

New Montgomery County Council District 7 Election Candidates Respond on Greater Olney Area Road Safety and Transportation Issues

GOCA Transportation Committee member Mindy Badin followed up with both District 7 Montgomery County Council candidates who appeared at the GOCA meeting forum at Cadence on October 11, 2022.

On behalf of the Transportation Committee, Mindy submitted the following two questions to candidates Dawn Luedtke and Harold C. Maldonado, and shared their responses further below:

- 1. What does the candidate believe are the primary or root causes of roadway-related mortality and injuries in Montgomery County, and what actions would you take to reduce these causes?**
- 2. What do you see as the greatest transportation safety issues facing Olney today, and what would your priorities be in addressing these? How would you work with the county and state transportation departments to establish a budget for these projects?**

Response from Candidate Dawn Luedtke

“As I spoke a little bit about during the forum, the root cause of the deaths and injuries on our roadways is a road system designed to prioritize vehicle speed over the safety of people. There are clear steps the County and State Highway should be taking - including filling in missing sidewalk gaps, increasing crossing times for pedestrians at signals, and ensuring that all bus stops have sufficient buffers from roadways and a nearby and safe crosswalk. Based on my own personal observations as a pedestrian and runner (prior to my recent orthopedic issues), and while working on school bus safety issues, we need to continually focus on strategies to adapt driver behavior. The two biggest challenges I've observed in that regard are flagrant disregard for posted speeds and distracted driving. This involves re-assessing strategies for educating new drivers, working with the MVA to have videos covering these issues on the loops that play in MVA service centers, and, of course, ongoing advocacy of State and local officials with our community partners.

In Olney, we must ensure the County moves forward with the Bowie Mill Bikeway as scheduled, fund sidewalk connections to bus stops along with bus stop shelters, push the State to install crosswalks and pedestrian-activated signals at key intersections along 108 and Georgia Avenue, and more to connect surrounding neighborhoods to our commercial areas.

This is going to be a priority for me and I would be grateful for your input and ideas. I look forward to working with you and hope to have your support in next month's election.”

Dawn

Dawn Luedtke

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Cell: 443-878-2954

<http://www.dawnluedtke.com>

Response from Candidate Harold C. Maldonado

“Two questions:

1. Many factors attribute to car crashes in the county. I'll point to 3 factors that I see as relevant; driver distractions (cell phones, kids, music, other), alcohol, and drug use. What I would do in support the police in enforcing the current laws by providing them with all the financial resources and removing legal impediments that place obstacles for them to do their work. Also, the reason crashes are happening now is because the police force is so undermanned that traffic law enforcement is lax and thus drivers are not as cognizant of their responsibilities and can get away with driving drunk or under the influence of drugs. They're not caught because police is undermanned.

2. As stated in the debate, I think this issue is complex and has to be dealt personally with the stakeholders who are directly involved in driving through Olney. One thing I would do first, per my own experience driving in the area, is to put more street lights in many areas that are very dark at night. My efforts also will be to allocate funding for transportation projects from the reallocation of funds after we complete the audit I intend to commission on my first day in office.”

Regards,

Harold C. Maldonado

"Let's Get Our County Back!"

P.O. Box 5800

Derwood, MD 20855

301.710.7888

www.haroldmaldonado.com

maldonado4council@usa.com

www.facebook.com/HaroldM4Council

Twitter: @HaroldM4Council