-wide and not just through a drop-off center.

3. Decarbonization of Transportation: Transportation accounts for almost 40 percent of Arlington's GHG emissions and contributes to poor air quality and congestion. What would be your plan for creating more sustainable transportation options that would sharply reduce reliance on single-occupancy vehicles with shifts to biking, transit, and zero emission vehicles?

As stated in #2, I am a proponent of protected bike lanes and safer pedestrian routes. Protecting and advancing transit-oriented development, advancing bicycling and pedestrian friendly neighborhoods and commercial areas are top priorities of mine. I am also supportive of converting our County fleets to electric drive and adapting as many of our county buildings as possible to using renewable energy sources.