

THE GREATER BETHESDA CHAMBER'S RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY 2020 BALLOT QUESTIONS OCTOBER 6, 2020

The Board of Directors of The Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce reviewed the Montgomery County ballot for the 2020 General Election and recommends the following positions on ballot questions A through D:

Property Tax Questions:

Question A: Yes

Question B: No

Council Structure Questions:

Question C: Yes

Question D: No

Property Tax Questions

Question B would limit the County's property tax revenue to the rate of inflation, with no opportunity for the Council to override the limit in times of crisis. It seriously hampers the County's ability to deal with emergency situations; such as we are facing now.

We recommend opposing Question B.

Question A, however, applies to the property tax rate, and not the total revenue collected. It freezes the property tax rate unless the Council votes unanimously for an increase. This gives us the flexibility to address crises as they arise.

We recommend supporting Question A.

County Council Structure

The basic issue with Questions C and D relates to whether or not we should have at-large seats on the County Council, versus converting all seats to Councilmanic (individual districts). We currently have a total of nine Council seats. Four are elected at-large and five are elected by district. As it stands now, voters can vote for five out of the nine Council seats. The current structure ensures that decisions are based on larger public policy issues and not on strictly parochial pressures. It gives us a stronger overall county perspective.

Question D would eliminate all at-large seats and make all nine seats Councilmanic. It means that each voter will only be able to choose one candidate. It decreases each resident's representation on the Council to only one Councilmember and encourages NIMBYism. **We recommend opposing Question D.**

Question C represents a reasonable alternative. It would expand the number of County Council seats to 11, rather than the current 9. We would maintain the four at-large seats, but the number of Councilmanic districts would increase from five to seven. Residents would still be able to vote for five seats and we would maintain the ability to address issues based on a Countywide perspective. While some feel that the Council structure should remain as is, **we recommend supporting Question C.**

For more information, please contact [Ginanne Italiano \(President & CEO, The Greater Bethesda Chamber\)](#), [Ellen Coren](#), VP Economic Development (Chesapeake Public Strategies) or [Matt Gordon](#), Co-Chair, Economic Development Group (Selzer Gurvitch Rabin Wertheimer & Polott, P.C.).