

20 Council Candidates for Montgomery County, MD Support Residents' Interests in Regulating Cell Towers

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 7, 2022

Contact: controlcelltowers@gmail.com

10 candidates sign a strong pledge to prioritize residents' interests,

10 additional candidates express support in written statements,

County Executive incumbent Marc Elrich has record of support

Rockville, MD – The Montgomery County Coalition for the Control of Cell Towers (MC4T) – a county-wide residents' organization dedicated to fair, transparent, and accurate regulation of wireless facilities, today released a voter guide to candidates for County Council and County Executive. MC4T urges voters to consider these candidates' support for residents on this issue.

The voter guide (attached) is largely based on Council candidates' responses to a pledge proposed by resident groups that oppose a new zoning law. The law allows wireless facilities 30 feet from homes, with no notice or hearings. Ten candidates have affirmatively signed the strong pledge, committing to prioritize the interests of residents in the regulation of wireless facilities by:

- Co-sponsoring a halt to implementation of the unpopular Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) 19-07.
- Opposing the proposed ZTA 22-01, which would worsen the impact of ZTA 19-07.
- Convening a working group to advise on updates for zoning, regulations, and fees for wireless facilities – and co-sponsoring improved regulation based on its input.
- Requiring that proposals for wireless facilities are subject to environmental impact assessment.
- Supporting policies to ensure that wireless facilities do not violate County requirements.

Ten additional candidates expressed their support for residents' input and interests in written position statements provided to MC4T, bringing the total to 20 candidates. That's almost 40% of a crowded candidate field. These statements are available on the website below.

Candidates for County Executive were not asked to sign any pledge. Incumbent County Executive Marc Elrich is the only candidate for this office with a track record of supporting residents' interests on this issue.

MC4T is a grassroots organization striving to protect and prioritize the interests of all County residents, regardless of their type of home – single-family, duplex, or multi-family buildings.

Attachments and Links:

Voter guide

Complete pledge document, including background rationale

Statements from Council candidates, in response to pledge.

For more information see <https://techwisemocomd.org/election-2022/>

Don't want cell towers 30 feet (or less) from your bedroom?

VOTE! BY JULY 19, 2022

Voter Guide to candidates who support residents' interests when it comes to cell towers

County Council and County Executive primary election, Montgomery County, MD

Legend	Pledged in writing to prioritize residents' interests (see next page)	Supportive of residents' interests, based on statements and/or track record
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County Council At-large:

(Vote for up to 4¹)

Dana Gassaway	Pledged
Brandy Brooks	Supportive
Laurie-Anne Sayles	Supportive
Lenard Lieber (R)	Supportive

County Council District 1: No candidate

County Council District 2:

Lorna Phillips Forde	Pledged
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County Council District 3:

Sidney Katz	Supportive
Robert Wu	Supportive

County Council District 4:

Cheryl Riley (R)	Pledged
Al Carr	Supportive
Kate Stewart	Supportive

County Council District 5:

William "Chip" Montier	Pledged
Jeremiah Pope	Pledged
Christopher Bolton	Supportive

County Council District 6:

Steve Solomon	Pledged
Christa Tichy	Pledged
Vicki Vergagni	Supportive

County Council District 7:

Sharif Hidayat	Pledged
Paul Schwartz	Pledged
Harold Maldonado (R)	Pledged
Paul Geller	Supportive

County Executive:²

Marc Elrich	Supportive
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Prepared by residents for residents
Montgomery County Coalition for the Control of Cell Towers

Notes:

- See <https://techwisemocomd.org/election-2022/> for more information.
- Candidates that have indicated they are NOT supportive: Gabe Alborno (at-large), Evan Glass (at-large), Andrew Friedson (D1), Amy Ginsburg (D4), Hans Riemer (County Exec). Likely not supportive: John Zittrouer (D4), Fatmata Barrie (D5).
- The following candidates kindly responded to our inquiry but did not take a position: Marilyn Balcombe (D2), Christopher Fiotes (R, at-large), Troy Murtha (D4).
- Other candidates for County Council not listed above were contacted multiple times and did not reply.
- Candidate positions based on their written statements, voting record, and statements in public forums.

¹ In the at-large race, voting for fewer than 4 candidates (known as "bullet voting") can help a voter's favored candidates. For example, if your favored candidate were close to fifth place, fewer votes for the fourth-place candidate could help your candidate win.

² County Executive candidates were not asked to sign Council pledge. Mr. Elrich is the only candidate for this office with a track record of supporting residents' interests on this issue.

VOTE! BY JULY 19

Guide to Montgomery County candidates who support residents' interests when it comes to cell towers

See voter guide on other side of page

Background

On July 27, 2021, the current Council approved by a 7–2 vote Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) 19-07. Despite widespread opposition, it enables “small” cell towers in County rights-of-way in residential and agricultural zones 30 feet from homes with no notice and no public hearing and, with notice, no minimum distance from homes. These zones include most single-family and multifamily homes in the County. The Council ignored public input, failed to do an environmental or racial equity impact assessment, and violated County code by failing to obtain input from the Office of the People’s Counsel.

Resident groups asked all Council candidates to sign the following pledge:

If elected, I pledge, to the fullest extent of my powers in office, to prioritize the interests of County residents by:

- **Co-sponsoring** Council action to immediately halt implementation of ZTA 19-07 and return the zoning code to the provisions in place prior to the adoption of 19-07 on July 27, 2021.
- **Opposing** the proposed ZTA 22-01, which would worsen the impacts of ZTA 19-07.
- **Convening** a working group of residents and other stakeholders that will present recommendations to the Council for updating zoning, regulations, and fees for wireless facilities in the County. A majority of the working group will be residents, independent health and environmental-science experts, and qualified outside legal counsel with expertise in protecting residents’ interests and the County’s autonomy over zoning in light of federal law. County executive branch would provide technical and staff support.
- **Co-sponsoring** regulatory improvements based upon input from the working group that will minimize, to the extent possible, adverse impacts of wireless facilities and infrastructure.
- **Requiring** proposals related to wireless facilities undergo environmental impact assessment.
- **Supporting** policies that ensure wireless facilities do not violate County requirements.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT

For more detail, candidate full statements, and selected voting records, see:

<https://techwisemocomd.org/election-2022/>

Join the mailing list and tell the current Council not to make the situation worse before they leave office:

<https://actionnetwork.org/letters/stop-zta-19-07>

Follow on twitter: [@MC4Torg](https://twitter.com/MC4Torg) [@TechWiseMoCoMD](https://twitter.com/TechWiseMoCoMD)

Montgomery County Coalition for the Control of Cell Towers (MC4T), Tech Wise Moco MD