



# MCCC 2014 Candidate Questionnaire

**Name:** George L. Leventhal

**Email:** George@GeorgeLeventhal.com **Campaign Website:** www.GeorgeLeventhal.com

**Office you are seeking:** County Council **District:** At-Large

**Years of residence in the district in which you are running:** 42

## Education Information

**College, Post-graduate, Technical School or Certificate Program you completed and the degree(s) you attained.**

B.A. in English from the University of California - Berkeley; M.P.A. from Johns Hopkins University; currently studying for a Ph.D. in Public Policy at University of Maryland - College Park

## Employment Information

**Current Occupation:** Montgomery County Councilmember, At-Large **Current Employer:** Montgomery County

**How long have you been employed here?** 12 years

**If less than two years, please provide immediate previous employer:** NA

## Questions

**In your opinion, what are the key issues facing the business community in the district/county/state you seek to represent?**

Permitting: We need to continue focused efforts to streamline our planning, permitting and procurement processes to see where they can be made more efficient and business-friendly. Energy Tax: It was intended as a temporary two-year measure, but our economic circumstances have not permitted us to eliminate it fully, which I regret. However, we have reduced the increase by 10% in each of the FY2013 and FY2014 budgets, and I am committed to continuing that course.

**What do you believe are the core responsibilities of the position you seek and what will you do to carry these out?**

The core responsibilities of the position I seek are to pass the budget, oversee land use and enact local laws. Since I was first elected in 2002, I have brought passion, honesty and integrity to the County Council. I work hard, and I respond quickly to our constituents' needs. I am an effective leader, and I get things done.

**Please explain your budget priorities and describe your approach to the role you will play in impacting the County/State budget.**

My budget priorities are the schools, transportation, and public safety. Our excellent public school system is one of the main reasons people move to Montgomery County, and we must continue to maintain it. The most important thing we can do to keep our economy competitive is build the promised mass transit improvements: Purple Line, Corridor Cities Transitway and Bus Rapid Transit on key corridors. I worked closely with the Montgomery County Delegation to ensure passage of the Maryland State Gas Tax in the last session which guarantees funding for many of our transportation priorities. Of course, none of these can come to fruition without an active partnership with our state and federal governments and I have worked constructively to encourage this partnership. Public safety is vital to the well-being of our residents and we are working to restore funding that was cut during the recession.

**What improvements do you believe are needed to the transportation infrastructure In Montgomery County and Maryland? Please list them in your priority order.**

The Purple Line, the Corridor Cities Transitway and Bus Rapid Transit.

**If elected, how do you plan to address the perception and reality of Montgomery County and Maryland having a less competitive business climate?**

We should do a better job of marketing our county to companies not already located here. I am impressed with the Montgomery Business Development Corporation's recent efforts to assemble data that would be useful to a business considering a new location. As I mentioned above, we need to continue focused efforts to streamline our planning, permitting and procurement processes to see where they can be made more efficient and business-friendly. We have a great story to tell: a superb quality of life, highly-educated workforce, presence of key federal agencies and proximity to the Nation's Capital. We should accentuate the positive!

**How do you define economic development?**

Economic Development means assessing our strengths and strategic advantages, maintaining and supporting the businesses already here and working to attract new businesses. We should take pride in our status as an International Gateway and market ourselves as a place where business can be conducted in every language, with a highly-skilled workforce that contains more foreign-born residents than any other jurisdiction in Maryland.

**What role should government play to help attract, grow and retain business?**

Government should play a supportive role in attracting, growing and retaining business in the county. Councilmembers should reach out to business people and listen to their concerns to find out what they need, as I do consistently. Government should support existing businesses and look for opportunities to attract new businesses.

**What current economic development initiatives do you support?**

I was the primary sponsor of the county's Local Small Business Reserve. I support tax credits for investments in our strategic focus industries: biotech, green jobs and cybersecurity. I am a co-founder of Bethesda Green, which maintains the first green business incubator in Maryland. I would like to work closely with the business community, as I always have, to consider suggestions they may have. As I mentioned above, I am impressed with the Montgomery Business Development Corporation's recent efforts to assemble data that would be useful to a business considering a new location.

**What new economic development initiatives would you propose?**

Expand our efforts to partner with international companies. Emphasize foreign language education at the earliest ages to keep our workforce globally competitive. Promote more incubators and accelerators, both government-run and privately-run.

**Please use this opportunity to provide any other information you would like MCCC members to know.**

I have learned a lot during my twelve years in office and I can put my knowledge and experience to work in a fourth term to help Montgomery County achieve the bright future it deserves. As Chairman of the Health and Human Services Committee, I want to continue advocating for those who need the most help from government: the sick, the poor, the elderly, the homeless, the mentally ill, and abused and abandoned children. The only way to accomplish our social goals is to attract new jobs and investment to expand our revenue base. As a member of the Planning, Housing and Economic Development Committee, I want to continue the Council's work promoting smart growth development, updating master plans for our modern society and attracting jobs. I understand the importance of attractive and creative planning to ensure cosmopolitan communities that provide desirable amenities, including schools, parks, trails, libraries, community and recreation centers and shopping. Montgomery County is a dynamic, diverse, affluent and sophisticated community and I have been proud to be part of its governance. Having grown up here, having worked for Maryland's U.S. Senator Barbara Mikulski, chaired the county's Democratic Party for five years and represented the entire county as an At-Large Councilmember for 12 years, I believe I have a profound understanding of the county's needs and its future challenges and opportunities.