

ENVIRONMENT:

- **With the recent heat waves and forest fires, it seems like the world is on fire as climate change worsens. Would you support and advocate for a county Climate Action Plan with specific actions outlined for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and a timeline for those emission reductions leading to net zero emissions by 2050 for existing facilities and for new proposed projects/ facilities ?**
 - * In answering, please address:
 - Henrico County doesn't have a plan to address climate change.
 - What actions would you propose to reduce Henrico County's carbon footprint?
 - Can you commit to developing a plan that addresses climate change?
 - Would you commit to making the CAP part of the new comprehensive plan this year?

Climate change is going to be the major challenge of the rest of this century. Extreme weather patterns such as heat waves, droughts, and floods show us the effects of climate change are already here. This is a global issue that will require a global response, but we can do our part here in Henrico County. Henrico County needs to produce a climate action plan to help prepare for the potential effects of climate change. We still have the opportunity to enact policies like expanding electric public transportation, creating walkable neighborhoods to reduce the number of cars on the road, preserving our forested and open space, and producing more green energy. These are very achievable goals that Henrico County can set that will have an impact right here in our own community. If we commit to putting these ideas into the comprehensive plan we can both reduce the effects of climate change, and be prepared for challenges ahead.

- **Henrico County is becoming a major internet hub with new data centers planned. Data centers are a major economic development focus for Henrico. Dominion Energy is proposing to build out the electricity grid to serve companies like Facebook, QTS, and others. Do you feel like Henrico County has done enough to educate residents and affected communities about all aspects of their economic development plans?**
 - * In answering, please address:
 - Who should pay for Dominion Energy's expansion of transmission lines to supply data centers?

- Are you aware of the environmental impacts of data centers on our air quality, our climate goals, water resources and health?
- How would you mitigate these environmental and community impacts?
- Would you support a required analysis of the expected cost of infrastructure expansion necessary to service data center demand for energy, water, transmission lines, sewer, new roads, energy substations to be conducted as part of the approval process?

In the modern day, having a strong and reliable internet connection is just as important as having well managed public libraries. Rural communities without an internet connection were left behind during covid, so the idea of data centers is something Henrico should be open to. However, we need to acknowledge these data centers are absolute hogs for massive amounts of electricity and clean water. Building data centers will demand a major investment in our infrastructure network, and these costs should not be unfairly placed upon the average citizen.

In the United States, we lose 30% of all electricity we generate to transmission losses. Installing solar panels on data center sites to produce green electricity would be a major benefit towards reducing the electrical cost of the data centers.

Moving forward, Henrico County needs to do a better job communicating the potential negative impacts of proposed developments in the community. Both the 65 million gallons of raw sewage in the James River and the hazards of the sanitization facility were mentioned when watchdog groups brought them into the spotlight. Henrico has a responsibility to the community to be transparent and effectively educate the public so residents can make an informed decision.

- **State law allows local jurisdictions to adopt a plastic bag fee to encourage the use of reusable bags and to cut down on plastic bags in our waste stream. Would you support this local option legislation for Henrico County?**

Readers will be familiar with the phrase “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle”. This saying is in a specific order for a reason. Reducing the number of plastic bags used is going to be far more impactful than any recycling initiative. One caveat, taxing plastic bags and asking people to purchase reusable bags could have a disproportionate impact on lower income households. I would couple the new tax with providing reusable bags to lower income households to prevent this.

- **The 30 by 30 campaign is a conservation initiative intended to protect 30% of land for nature by the year 2030. The report states that 30% of the Earth's surface is the minimum that humans must protect in order to effectively fight climate change and prevent irreversible declines in biodiversity. As of 2021, Virginia had only achieved 16%. Henrico County has only achieved 6%.**
 - Follow up questions:
 - Would you support setting a 30% by 2030 land conservation goal for Henrico County and put in place the mechanisms to achieve that goal?
 - Are you familiar with conservation programs in the county?
 - Can you list in what ways have you helped conservation efforts and what will you do to advance the goal of 30% by 2030?

Unfortunately, I'm not sure if it's possible that Henrico preserves 30% of our land area for conservation. I am unable to find up to date numbers, but Henrico had already developed 50% of its land area by 2006. This indicates to me there's a good chance we have already developed more than 70% of our land area. It doesn't seem reasonable to expect population centers like cities and metropolitan areas to commit to the same percentage of land area as more rural communities.

Regardless, Henrico should still make every attempt to preserve any potential conservation area. Moving forward we need to fully commit to quality over quantity, and ensure our parks truly have the capacity to support wildlife conservation and biodiversity. Large fields of tall fescue or Kentucky bluegrass will not be enough to sustain the natural beauty of Henrico County.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE:

- **THE EPA environmental justice community report shows great disparities in the most vulnerable populations in the county. See EPA's Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool at [EJScreen \(epa.gov\)](https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen) and a sample copy attached.**
 - Follow up:
 - What steps will you take to ensure that disadvantaged communities and communities of color are not disproportionately impacted by decisions to locate industrial and other uses that emit pollution or significantly increase traffic or noise?

Zoning law has been a buzz word in recent years, but this is the exact scenario where we can use zoning to work in our favor. Requiring pollution centers to be a set distance away from residential areas and schools is the first step we can make sure our community members aren't exposed to toxins in their own homes. This was the original intent of zoning law and we should use it for its intended purpose.

Another important topic that needs to be addressed is heat islands. Historically, communities of color were not given the proper investment. Environmental factors such as parks, open space, and tree cover were not given any thought or funding in these communities. When an entire neighborhood doesn't have any tree cover, the ground absorbs much more heat from the sun and actively raises air temperatures in the community. A few extra degrees can make a big difference in the cost of air conditioning in the summer and how comfortable it is to be outside.

LAND USE:

- **Northern Virginia’s sprawling suburban pattern of development has resulted in significant traffic and loss of farms and forests, causing many people to move to the Richmond region. How will your land use plans ensure we don’t repeat the mistakes of NOVA?**
 - * In answering, please address:
 - Will you support comprehensive plans and zoning to protect forests, farmland, and natural and historic resources?
 - Will you support development patterns including mixed-use transit-oriented communities (TOD) projects that are also pedestrian and bicycle-oriented, that save land and reduce the amount that people have to drive?

As a Civil Engineer, land use planning is a topic that’s very close to my heart. Henrico currently has walkable neighborhoods and mixed use communities such as Willow Lawn, Libbie Mill, and West Broad Village. These areas are incredibly expensive to live in because everyone wants to live there. These communities are environmentally friendly, they provide more housing units to help bring down the cost of living, and they are clearly economically viable. We don’t need to make every square inch of Henrico just like Short Pump, but on major corridors like Staples Mill and Brook Road, these mixed use developments seem like the obvious choice.

- **Development pressures in the eastern portion of Henrico County that would significantly change the character of that community have prompted some residents to post signs saying “Don’t Short Pump Varina”. What is your position on development of the East End and the sentiments expressed by this sign?**

This is a difficult balancing act. Obviously the east end has been underserved for a long time. Things are getting better, but we still have a long way to go. I fully understand why the citizens of Varina see Short Pump and say “I don’t want that here”, but developing parts of Varina and bringing in more people attracts grocery stores to eliminate food deserts and helps businesses stay open to provide jobs to people in the area. I don’t want the west end to completely gentrify the east end, but a little bit of development can go a long way to provide more economic opportunities to serve the people of Varina. Proper city planning to keep development contained to dedicated areas would create these opportunities while still allowing the majority of Varina to remain in its current form.

- **Virginia law requires localities to develop long range comprehensive plans to address population growth and land use. Henrico County is currently in the process of formulating its 2045 plan during a period of accelerating growth and land conversion, particularly in the traditionally rural Varina district. The 2045 Plan, when finalized, will guide important zoning decisions and changes on the landscape for many years to come.**
 - * In answering this question, please address:
 - What are some of the dangers and opportunities presented by the comprehensive planning process as it plays out in Henrico?
 - If elected, what actions would you take to ensure that Henrico's 2045 plan —and its use- embody the highest principles of good government and smart growth?

Both the danger and opportunity of the 2045 comprehensive plan is how legally binding it is for the next 20 years. Every sized development from a tiny coffee shop to a giant apartment complex references the comprehensive plan for approval. If conservationists are elected to the board, the issues and solutions regarding the environment can be cemented into Henrico County's future. However that also means Henrico could potentially ignore these issues to hamper future efforts at the local level.

If elected to the board, I would make sure to enact sustainable development policies such as mixed use zoning, expanding public transportation, conserving existing forested areas, and requiring dedicated greenspace in new developments. Simple things like this go a very long way in making Henrico a better place to live.

TRANSPORTATION:

- **Northern Virginia has built and widened dozens of roads and still has significant traffic. Henrico County plans and Central Virginia Transportation Authority priorities also include significant road expansion. What will be your project priorities for transportation to provide alternatives to driving, increase accessible public transportation for all and reduce emissions?**
 - In answering this question, please address:
 - What actions will you take to increase access to bus transit in your county?
 - Our roads are increasingly unsafe for all users, but especially people walking and biking, and trying to use transit. What will you do to make our roads safer?
 - Transportation is now the #1 source of greenhouse gas emissions. What steps will you take to help your residents reduce these emissions?

Transportation, zoning, and land development are all very closely intertwined. Henrico County alone had 5,000 car crashes in 2022. This is an issue of public safety just as much as it is an environmental issue. Unfortunately, it's simply not possible to add enough lanes to a highway to reduce traffic. California invested \$1 Billion dollars to expand Interstate 405 for no noticeable reduction in traffic congestion. The Katy freeway in Houston is a staggering 26 lane wide highway that still has traffic congestion problems. If we don't want Henrico County to become NOVA, we have to think differently than NOVA. In order to reduce traffic, we need walkable, mixed use communities where people don't need to drive to access a grocery store or public library.

- **Will you work to expand GRTC in the county? Including working with our school board to create more routes near our high schools to help students with after school programming, after school jobs, and independent living skills.**

Yes, Henrico needs more public transportation and we need to expand the GRTC. It needs to connect residential communities to public resources like schools, libraries, and grocery stores. However, the major problem is not money or political willpower, it is the lack of bus drivers. We currently have 50 fewer drivers than before covid. The GRTC wants to expand, but we need to solve staffing shortages before that happens. As a Henrico County employee, I know what it's like working in the public sector. I know the

ins and outs of what some of these people are going through. Strengthening our workforce is going to be the most important part of expanding our public transportation.

HOUSING:

- **Henrico County, like other communities, faces challenges in providing affordable housing. What specific policies, funding, and tenant rights measures do you propose to increase the availability of affordable housing options, especially for lower income families?**
 - In answering this question, please address:
 - Would you be willing to identify affordable housing unit goals and targets?
 - Would you create a housing trust fund and how would you leverage federal funds? (this question is only for Henrico)
 - Would you create legal defense support for tenants who are facing eviction?
 - How would you address issues of discrimination, and would you use public land available in conjunction with fire houses, government offices complexes, community centers to provide affordable housing?

Housing is one of the primary issues facing both Henrico County, and the entire county. Almost every single voter I talk to says the same thing, that rent is too high. Right now, Henrico County is short approximately 40 thousand affordable housing units. That means if we magically build 500 affordable housing units and put them on the market, they will cost approximately \$300,000 for a standard single family home. That price is simply not affordable to someone who needs affordable housing. Being short this many housing units is the primary factor in the cost of housing. There are no programs, policies, or tax incentives to fix the laws of supply and demand. Henrico needs to create more high density, mixed-use communities that can provide the amount of housing we need. There's simply no way around it, we need more housing units.

PUBLIC PROCESS AND TRANSPARENCY:

- **How do you plan to increase transparency and the involvement of all residents, representing the full diversity of the community, in the decision making process?**
 - In answering this question, please address:
 - What additional approaches would you use for outreach to reach renters and lower income residents?
 - Do you think the county website provides adequate information, and if not, how would you improve it?

Being present in the community, providing good communication with the public, and making sure as many resources as possible are available online. It can be hard to travel all the way to the western government center, especially if you live in the east end. The county has made progress in making board of supervisors meetings available online to replay the meeting at a later date, but this is hopefully only the first step. County projects should be available to view online, both planned and active. I work in the DPW Construction division, and I can tell you there are a lot of county projects not available on the website. Even though the Pemberton Bridge repair is a VDOT project, residents should be able to go to Henrico County's website and see what's going on and when we can expect the bridge to reopen.

EDUCATION EQUITY:

- **With the new proposed changes to our education system regarding the marginalization of Black history being taught in our public schools and policies related to LGBTQ students, what are your thoughts on this change? Do you support or oppose Gov. Glen Youngkin's proposed changes?**

It really hurts me to see how public education is being demonized by the individual in the governor's mansion. I went through the Virginia public education system all the way through. K-12 and then to a public college. My mom is an elementary school teacher. Education is the great equalizer; it's something that we should all want every child in Henrico to have access to. Using it as a cudgel in a culture war to try and rewrite history is simply unacceptable. Every child deserves a proper education in every subject, and every child deserves to feel safe at school. After seeing the SOL scores that came out last week and watching the Youngkin administration "misplace" over 200 million dollars of funding for the schools, I think it's clear that we're on the wrong track.

- **Reducing food insecurity is essential for promoting educational equity because it addresses both immediate barriers to learning, such as hunger and health issues, as well as the long-term structural inequalities that affect educational outcomes. What is your plan to help reduce food insecurities in Henrico County?**

Henrico County School Board has just this year approved free school lunches for all students of 43 different schools here in Henrico. I think this will go a very long way towards reducing childhood food insecurity. Hopefully this program is a huge success and we can come back next year and expand it to every school across the county. Another issue I've seen is high school cafeterias are serving elementary school sized portions to students. The schools are not permitting students to purchase a second lunch, even if they have the money. Making sure that meals are sized for the school level and solving whatever supply chain issues are preventing students from having two lunches would be another big step in the right direction.

- **How do you plan to collaborate with the Henrico County School Board to address education equity issues within the county?**

Open lines of communication. Every elected representative wants the same thing, to make sure every student has the best education possible regardless of their background. The first two things we need to do regardless of what school district we're talking about, is find a way to solve the teacher shortage, and get our schools some proper air conditioning. The best teacher in the world won't be able to teach kids who are hungry in a 90 degree classroom. Whatever it takes, we need to make sure this doesn't happen again.