

Action Committee for Transit
Questionnaire for Candidates for County Council, District 4

1) How do we transform the auto-oriented suburbs of District 4 into livable and walkable communities?

This is not a simple question. This proposes a policy and blueprint of social engineering as a reaction to poor planning and development by the very body that created these now obsolete communities in the first place. The citizens that bought into these neighborhoods have a good deal both financially and emotionally invested in them. A compounding factor is that in many cases, this transformation requires people to restructure their communities wholesale well before they have turned a complete cycle that would warrant urban renewal. Regardless of the planning that goes into it, ultimately the livability of a community is up to its citizens. The best that planners can do is to set proper outlines for development and transportation. First, high density pure residential development, especially that buttresses arterial roads must be halted. Non retail business or industry that can anchor communities must be established and then developed around. Patchwork, mixed method, mass transit must be replaced with a uniform and comprehensive system. Most importantly, citizens must approve of any self sustaining community projects because this proposes a radical change to everyones lifestyle.

2) Do you support building the light rail Inner Purple Line from Bethesda to New Carrollton, as recommended by County Executive Leggett and the County Council?

I strongly support E/W mass transit projects as long as they are not piece meal. I have seen various proposals and if you are referring to the one where it is nice light rail trains in the western districts and big nasty busses on the east side... no thanks! We would like some nice stuff too please!

3) All bridges over US 29 have been designed so that light rail could run in the median of the highway. There are several possible routes for a connection from White Oak to the Red Line or Purple Line. Would you support detailed study of running a light rail line that connects White Oak to the Metro system and then runs in the median of US 29 to Burnsville, as a future project after the Purple Line and Corridor Cities Transit-way?

Bridges over rt.29 or running along rt. 29? No I would not support a study after the Purple lines or Corridor Cities Transitway... I WANT IT NOW! There is a major problem with the easements that I believe you are describing. They do not continue past Burnt Mills. Four Corners is a transportation nightmare and that is an area that needs to be a priority.

4) What should the county do to increase transit rider-ship?

Put transit where the people are! It makes no sense that Metro stops train service in Glenmont when there are thousands living in garden apartments and town-homes in Aspen Hill and Olney- or in Silver Spring when White Oak and Burtonsville are exploding. I don't understand why all of the proposed light rail service projects are located in western districts. Isn't our tax money in District 4 deserving of equal services? We could also make getting onto transit a less trying ordeal. I was told by a community leader that they discontinued the buses from Four Corners to Forest Glen (a Metro stop designed primarily for buses) because of low rider-ship. There was low rider-ship because there WAS NO COVERED BUS STOP ON RT 29! I regularly see people standing out in the elements on Bel Pre rd. and Georgia Ave. because the bus shelters are too small. We could also try giving the rider a different experience than just sitting in the same traffic except with a crowd. Schedules could also be modified so that people who take transit to go somewhere will not have to take a cab from the nearest hub to get home.

5) County master plans have stated a policy of focusing development around mass transit stations. Much development has occurred that has poor transit access, yet the county's planning also deserves much of the credit for the emergence of Bethesda and the revival of Silver Spring as centers of activity.

A) What smart growth projects near Metro stations do you support even though they have had opposition?

I wholly disagree with the premise of the question. Bethesda has been in the process of rebuilding for 25 years since the traffic re-alignments of the E/W highway. It has had the benefit of it's zip-code, proximity to the district, proximity to mass transit (both inherent) as well as the economic engines of N.I.H. Uniformed Services hospital, and, Geico. Also, the Council has conveniently avoided zoning in MPDU housing therefor the area is not subject to the growing pains that usually come with economic integration. Silver Spring is heavily subsidized and is not truly self sustaining. Much of this is due to poor planning with having the anchor businesses and merchants bisected with major automobile arteries. Access is not as inviting as it should be. Having said that, if the Shady Grove tract can truly be developed in a economically and environmentally friendly way, it seems like a viable project. I see no other Metro accessible proposals that are currently being proffered.

B) Do you support a requirement that development described as "transit-oriented," such as the proposed Germantown and Gaithersburg West master plans, may only be constructed after rail transit access is built?

Not necessarily, They could be build concurrently but transit funds must be guaranteed.

5) Do you believe that the decision by Governors Ehrlich and O'Malley to build the Inter-county Connector was wise or unwise?

The timing, alignment, awarding of service contracts, expense, etc. all point to a budget busting blunder of biblical proportion. If the true purpose of this road was to connect the I270 corridor with BWI, Annapolis, and Laurel, then someone needs a lesson in how to read a map. If this was intended as an asphalt string of political payoffs... good job guys! The simple upgrading of E/W arteries already in use, combined with better community planning and permitting, would have sufficed.

Name of Candidate ANDREW L. PADULA

Signature Date

3/23/09

Please return by March 24, 2009, to Action Committee for Transit, P. O. Box 7074,
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