

Mark on the Issues

Jobs and economic development: Rockville should embrace a more vibrant private economy that is less dependent on the government sector. The next generation will depend more on private-sector jobs than their parents do. The County stagnated its way through the Great Recovery making it harder to provide for school and transit infrastructure. We need to attract **high-paying private employers** and provide **environmentally friendly homes** near transit. This means re-evaluating our counter-productive development restrictions that reduce resources for new classrooms and transit.

Homes: Rockville should do a much better job of encouraging commercially affordable **housing near transit**. **Our children should be able to live independently in Rockville when they become adults**. Our **teachers, police, and fire fighters** should also be able to live here. This would keep rents reasonable for workers of all ages and income levels. Smart growth also helps **protect our neighborhoods** from the encroachment of illegal apartments fashioned out of houses and townhouses.

I-270 widening: Mark will continue to lead the fight against the bad impacts of I-270 widening. **Mark led the awareness campaign in 2018 that resulted in hundreds of Rockville resident comments to the state** and to the formation of **Don't Widen 270** (www.dontwiden270.org). This included a **mailing party** of more than **100 people** at the Senior Center to alert more than **5,000 homes**.

Smart growth policies: Mark supports smart-growth policies. There are 3 ways to deal with population growth (there has always been population growth): **Grow up** (increase density), **grow out** (increase sprawl), or **neighborhood encroachment**. The last 2 options are bad. Rockville's decades-long resistance to almost all **transit-oriented residential development** in Rockville has contributed to **car-oriented sprawl** outside and north of the City. Mark calls this

the **boomerang effect**. Because of this, Rockville faces a long struggle to stop the widening of I-270 into our neighborhoods. Additionally, our neighborhoods face encroachment – for example, ad hoc boarding houses and multiple families in a house. **We have to smarten up with smart growth** – mixed-use neighborhoods where people can live near their work and Metro or bus transit.

City budget: Mark supports productivity improvements and will consider buy-outs for the City's retirement-ready staff. The City's revenue will rise only 2% over the next few years while City staff pay raises have averaged over 4% for the past several years. Mark supports Councilmember Virginia Onley's initiative to evaluate buying out retirement-ready City employees. He further supports her initiatives to promote productivity improvements in the City's staff. He is not in favor of property tax rate increases. He believes we must live within our means and expand our tax base.

Town Center: Rockville must **address the fundamental economic and development obstacles to success**. Town Center has struggled since the City poured tens of millions of dollars into it. There are still many empty storefronts. The City recently gave a huge subsidy to Dawson's Market to keep a grocery store in the heart of our City. Its loss would have devastated Town Center. We must reevaluate the Town Center Master Plan and remove irrational zoning restrictions and parking requirements. Mark will consider providing free parking for evenings and weekends, but since this will be expensive, it should come only with other fundamental improvements.

Our schools: Mark is considering a plan to address the school capacity deficit issue. He documented a \$2.4 billion-dollar deficit today for additional classrooms, capital maintenance, and provision of core facilities. Mark has spent the past few years studying why the County cannot provide adequate school capacity. While Rockville must continue its County and State advocacy for school capacity. **Forty years of advocacy have not worked!** This is primarily a County problem. The

State cannot provide a substantial percentage of construction funding. The County must look to its own resources to solve this issue.

Champion projects: Mark will continue to work to provide transit-oriented development through Champion Projects and other methods. Mark proposed Champion Projects as a way of working with developers to gain more benefits for the City. For example, he was the earliest and most vocal supporter of the recently approved Twinbrook Quarter development next to the Twinbrook Metro. This project will be an exemplar of **smart growth** that reduces car traffic. It will turn 18.5 acres of asphalt into homes including affordable homes, jobs, and commerce. The environmental impact on the land will greatly diminish through better stormwater management and tree plantings. There will be better connectivity for all modes of transportation. Twinbrook Quarter will provide **more school capacity than school children** due to impact fees paid at the time of development (overall about half an elementary school). Finally, it will provide an economic boost to the City due to increased property and income taxes.

A welcoming community: Mark will continue to **make Rockville work for everyone**. He was an ardent supporter of the Fostering Community Trust Ordinance (a. k. a. the Effective Community Policing Act). This legislation ensures that the City police will focus on **community policing** while in specific circumstances draw on County, State, and Federal resources. Further, Mark supports affordable housing including the preservation of the **historically affordable housing** at Fireside Park Apartments. We cannot claim to be a welcoming community if housing is unaffordable for even midlevel incomes.

Broader Council representation: Mark supports more 2 more councilmembers on the Mayor and council. He supports Virginia Onley's initiative to increase the number of Council seats by 2. He believes it is impossible to represent our diversity with only 5 elected officials. Rockville has had 5 elected officials since 1888 when the population was measured in the hundreds.

Behavioral Ethics Ordinance: Mark will propose a behavioral ethics ordinance. It will deal with both behavioral and legal issues.

Council vacancy: Mark will propose a tie-breaking clause to the candidate selection process when there is a vacancy and the remaining body cannot agree on a replacement.

RedGate Golf Course: Mark advocates a **strategic evaluation of the 144 acres** in the context of citywide goals. He believes we should look at the property as an asset with several positive possibilities. RedGate lost more than \$3 million before a management agreement leased the course to Billy Casper Golf, but still the course failed. The evaluation might include turning part of this land into athletic fields and using the rest for a new neighborhood and other uses. Proceeds might go toward funding King Farm Farmstead improvements and/or to provide for a major Town Center attraction such as the **Rockville Science Center** or the **Kid Museum**. **Mark is adamantly opposed to converting the golf course to a County bus depot facility.** RedGate would still be a golf course today if Rockville would have entered into a management agreement with the County Revenue Authority. A vocal gaggle of protesters stopped that from happening and they are the ones responsible for the course's failure.

King Farm Farmstead: Mark will propose that the City immediately restore the horse barn and bring in utilities to the property. These are seed improvements that will make it easier to attract a private partner. Mark's hard work led to formation of the new King Farm Farmstead Task Force as well as to the stabilizing of the dairy barns. However, there are severe obstacles to the adaptive reuse of the historic property, thus making complex problem harder to solve of the many risks to private investors that are not under the City's control.

Rockshire Village Center: Mark supports a mixed-use development with modest residential placement and local shops that the neighborhood can

support, along with some open green community space. The vacant 7 acres are an eyesore now but provide much opportunity for the community.

Deer control: Mark will continue to support methods to control the deer population. He has been a leader for the deer issue for all of his years on the Council. His efforts resulted in a pilot control program that will be implemented in fall of 2020. The deer population is far over the carrying capacity of our forests. This has resulted in great environmental degradation, and a worsening of tick-borne illnesses as well as an increase of car-deer accidents.