

Andrew Einsmann

Questions for 2022 ACT Scorecard

Toll Lanes

1. Will you oppose all plans for toll lanes built by "public-private partnerships" on I-270, the Beltway, or the American Legion Bridge?

I do not believe toll lanes are the answer but might be a better option than we have now. The problem with toll lanes even with studies it is difficult to get an honest assessment of how many people will use them. There have also been a lot of problems with readers of the automatic toll systems. We need more lanes of traffic yes and if we can not afford to do it without tolls, then yes tolls have to be the option.

MARC

2. Should all-day two-way MARC service be the county's highest-priority goal for rail transit expansion in the I-270 corridor? Do you support a request for capital improvements to increase the number of trains per week as a high priority in the transportation priorities letter? That is a tough one. I think it is one of the two. Yes it is the best option currently available. I would like to see the CCT be a rail service as well and we have more transit hubs in the Upcounty region. Back in 2011-2013, this was approved at the federal level, maybe we can get it back again. People love the idea of bus rapid transit but in reality I do not think people will ride it.

Halting construction of new state highways and arterials

3. Do you support removing new county and state highways and arterials from county plans, including M83, Observation Drive Extended, the Norbeck/Georgia grade-separated interchange, Montrose Parkway East, and the 355 Bypass in Clarksburg? No, No, No. The philosophy of people are going to just have to use mass transit does not work. If people do not live near reliable mass transit and they have the ability to take a car they will not take mass transit. Clarksburg was promised M83 and we have done a disservice to them by not provide it. For 15 years, I have promoted reversible lanes HOT lanes on 270 Frederick that lead directly into the Shady Grove Metro parking lot. This will provide people direct access to reliable transit options. A lot of our traffic still is pass through traffic so let them take the Metro on through as opposed to our roads makes sense.

Land Use

4. If your only choice was whether or not to approve Thrive 2050 as currently written, would you vote yes or no? I would sent it back to have some sort of staging criteria for schools. We can not overcrowd our schools and that framework is not in the document. Once that framework is there I would approve it. It is a guideline and a document that will need to be fine tuned by the local level master plans.

Pedestrian Safety/balanced transportation/climate change

5. Do you support the reallocation of existing road space from cars to sidewalks, bike lanes, and bus-only lanes, even if it might cause vehicle delay and/or reduce parking? This is not a one size fits all question either. I can not really think of place in District 7 where this would

be a necessary one or the other situation. In Montgomery Village, our most densely populated area we can still add bike lanes and not disrupt traffic but they have a major parking shortage so it would not make sense there. They need more creative parking solutions. Now, in Urban areas such as Bethesda, Silver Spring, the densely populated new developments down 355 and to some extent Germantown Center, Rio, Kentlands and Crown if we would establish parking areas around the parameters and have town centers as much as two or 3 square blocks designated for only bike lanes and pedestrian traffic and increase bike lanes in these areas then yes it makes sense. If there are buses that ridership supports bus-only lanes they yes here as well.

Candidate Name: Paul Geller
Montgomery County Council District 7

Questions for 2022 ACT Scorecard

Toll Lanes

1. Will you oppose all plans for toll lanes built by "public-private partnerships" on I-270, the Beltway, or the American Legion Bridge?

Answer:

Yes. I am in favor of growing jobs right here in Montgomery County, Maryland so our residents do not have to travel long distances to get to work. This will relieve some congestion on our roads. Toll lanes are also extremely inequitable. Two reversible, free lanes should be required on I-270 as well as at least one additional lane each way north of the beginning/end of the HOV lanes. We would also need to ensure full partnership with Virginia before anything can be done on the Beltway or American Legion bridge since their HOT lanes end one mile before the bridge into Maryland.

MARC

2. Should all-day two-way MARC service be the county's highest-priority goal for rail transit expansion in the I-270 corridor? Do you support a request for capital improvements to increase the number of trains per week as a high priority in the transportation priorities letter?

Answer: MARC service is a terrific help to our residents, and increasing the number of trains would be good if it will be utilized all-day. As long as the rails are available for MARC to use on an expanded schedule, and the effects on traffic at railroad crossings in downtown Gaithersburg, Randolph Road in North Bethesda, Linden Lane in Silver Spring, and elsewhere are minimal, I would support it. There is the additional challenge of the humpback bridge in Gaithersburg that is limiting to a single track with no easy resolution to expand.

Halting construction of new state highways and arterials

3. Do you support removing new county and state highways and arterials from county plans, including M83, Observation Drive Extended, the Norbeck/Georgia grade-separated interchange, Montrose Parkway East, and the 355 Bypass in Clarksburg?

Answer: More evidence is needed for all of these projects, and the affected communities must have greater input in the process and have their voices heard.

Land Use

4. If your only choice was whether or not to approve Thrive 2050 as currently written, would you vote yes or no?

Answer: As it is currently written, I would not approve it. There are several items clearly missing from it: 1) more community input, especially from traditional disenfranchised communities, 2) more emphasis on the environment, 3) more consideration for suburban and rural communities which are not currently reflected, 4) more care given to seniors who wish to age in place. This was a plan created in a pre-pandemic world, the long-term effects of which were not considered and this plan must reflect the changes in how we shop, how/where we work, where we learn and the space people desire in their living environment.

Pedestrian Safety/balanced transportation/climate change

5. Do you support the reallocation of existing road space from cars to sidewalks, bike lanes, and bus-only lanes, even if it might cause vehicle delay and/or reduce parking?

Answer: This depends on the specific road space in question. If the space is available, and will not impede traffic flow, I am open to considering it.

Candidate Name:

Dawn Luedtke

Questions for 2022 ACT Scorecard

Toll Lanes

1. Will you oppose all plans for toll lanes built by "public-private partnerships" on I-270, the Beltway, or the American Legion Bridge? My position with respect to the toll lanes expansion on I-270 is that while expansion of the roadway may be necessary, and tolls may be needed to recoup some of the cost of the expansion, the proposal as it stands contains prohibitively expensive tolls that create an inequitable situation and do not truly increase access. If the point of expanding the roadways was to alleviate congestion and alleviate diversion onto many of the county's secondary roads that were not designed to accommodate such a heavy flow of traffic, this is not the way to do it. Given procurement and other contractual delays and impediments on this project, this will be something that all elected officials must maintain a careful watch over and work towards more equitable solutions. Road expansion cannot be the only solution to existing traffic problems and should only be done in parallel with commitment to other non-vehicular transit projects – again, seeking equity, balance, and climate friendly solutions.

MARC

2. Should all-day two-way MARC service be the county's highest-priority goal for rail transit expansion in the I-270 corridor? Do you support a request for capital improvements to increase the number of trains per week as a high priority in the transportation priorities letter?

I strongly support all-day two-way MARC service and expansion of MARC service to include an additional line. As a former MARC rider when I lived in Baltimore City and needed to get to Washington, DC on a frequent basis, the service was invaluable. A needs assessment should be done to determine priorities for highest commuter usage and volume times, but should maintain service throughout the workday due to flex schedules and other non-traditional work hours in order to best serve the needs of our residents. Failure to maintain trains in the middle of the workday means that commuting parents cannot rely on MARC if they need to return to their children's school or daycare to pick up a sick child, or for other school/childcare issues that arise.

Halting construction of new state highways and arterials

3. Do you support removing new county and state highways and arterials from county plans, including M83, Observation Drive Extended, the Norbeck/Georgia grade-separated interchange, Montrose Parkway East, and the 355 Bypass in Clarksburg?

My decisions related to county and state highways on county plans will directly relate to the needs and preferences of the residents in and around where the construction will take place. To the extent that, for example, the residents surrounding any of those areas are eager to have those solutions put into place, I believe the decision-making should include their voices, along with other traditional factors such as cost, utility, environmental impact, equity, etc.

Land Use

4. If your only choice was whether or not to approve Thrive 2050 as currently written, would you vote yes or no?

Thrive 2050 is a guidance document. It is not law. It is not a statute nor a regulation. Having been on the authoring side of such guidance documents at the State level, and knowing the difficulty of trying to make them all-encompassing, I likely would have approved it knowing that it's something that can always be revised and updated as new developments take place and new technologies come to light. I would also feel quite comfortable raising opposition to a piece of Thrive 2050 where the applicability of it does not match the project at hand or is not in the best interest of the county and the residents. At that time, in such a circumstance, I would again raise that Thrive 2050 is a guidance document, there are circumstances present which make portions of Thrive 2050 inapplicable or ill-advised, and I would request modification or deviation from Thrive 2050 based on that analysis.

Pedestrian Safety/balanced transportation/climate change

5. Do you support the reallocation of existing road space from cars to sidewalks, bike lanes, and bus-only lanes, even if it might cause vehicle delay and/or reduce parking?

I strongly support expanded sidewalks, creation of shoulders and/or dedicated bike lanes where none exist, and bus-only lanes where appropriate. I want flexible options that increase pedestrian, bike and bus access but do not create new problems. This will require compromise and a balanced approach. For example, on some roads it may not be feasible to have a fully dedicated bus lane at all times. There should be the opportunity to have designated bus lanes during high volume commuting time to expedite bus service and incentivize public transit usage.

Paul Schwartz
Candidate for County Council District 7
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Questions for 2022 ACT Scorecard

Toll Lanes

1. Will you oppose all plans for toll lanes built by "public-private partnerships" on I-270, the Beltway, or the American Legion Bridge?

Yes and because of some very specific reasons. First, I don't think expanding I-270 and I-495 is the best use of taxpayer money in addressing traffic congestion. I think the money would have been better spent investing in public transportation. Moreover, I did not see in the expansion plans adequate plans to address the exit traffic on Georgia Ave., Colesville Road, New Hampshire Ave., or 355 since expanding I-270 will undoubtedly increase the amount of traffic even if the traffic congestion on the highway is reduced. Further, I believe that traffic congestion on I-270 can be addressed with no impact to taxpayers with lane reversal which can be done now after a study is performed to determine when lane reversal will have the most impact. Lastly, handing over toll collection responsibility to the private sector comes with some risk regarding the profit motive. Whereas the goal of government is to provide service, the goal of the private sector is to seek a profit. I would hate to see \$50 tolls as is rumored.

MARC

2. Should all-day two-way MARC service be the county's highest-priority goal for rail transit expansion in the I-270 corridor? Do you support a request for capital improvements to increase the number of trains per week as a high priority in the transportation priorities letter?

Certainly. As I mentioned in question 1, I fully support investment in public transportation as a means of obviating the need to invest in more vehicular traffic.

Halting construction of new state highways and arterials

3. Do you support removing new county and state highways and arterials from county plans, including M83, Observation Drive Extended, the Norbeck/Georgia grade-separated interchange, Montrose Parkway East, and the 355 Bypass in Clarksburg?

If I read this question correctly, it looks like you are asking me if I am in favor of an across the board rejection of county and state highway improvements. Before I would support removing any of these specific projects from the county plans, I would want to understand the impact on the individual communities, the community's reaction to that impact, and how the benefits outweigh the negative impact and costs. I am not knowledgeable enough on these particular projects to make that assessment now and determine what other options are available than

these major projects, but my approach is to determine just that as a member of the County Council. So my answer to this question is I would prefer to seek alternatives, but would not rule this out without further study by me.

Land Use

4. If your only choice was whether or not to approve Thrive 2050 as currently written, would you vote yes or no?

At this time, I would vote NO. The term used most often to describe Thrive 2050 is “aspirational” which means to me it provides the “what” needs to be done with very little detail as to the “how” and “by whom” it will get done. Without the needed detail, giving blanket approval would not be in the best interests of the community members directly impacted. I will tell you that County District 7 has some 16 individual neighborhoods and one size does not fit all. There are areas like Damascus that scream for more transportation to help small businesses and other areas, such as Sandy Spring/Ashton, that are extremely concerned about maintaining the rural character of their community. Thrive 2050 has many good ideas in it, but I believe that it places a great deal of emphasis on preparing the county for the anticipated 200,000 additional residents in thirty years but to the detriment of the current residents and the need to more fully balance development with the environment.

Pedestrian Safety/balanced transportation/climate change

5. Do you support the reallocation of existing road space from cars to sidewalks, bike lanes, and bus-only lanes, even if it might cause vehicle delay and/or reduce parking?

This should not be a binary, either or, question. There certainly are locations where this should be done and other locations at which roadway expansion and redesign of certain intersections would be more appropriate. The important point is that whichever is most appropriate for any particular road or intersection at any particular location, safe pedestrian and bicycle pathways is paramount and should be a priority for the County Council.