



2026 Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name: Aaron J. Barnett

Position: Baltimore County Council

District: 4

What is your position regarding the Councilmanic Courtesy norm?

Councilmanic Courtesy should be respected, not abused. In the union world, we respect leadership and local voices—but we don't rubber-stamp bad deals. I believe in honoring the district councilmember's role while demanding transparency, accountability, and fairness. If something hurts workers, neighborhoods, or the broader county, it's our responsibility to speak up and do what's right for the people.

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 Dividing Line.

Affordable housing is one of the biggest challenges facing Baltimore County, and it won't be solved by talk alone.

I strongly support keeping the Urban-Rural Demarcation Line right where it is. Pushing development past it raises taxes, strains schools and infrastructure, and hurts the environment—without creating truly affordable housing. We should be building where the infrastructure already exists, not sprawling into rural communities.

What I will do:

Focus new housing inside the URDL, near transit, jobs, and services

Require developers to include real affordable units, not just make promises

Use county-owned land to build housing that stays affordable long-term

Speed up approvals and reduce fees only for projects that meet affordability standards

Protect and preserve existing affordable housing so families and seniors aren't pushed out

Expand support for renters, seniors, people with disabilities, and first-time homebuyers

I believe in smart growth, strong neighborhoods, and accountability. Affordable housing should work for working people—and that means building responsibly, protecting communities, and putting people before profits.



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

Baltimore County already has the tools for economic growth—we just don't use them well.

Workforce talent: Our union workers, veterans, and young people are underutilized. We should expand apprenticeships, vocational training, and school-to-career pipelines tied directly to local jobs.

Vacant and underused properties: Empty storefronts, aging industrial sites, and county-owned buildings can be turned into small-business hubs, light manufacturing, and mixed-use development.

Small and minority-owned businesses: Too many are locked out of county contracts. We need simpler procurement, technical assistance, and set-asides so local businesses can grow and hire locally.

Transit and infrastructure inside the URDL: We should better leverage existing transit, utilities, and commercial corridors to attract employers instead of chasing sprawl.

Community institutions: Our unions, nonprofits, faith groups, and community associations are economic engines that can support job training, entrepreneurship, and neighborhood revitalization when fully partnered with the County.

Bottom line: invest in people, reuse what we already have, and make the County work for local workers and businesses—not just big developers.

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

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Workforce talent: Our union workers, veterans, and young people are underutilized. We should expand apprenticeships, vocational training, and school-to-career pipelines tied directly to local jobs.

Vacant and underused properties: Empty storefronts, aging industrial sites, and county-owned buildings should be repurposed into small-business hubs, light manufacturing, and mixed-use spaces.

Small and minority-owned businesses: Too many are locked out of county contracts. We need simpler procurement, real technical assistance, and meaningful set-asides so local businesses can grow and hire locally.

Transit and infrastructure inside the URDL: We must better leverage existing transit, utilities, and commercial corridors instead of chasing sprawl.

Community institutions: Our unions, nonprofits, faith groups, and community associations are untapped economic engines that can drive job training, entrepreneurship, and neighborhood revitalization when fully partnered with the County.



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