



## 2026 Candidate Questionnaire

**Candidate Name:** Shawn McIntosh

**Position:** County Council

**District:** 5

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### **What is your position regarding the Councilmanic Courtesy norm?**

I respect the importance of district representation, but councilmanic courtesy should not give any single council member unchecked control over land-use decisions. We are one Baltimore County and should be making our planning decisions with that in mind. The Council has a collective responsibility to ensure that decisions support long-term planning, transparency, and fairness across all communities.

### **What concrete steps will you take to address the acute shortage of affordable housing in Baltimore County? Please include your position on the current Urban-Rural Demarcation Line.**

"I support maintaining the Urban-Rural Demarcation Line (URDL) as a critical tool for preventing sprawl, protecting farmland and natural resources, and ensuring development occurs where infrastructure already exists. Expanding the URDL would increase sprawl and strain county resources.

To address the affordable housing shortage, I would focus on increasing housing supply within the URDL through smart growth strategies. This includes encouraging mixed-income and higher-density housing near transit and commercial corridors, updating zoning to allow a wider range of housing types, and redeveloping underutilized commercial properties.

I also support strengthening inclusionary housing policies so new developments include affordable units, partnering with nonprofit housing developers, and prioritizing the preservation of existing affordable housing. Housing policy should be coordinated with school capacity, transportation, and infrastructure to ensure sustainable growth."



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### **What resources are under-utilized in our County that could be used to increase economic growth?**

"Baltimore County has many strengths, but some of our greatest opportunities lie in resources that are currently under-utilized.

First, we have underused commercial and office spaces, particularly along aging commercial corridors. With the shift in work patterns and retail, many of these properties could be redeveloped into mixed-use hubs that include housing, small businesses, and community amenities.

Second, the County has a strong network of community colleges, universities, and workforce training programs, but we can better connect those institutions with local employers to strengthen workforce pipelines in high-demand fields like healthcare, technology, and skilled trades.

Third, Baltimore County's natural assets, including farmland, parks, and waterways, are an economic resource that can support agritourism, local food systems, and outdoor recreation economies if we invest in them strategically.

Finally, we can do more to support local entrepreneurs and small businesses, particularly in our rural and historically underserved communities, by improving access to capital, technical assistance, and streamlined permitting.

By better leveraging these existing assets, we can promote economic growth that is both sustainable and inclusive."

### **What is the greatest need in the district you are seeking to represent and what are your plans to address it?**

"One of the greatest needs in District 5 is a more transparent and community-centered planning process that addresses our growing affordability crisis while protecting the character of our communities and ensuring sustainable growth. Residents want to preserve what makes our



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area special, its rural character, farmland, and natural resources, while also making sure our schools, roads, and infrastructure can keep up with growth.

At the same time, we are facing a real affordability crisis, particularly when it comes to housing. Addressing that challenge requires thoughtful planning and collaboration so that we create housing opportunities that meet community needs without sacrificing the qualities that make our neighborhoods strong.

Too often, the County brings the community into the planning process late in the game, asking residents to react to plans that are already largely developed. I believe we would get much better outcomes if the County engaged communities earlier; inviting them to help envision solutions rather than simply respond to finished proposals. When residents are partners from the beginning, we can develop solutions that address affordability, infrastructure, environmental protection, and quality of life together.

As a Council member, I will push for earlier and more meaningful community engagement, protect the Urban-Rural Demarcation Line, and strengthen tools like Adequate Public Facilities laws so development does not outpace infrastructure.

Ultimately, my goal is to ensure that planning decisions are guided by community input, sound data, and a shared commitment to meeting our affordability challenges while preserving what makes Baltimore County special."