

2. MPClarke

Personal Commitment and Leadership on Environmental Issues

1. What environmental issues are most important to you? Please give specific examples of your environmental leadership or describe leaders who you would like to emulate. Include specific government examples or organizational work.

Elimination of lead paint, asbestos, mold and other harmful characteristics of blighted housing which adversely affect the mental and physical health of Baltimore City residents, especially our children.

Residential and commercial recycling of trash and yard waste to the extent humanly possible in Baltimore City. Effective alternatives to factors contributing to Baltimore City's crisis level of illegal dumping in our poorer neighborhoods. Restoration of twice-annual hazardous waste collections at Poly-Western. Ban on commercial use of plastic bags and Styrofoam containers in Baltimore City. Restoration of bulk trash collection.

Practical alternatives to private vehicle transportation, from zip cars and effective mass transit to enforcement of bicycle-friendly laws and policies in Baltimore City. Traffic calming and Complete Streets' emphasis on planning input by all users for new and reconstructed or reconfigured roadways in Baltimore City.

LED for all Baltimore City streetlights by June 30, 2013.

Vigorous enforcement of May 2011 storm water regulations for all new and substantially rehabbed Baltimore City developments.

2. If you currently serve as an elected official, what changes in your approach to environmental issues will you make if re-elected in 2011?

The best change I can hope and work for is ENACTMENT & ENFORCEMENT of legislative and policy initiatives of environmental importance. For example, by supporting and encouraging more active lobbying for and oversight of City issues by our local environmental organizations.

3. If elected, what do you hope to accomplish to advance environmental issues?

The key accomplishment would be to support and encourage the more active lobbying and oversight I mention in #2 above. Three of us joke that we are the City Council's Environmental Caucus. Yes. The emails arrive by the dozens in support of this-or-that environmental legislation before City Council, but we lack the informed and committed presence and oversight required for development and passage of uncompromised environmental reform.

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4. Please list personal examples of commitment to the environment, such as gas mileage of your car, charm card ownership, home energy audit, or participation in the BGE Peak Rewards program.

I personally recycle and regularly walk alleys with C.O.P. constituents, for example in the CHM neighborhood, to explain what can and should be recycled. I sponsored a constituent tour to the City's recycling contractor's plant to prove that our recycling waste is actually recycled. Many City residents subscribe to the myth that our recycled material goes directly to a landfill --- and use that myth as an excuse not to recycle. I paid a lot for an energy audit via Civic Works. I carry and use cloth bags for shopping. I have co-sponsored legislation on environmental issues from required composting to plastic bag bans to restrictions on the "over-pruning" of street trees by City and BGE contractors. I helped Miriam Avins weather the formative days of Baltimore Greenspace, Inc., and its mission of preserving community-managed greenspace. I am long married to a man who never saw a light he didn't want to turn off.

5. What do you believe to be the greatest environmental accomplishment and failure of the Baltimore City government in the last 4 years?

Greatest accomplishment: weekly residential and condo recycling collection.

Greatest failure: lead paint abatement and resistance to paying damages for that failure.

6. What will be your environmental agenda? Where does your environmental agenda fit into your other policy goals?

My main goals have always involved the education, safety, opportunities and well-being of our young people. I am a teacher by profession, the mother of four and Bubby of ten. My main environmental agenda will include engaging our young people in volunteer activities and career explorations in which they goad us elders on by their innate spirit of environmental commitment. Kids "get it."

ACCESS AND COMMUNICATION

Open and honest communication is a critical feature of good government. How, both formally and informally, will you provide such communication? Specifically, what mechanisms and what amount of access do you expect to provide to the environmental community? What will be the role of the public on these issues in your decision making?

Most of my ideas for environmental initiatives come from my constituents, environmental activists and my "Environmental Caucus" colleagues in the City Council. I have always enjoyed a good and creative relationship with the environmental community in Baltimore City. There's no way City Council can enact a positive environmental agenda without the consistent and insistent input of our citizen environmentalists and the semi-uncompromising spirit you bring to the table. In other words, we need your expertise and passion more than you need our open doors. But that "open door" remains open, and I will serve as enthusiastic cheerleader vote-counter for what needs doing and why and how-best.

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ISSUES SECTION

Sustainability Plan

1. What do you like about the Baltimore City Sustainability Plan? What will you do to implement the Plan's recommendations? What parts of the Plan need improvement?

http://www.dooconsulting.net/pdf/ref_bar/about/051509_BCS-001SustainabilityReport.pdf

I supported the development of the Plan and the establishment of the Sustainability Commission. Now we need a way for the Commission to publicize its recommendations and proposed action items to the public, using the "white paper" approach, for example, so as to build grassroots and legislative support for implementation.

2. In 2009, Maryland General Assembly passed the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Act with a commitment of reducing global warming pollution 25% by 2020. Baltimore City's Sustainability Plan reflects these goals. If elected, what policies would you enact to achieve these goals?

I would seek the recommendations of this environmental coalition and of the Sustainability Commission --- and act accordingly to introduce or co-sponsor any relevant local legislation.

3. The Maryland General Assembly has continually diverted funding from the Strategic Energy Investment Fund and established to fund for energy efficiency programs benefiting low-income citizens (such as home weatherization) to low income rate payer assistance. What do you think about this diversion?

The SEIF's stated purpose is "... to decrease energy demand and increase energy supply to promote *affordable*, reliable and clean energy to fuel Maryland's future prosperity" [Emphasis added.] As I read SEIF's allocation formula, 40% of annual funding will provide help for low-to-moderate income Marylanders, i.e., 17 % for Low Income Energy Assistance + a minimum of an additional 23% in Energy Efficiency, Conservation & Demand Response Programs.. Although the survey question is unclear, I think the claim is that funds are being diverted from these SEIF low-to-moderate benefit provisions. If that's the case, I am outraged, opposed and looking for help in reversing this unfair and harmful diversion.

Recycling

If elected, how would you improve the City's single stream recycling program?

Urge City government to consistently demonstrate how our recycling waste is actually recycled, then sold and reprocessed into new products for sale. Demystifying that "cycle" will increase participation among our many non-recycling cynics.

Organize community service credit tasks for public school students who organize and promote school-based recycling programs. Their involvement will spillover into residential recycling within their families.

Offer more opportunities for low-income families and neighborhoods to conveniently purchase the yellow bins and cans. The sight of lots of yellow has proved to inspire entire across-the-alley neighbors to "try" recycling.

Mandate recycling for apartment complexes, multifamily properties and businesses which are not served by the City's Solid Waste trash and recycling collection services.

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Trees/Greening

1. Trees in urban areas help with stormwater management, air quality, and energy conservation, yet tree cover in Baltimore has declined significantly in the last several decades. If elected, what would you do to increase the number and health of trees in our communities?

Enact my long-languishing legislation to prohibit the “tree-scalping” practiced by many contractors engaged in clearing overhead wires of branches. Support adequate funding for appropriate levels of tree planting by Baltimore City and promote private sector planting on private property.

2. Please comment on your style of working with communities and greening by using the example of how you would work with the Mt. Vernon Conservancy and neighborhood activists to ensure the development at Mt. Vernon Place will result in minimum loss of green space and the tree canopy?

My “style” would be to determine that my help is wanted and needed by the Conservancy and neighborhood activists and not presume to impose myself without invitation. Because Mt. Vernon Place is a Citywide treasure and a prominent symbol of our Baltimore values, I would welcome the opportunity to be involved in local efforts to preserve mature trees and green space to the greatest extent possible. “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.”

3. What other ideas do you have for making Baltimore a greener city?

After years of efforts by Miriam Avins, Community Law Center, Master Gardeners, myself and others, Baltimore City has yet to embrace recommendations for the cost-effective access to water required by community-managed greenspace. I will continue to pursue policies which acknowledge the value of preserving and expanding current greenspace through rational access to the water needed to sustain such endeavors.

Economic Development and Clean Construction

1. Do you support the promotion of more environmentally-oriented economic development, concentrating on jobs in green industries and technologies? If so how would you go about attracting such development?

Yes. I supported and co-sponsored the City’s Green Building ordinance which in itself promotes employment in green-savvy construction, design, planning and architectural enterprises within Baltimore City and attracts environmentally-oriented training and career paths.

2. The mandate for developing the Open Space District in the Baltimore Zoning Code is to enhance the quality of life for city residents and improve its business climate. What policies and measures would you support to permanently preserve and expand public and private lands as an important public asset and critical environmental infrastructure?

Amend that law and win Planning/ Mayoral support for “green preservation” requirements within the Open Space District(s) which this law merely designates as such, with no CHAP-like powers to sustain.

3. Toxic diesel pollution has a devastating impact on public health. It is associated with numerous adverse effects including lung cancer, asthma, heart attacks, stroke, and premature death. If elected, would you support a policy for Baltimore City that requires clean diesel technology on construction equipment used on public construction projects and other large construction projects supported with city funds? Yes, plus for City vehicles as well.

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Chemical Poisoning or Toxics

1. Due to mismanagement of previous federal grant awards, Baltimore City currently lacks a federally funded lead paint abatement program. What steps do you propose to take to address:
 - a. Regaining Federal funding?
 - b. Interim measures to abate lead paint in Baltimore?
 - c. Safeguards/transparency to prevent similar loss of funding in the future?

a. Reorganize and demonstrate the effectiveness of the City's reconstituted lead paint abatement infrastructure, management and fiscal/dwelling unit accountability.

b. In the interim, I have confidence in Ken Strong at Housing/Weatherization to which the City has transferred responsibility for the lead abatement program.

c. I support required and regular quarterly reports in the short-term to the Baltimore City Council and half-yearly reports once an accountable and effective program earns public confidence. Reports to include: quarterly funding available at start of the immediately previous quarter; amount of funding spent in that quarter; specifics of how spent, including number of units completed as compared to outstanding units to address.

2. Toxic chemicals in consumer products threaten public health. Do you support expanding the Department of the Environment's ability to list chemicals of concern and act on them if safe alternatives are identified? Yes.

Water Quality

1. Will you ensure public notice and a transparent process for deciding any request to waive requirements to protect air and water quality? Yes.
2. Under a consent order, the City is spending more than \$1 billion to repair and replace the crumbling sewer system, but unfortunately Baltimore's harbor is still impaired from bacteria and trash. What specific remedies would you take to help accelerate the reduction of this bacteria and trash pollution?

Make TMDL pollution reduction a Baltimore City priority. To reduce trash, organize effective citizen-led and City-supported watershed efforts to educate, first of all, the children in our schools and then their families as to connection between our local storm drains and pollution of the Harbor and Bay. Be consistent in that education effort, using creative and complementary initiatives such as the inlet paintings undertaken in my district by 901 Youth Arts in Better Waverly. Keep at it until everyone in the City is aware, especially youth and children. In addition, organize Mayoral Clean-Up days around the City's 7 watersheds --- and make a big public point of why that's important. Work with local colleges and universities to direct their student volunteers to the research, monitoring and clean-up aspects of this effort.

3. Under an Executive Order the Environmental Protection Agency has developed a "Total Maximum Daily Loads" (TMDL) for particular pollutants for the Chesapeake Bay watershed. As required, Maryland has developed a Watershed Implementation Plan to meet the TMDL pollution reduction under the order. Do you think this should be a priority in Baltimore? Yes.

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4. Polluted stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces such as roads, rooftops, lawns and parking lots is one of the main sources of pollution into Baltimore streams, the Inner Harbor and into the Chesapeake Bay. This runoff from our properties makes us all part of the pollution problem and therefore we are all responsible for the cost of stormwater damage and rebuilding our water infrastructure. Would you support a reasonable stormwater management utility fee based on a property's impervious surface?

Would depend on how reasonable and how reasonably and fairly distributed. Definitely would vote YES for such a fee as applied to new or substantially rehabbed developments, using as a model the Traffic Impact Studies (TIS) and fees imposed by the Department of Transportation on the specific traffic impact of new developments and the estimated costs to mitigate.

Plastic Bag Program

In Washington D.C. a small fee of only .05 cents per disposable bag, is highly effective in reducing plastic pollution. It has reduced demand for bags by 80% and plastic bag litter/pollution by 66%. Currently Baltimore City has a voluntary "plastic bag reduction program." Would you support an improved program with a small fee on plastic bags, if the money raised was spent on environmental cleanup, parks and open space, while providing free reusable bags to low income and elderly Baltimore City residents? Yes.

Environmental Justice

Many of Baltimore's economically disadvantaged areas and communities of color are subject to the hazards of environmentally harmful industries and facilities located in their communities. If elected, would you support a policy that requires applicants applying to build or expand facilities conduct and submit an "Environmental Justice Review" detailing any adverse and additional environmental, economic or public health impacts upon the air, land, water or people of the surrounding communities for which the permit or zoning is sought? What other way would you support these communities in their efforts for a clean environment?

I would support the requirement of an "Environmental Justice Review," but I doubt that residents of affected neighborhoods would trust a report prepared by the applicant industry. Because the City is no less suspect, I would support a City pre-application charge to the applicant to hire a private contractor to conduct the study and present its findings. Local affected neighborhoods and the applicant industry should be involved in preparing the Request For Proposals (RFP), to ensure relevance. After reviewing bid proposals, the City could then invite local affected neighborhoods, through a recognized and local non-profit of their choice, to choose its preferred contractor from three qualified applicants vetted and submitted to the community by the City.

Transportation

1. A great city needs a great transportation system. What changes would you suggest to Baltimore's transportation systems? How would you finance any new transportation projects?

Interconnecting and reliable mass transit routes of integrated and diverse modes.

2. What instructions and priorities will you give to advocate Baltimore City's representatives on the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board (BTRB)?

Please remember that Baltimore City has the 5th highest percentage in the United States of residents who do not own a vehicle, behind NYC and metropolitan New Jersey cities which whose residents enjoy reliable mass transit alternatives.

3. What will you do to improve and/or facilitate:

Construction of the Red Line?

Keep voting Democratic.

Biking and walking?

Enforce the Complete Streets law I introduced and the Mayor & City Council enacted which requires that, to accommodate specific user classes, pedestrian, biking, passenger vehicle, mass transit, trucking, and disabled representatives must be involved in the design of all of Baltimore City's new and substantially reconstructed arterial and major roadways --- with the aim of making such roadways accessible to and safe for the universe of users, An annual report is due to City Council on DOT's implementation of Complete Street requirements, including justification for any specific waivers granted to this meaningful involvement of key parties.

In addition, in the past 1 ½ years, I have introduced a package of resolutions and bills to protect bicyclists, to confirm their rights on the road, to legally establish bike lanes and to prohibit bike lane parking and standing, to require access to lockers in parking garages and employer locations, to call for better police training in bicycling law and consistent police reporting of accidents involving bicycles. All resolutions and bills in this package have been enacted. Special thanks to the Mayor's Bicycle Task Force for its suggestions, revisions and support. I have also been lead sponsor in promoting BMore Streets for People and enacting its status as a City advisory board for cyclovia events across the City.

The MTA operated bus system?

I work constantly with MTA to improve specific routes, and schedules, to locate and relocate specific stops, to help disabled riders, to better protect student riders, for example at the Poly/Western light rail stop..

Expansion of the Charm City Circulator?

In the wake of the tragic killing last July of Stephen Pitcairn, a Hopkins researcher walking home at 11pm from Penn Station,, Charles Village residents met twice in great numbers to outline a list of requirements to keep the neighborhood safer for its residents. One urgent request was for the extension of the Circulator up North Charles Street to University Parkway. This effort is gathering support throughout North Baltimore. Now that new and additional routes are being added to the Circulator, my effort is to make this northern route extension a reality. We may not be tourists, but we deserve such a service to keep us safe.

Add electric vehicles and plug in stations?

I am ON it. Trying to help General Services identify suitable private locations for plug in stations in my district. Must have adequate onsite parking, security, location convenient to densely populated residential areas. We need such stations, because many of us live in rowhouses with densely parked streets and no garages. We need alternatives for charging-up.

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