

**Karen Kukurin,
Harford County Council District C**

1. What improvements are needed for your district?

A focus on the zoning of the area previously slated for the Walmart project. It's still zoned for commercial use and any major, high-traffic producing project would devastate the area. It would have a huge impact on traffic coming from 924 and 24. Traffic: The morning and evening rush hour traffic is already at a crawl. The bumper-to-bumper traffic throughout Harford County on two-lane highways is a daily reminder of years of poor planning by Harford County and insufficient coordination with the State Highway Administration. Congestion not only impacts the environment, but also our quality of life. Time is a valuable commodity for residents and they should not have to waste it, sitting in their cars. Neither Citizens nor the environment have an advocate on the County Council to respect the environment and the needs of all citizens.

2. What legislation do you plan to introduce for your district?

First, I'd like to introduce legislation that would benefit the entire County by extending the time a bill is introduced and voted on to 60 days, so residents have more time to study proposed bills and determine if they support or oppose them. Also, adding new amendments, as the bill is being voted on, is unacceptable. Citizens need an opportunity to review them. In addition, developers are continuously "pushing" the Development Envelope trying to go outside of it.

The Development Envelope was established to create boundaries for the area which is intended to absorb most new development and the infrastructure to accommodate it. The Master Plan, which is the long range strategy for the County's future growth, development and preservation, is very general. It doesn't dictate what could happen on any specific property and while a property's zoning does, it is constrained by the Master Plan. Residents need more protection and the Master Plan needs to be enforced either by the Council or new legislation.

3. How would you include or engage more people to provide more input into the county councils decisions. Part of my background is in public relations/public affairs and I have developed outreach programs for multi-million dollar corporations and various community groups. When I'm seated, I will develop a plan of action to engage more people, which I think is crucial. I'm already involved in the community and concerned about preserving our environment and our quality of life in Harford County. Currently, I'm a member of Friends of Harford, Citizens Voice for Responsible Land Use, Harford County Land Trust, Ma & Pa Heritage Trail, and a supporter of the Susquehannock Wildlife Society. I'm on the Advisory Board of Together We Will (TWW), an 800-person organization that is community oriented and is developing outreach through education and public forums on a variety of issues. They have shown an interest in participating in county council meetings. I also participated in the Harford County Green Infrastructure Plan (GIP).

4. Would you be willing to explain your voting decisions on the dais for each bill you voted upon?

Yes, it's important for citizens to know what is behind a council person's decision. For example: Is the decision putting people above politics? Often decisions are based on big donors and not the best interest of the community.

5. Would you support better ways to provide the public with user-friendly notification of decisions by DAC and the Zoning Board of Appeals? If so, how?

DAC and Zoning Board appeals are significant and citizens should know in a timely manner when the meetings are being held and what the decisions are. First, the signs posted at the site should be more substantial, they barely can be seen. I would also recommend a citizen advisory committee to be formed to flesh out shortcomings and suggest ways to better inform residents. A communications tree could be developed with various organizations that have a vested interest.

6. Would you vote in favor of term limits for County Council members?

Yes.

7. How do you propose to solve the County's traffic problems in your district? Unfortunately, because of poor planning and lack of oversight, there are at least 10 roadways that fail to achieve an acceptable level of service. Numerous studies have been done on the congestion in some of these areas, but remedies, such as with Maryland 22 and Thomas Run Road, would be exorbitant, requiring land be taken to expand. As our land use continues to change from rural to semi-urban and new development stretches further into once remote areas, we must plan ahead, learn from mistakes, and change traffic assessment. Lastly, any further development in these congested areas should be looked at with extreme care.

8. What parts of the zoning code do you feel need to be changed?

I suggest the council considering requiring periodic review of the zoning code to revise certain ambiguities and to make any changes that could mitigate issues unforeseen when the codes were last reviewed and approved. An example would be the issue with the former Bel Air Walmart site. If a special exception had been required for a project of that size a lot of time and effort could have been avoided.

9. Do you feel it's time for noise and lighting legislation in Harford County?

Yes. Light pollution is real and is a growing problem throughout Harford County, adversely affecting residents, farmers and small business. The current zoning code has a subjective, unenforceable "not too bright" requirement that is based on a subjective opinion, not on objective, measurable numbers. An outdoor ordinance should be developed to include measurable results. I think there's a balance between having a property owner be able to develop their property for their purposes but also negating the environmental damages that their development does.

10. Do you approve of General Industrial (GI) zoning adjacent to residential communities or within a Village District? If your answer is No, how do you reconcile your disapproval with HarfordNEXT and recent Comprehensive Review decisions?

District C has few open places to be zoned GI. If it is being considered for other areas, there should be careful consideration of its impact including traffic, noise and light pollution. There is an erroneous belief that more development always generates new money to fix existing infrastructure and service shortfalls. Many times development costs taxpayers money and a reduction of quality of life. There should not be a bias of individual rights over the community rights.

11. Do you agree with the reduction in the number of County inspections on construction sites when only 34% of contractors are in compliance with the Erosion and Sedimentation Control Ordinance?

No. This is a perfect example of trying to save money only to have the taxpayer and community pay for it down the road. Ordinances are in place for a reason and they should be enforced.