



Eckington
Civic Association

Ward 5 Councilmember Candidate Questionnaire

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Please respond to each question in 200-300 words. We know that you might have more to say on each topic, but shorter answers will better help residents digest these materials. Feel free to direct folks to other resources on your website if you have more to say than this space allows. Thank you!

Q1: Like many Ward 5 neighborhoods, Eckington is home to a significant amount of land that is currently zoned for industrial uses. In your view, what is the best use of that land and why?

Ward 5 has the largest share of land devoted to industrial uses. Zoning and land-use decisions, past and present, are driven by power dynamics and systems of incentives. In Ward 5, Brentwood is home to a trash transfer plant, concrete plant, and DDOT paving site, and residents are fighting right now to stop placement of another polluting facility in their community: a diesel bus depot. In Eckington, the Fort Myer plant pours trucks onto neighborhood streets and distributes toxins in the air. What's more, Council failed Eckington neighbors when asked to convert some of the community's PDR land into affordable housing through the Comp Plan.

As Councilmember, I will partner with the community to propose healthier alternatives for this industrial land. My vision is to co-create a baseline for healthy communities across Ward 5, which will include what we all should have access to: restaurants, groceries, green space, and affordable housing. I support expanding affordable housing, recreational outlets, and bringing more businesses like the incoming brewery that neighbors can enjoy within Eckington.

My goal will be to ensure all Ward 5 residents have clean air and water, as well as green space and other necessities for a healthy community. It will take a lot of work

to get there, but I will stand with residents to stop harmful projects or modify projects to ensure that neighbors are not harmed. I am committed to aggressive oversight of DCRA to ensure that environmental laws and rules are actually followed and future land-use decisions spread industrial-zoning to other parts of DC. And I will partner with Eckington Parks and others to ensure they have the support and resources needed.

Additionally, we should ensure that Ward 5's industrial areas are prioritized for arts and entrepreneurial uses by Ward 5 residents, especially people of color, LGBTQ youth, and others who have been shut out of opportunities in the past. As discussed in my [small business development platform](#), I want DC to focus on community businesses that build equity within neighborhoods – including creating cooperative businesses and supporting long-standing neighborhood businesses in areas such as green technology, food, and cannabis. I would work to ensure that licenses for businesses in Ward 5 industrial areas are distributed equitably, by focusing on long-term residents and offering grants and technical assistance to people from marginalized communities.

Q2: Eckington is bounded by four large arterial roads—New York Avenue, Florida Avenue, North Capitol Street, and Rhode Island Avenue. Do you think those corridors should be transformed, and if so, how?

Yes. These streets running through the heart of Ward 5 neighborhoods are often treated as dangerous highways, especially by commuters — many of them from Virginia and Maryland — who do not think of them as neighborhood streets. It is important that we transform and redesign them for safety.

Early in the campaign, I joined neighbors on 2nd and 3rd street to hear concerns about traffic safety. I've been working with Commissioner Wright, ECA President Shaw, and DDOT to address concerns we heard.

I'll focus here on my vision for Rhode Island Ave. In NW, trees run along the middle and there are safe ways to traverse the neighborhoods along the corridor quickly and by any means. In NE, it's a different story. It is perfect for a reimagination.

My vision would be to expand the sidewalk, which has become dangerous for folks of all abilities to traverse, to create space for pedestrians to walk comfortably and safely. I'd like to incorporate a protected bike lane into those expanded sidewalks. I would also push for a dedicated bus lane, perhaps one that switches direction for the different times of day with rush hour (although I understand that this is an imperfect solution). The particulate and diesel pollution is especially bad, so I would look to find

ways of reducing industrial use of the road and planting and designing streetscapes with key vegetation that would decrease flooding and lessen the effects of pollution. Finally, I would push for a road diet and equity-focused speed cameras to stop cars from reckless driving.

Q3: Eckington has been impacted by armed carjackings and homicides in recent years. At the same time, Eckington residents have also expressed concerns about policing in D.C. How would you approach public safety as a Ward 5 Councilmember? Do you have thoughts about the revision of the D.C. criminal code that is underway or other policy changes being considered?

Rising violence is shaking our sense of safety. Current approaches are not working, and we must urgently pursue targeted solutions we know can work. The recent rise in violent incidents across the nation is likely linked to a widening wealth gap, pandemic mental health strains, lack of support for families, and continued disinvestment in schools and communities that has left many of our youngest neighbors with unaddressed trauma and unmet needs.

As Councilmember, I will work with Council colleagues and the Executive to build a comprehensive public health approach to safety, focusing on three main areas:

- **Adequate Prevention:** We must address the root causes of crime, which are connected to educational quality, recreational outlets, trauma, and economic opportunity. The District must focus more on improving our schools, expanding DPR and other programming, and ensuring more of our neighbors can earn a living. We must also expand community based mental health, which has been slashed in recent years. What's more, I call for expanding violence interrupters and establishing mobile health units and a non-police crisis response team of credible messengers, medics, and trauma professionals.
- **Targeting Violent Crime:** Police should focus on the most violent incidents. I will advocate for connecting and coordinating existing programs and agencies, much like the promise of the new Building Blocks program which has been hampered by a lack of follow-through, transparency, and community engagement. I will work to shift MPD away from duties better suited for others, such as behavioral health crises and traffic enforcement. And I will prioritize safe passage for students to and from school.
- **Accountability:** I support reducing violence and focusing on constructive accountability through restorative justice in schools, funding community

mediation, and making a real and lasting investment in violence interruption networks. That said, those who break the law must be held accountable to the people that they harm. I support programs within the AG's office that allows juveniles to expunge their records after years/ample time seeking help, repairing the harm caused.

Finally, our desire to do something should not push us to ineffective approaches of the past. Mandatory minimums, police jump outs, hassling teens playing games in the street, or targeting drug enforcement in Black and brown communities do not make us safer. DC has a shockingly high incarceration rate – nearly all of them Black people - and they either go to federal facilities far away or are treated inhumanely in the DC jail. This focus on harsher incarceration has not made us safer and has only continued the cycle of violence. Instead, we should pursue criminal legal reforms to reduce mass incarceration and increase rehabilitation, including adopting the revised criminal code. If harsher punishment is our only approach, the cycle of violence will continue indefinitely.

Q4: Eckington residents are concerned about air pollution from the Fort Myer asphalt plant, vehicles on large nearby arterial roads, and the like. How would you approach this and other environmental issues in Ward 5?

My campaign is focused on creating a healthy Ward 5 where all residents have what they need to thrive. That must include basic needs like clean air and water, especially for communities like Eckington that have felt the effects of decades of environmental racism in zoning and other regulations. If businesses are polluting our air, we must take further steps to protect residents. This would mean both increased penalties for violating our environmental regulations and stricter requirements to significantly “green” business operations that harm nearby communities, especially children. Our health and our future must be prioritized.

Our environmental policies also must acknowledge that climate change is directly harming Ward 5 residents. Flooding and heat islands are the everyday lived reality of so many neighbors in Ward 5. We are the hottest Ward in the city with the least amount of trees. We need to push for trees on every block and we should incentivize fruit trees so that more Ward 5 children could be exposed to the health and wellness opportunities that can come from living in a real relationship with the land.

We need to decarbonize our economy and stop our toxic reliance on fossil fuels that not only is harming the planet, but it also is harming children and communities in Ward 5 through flooding, air pollution, and disproportionately high levels of asthma. We can add thousands of local jobs and train workers in the work of the future if we take on transforming our infrastructure to be safer, healthier, and more resilient.

Again, my vision is to co-create a “healthy communities” metric (similar to a walkability metric) and pass legislation that would *require* DC to strategically and equitably invest in communities lacking basic amenities and cut off from essential services and resources. Moreover, a healthy communities metric will preclude further expansion of PDR land in our communities and require companies like Fort Myer to pay for the harm they cause. We can combat the pollution in Eckington and elsewhere by implementing a healthy communities metric.

Q5: Eckington, Edgewood, and other Ward 5 communities have struggled to secure important amenities that are commonplace in Wards 3 and 6. If elected, are you committed to ensuring that Ward 5 elementary and middle schools are modernized and that a D.C. public library serving Eckington and Edgewood is built?

Through my work on the State Board of Education, I've fought to ensure that Ward 5 school facilities get the attention they need and deserve. For example, parents and students were promised COVID-safety when schools were re-opened for the pandemic, and yet many students came back to inadequate ventilation and HVAC systems in disrepair. I worked closely with Ward 5 schools (including Burroughs, Langdon, and Langley) to elevate concerns to the Department of General Services (DGS) to get needed and immediate fixes to the schools' HVAC systems.

I will bring that same energy, knowledge, and relationships with DC government agencies to make sure that Ward 5 schools and libraries are prioritized by DGS and in DC budget fights. As Ward 5 Councilmember, I will work with DGS to monitor school work orders, routinely check-in and report back to schools, and ensure work orders are completed timely. DGS recently produced a tracker that shows hundreds of work orders remain outstanding in Ward 5, from leaking roofs to unstable structures that are dangerous for students and teachers. That is unacceptable and will be a priority focus for me.

I have become familiar with the DC budget process when I served as the President on the State Board of Education and have engaged in budget fights for Ward 5 schools. As Councilmember, I will work to ensure that Ward 5's capital needs, including modernizing our schools and building a new library, are prioritized in the budget. That means ensuring that Ward 5 needs are reflected in the budget, and then protecting those wins against political pressure.

Again, my vision is to co-create a “healthy communities” metric (similar to a walkability metric) and pass legislation that would *require* DC to strategically and equitably invest in communities lacking basic amenities and cut off from essential services and resources. I believe we can no longer subject ourselves to the subjective nature of human decision making. We have to legislate and require equitable development across the city. A healthy communities metric will allow us to do that.