



CLEVELAND PARK
SMART GROWTH

2020 ANC Candidate Questionnaire

Thank you for running for Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner! ANCs play a key role in our neighborhoods and we are fortunate for those of you willing to dedicate volunteer service to making our communities better. This year, Cleveland Park Smart Growth is asking all candidates running in ANCs 3C and 3F to respond to our Candidate Questionnaire below. We will publish your responses on our website so voters can learn more about you.

There is no space limit to your responses so use as much space as you need under each question. Please use this document to enter your responses, save it with your last name in file name, and return it (ideally as a PDF) via email to cpsmartgrowth@gmail.com by **5pm on October 5th**.

Name: Sauleh Siddiqui
SMD: 3C05

- 1) As you may know, DDOT is studying the future operations of Connecticut Ave from Chevy Chase through Woodley Park. As an ANC Commissioner, what would your priorities be for the future configuration of Connecticut Ave?

My approach to our physical transportation infrastructure stems from the idea of Complete Streets. Complete Streets is a transportation policy and design approach that requires streets to be planned, designed, operated, and maintained to enable safe, convenient, and comfortable travel and access for users of all ages and abilities regardless of their mode of transportation. If the physical infrastructure for pedestrians, bicyclists, and people using buses is not safe or adequate, we must improve it in order to promote equity. While adequate parking is a part of Complete Streets, it shouldn't come at a cost to public safety. In Cleveland Park, DDOT is conducting a study to remove the reversible lanes on Connecticut Avenue and has presented options for the redesign that remove some on-street parking in order to add bicycle lanes. Currently, Connecticut Avenue is designed solely for car commuters and not the community or other users of the public infrastructure. We need to shift the balance away from car infrastructure towards more sustainable infrastructure. As chair of the Cleveland Park Citizens Association's (CPCA) Transportation committee, I understand these issues well and also have heard the diverse views of the neighborhood before forming my priorities.

My first priority for Connecticut Avenue would be the installation of protected bicycle lanes. Bicycle lanes have been shown to benefit the local economy, improve health and wellbeing, and reduce carbon emissions. In addition, car sales and car use has been going down in urban centers and we need to provide infrastructure to promote increased sustainable transit. We also need out-of-the-box thinking: while DDOT is considering only four options as part of its reversible lanes study, the fifth option by CPSG is more in line with Complete Streets. I am advocating for this fifth option or one

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of the DDOT options with protected bicycle lanes, as all the research and evidence suggests this will be good for our community.

My second priority would be to improve pedestrian safety and public space around Connecticut Avenue. If you try to walk from the corner of Ordway and Connecticut, where I live, to the Broadmoor, it's a confusing and dangerous zig-zagged pathway that goes through at least three traffic signals. There is also very little space along Connecticut Avenue for people to walk safely and congregate to build community. I would prioritize place-making for Connecticut Avenue to make it safer and more efficient for pedestrians. The Connecticut Avenue Streetscape project advances in this direction, and I look forward to the public plaza being developed as part of the Macklin project.

2) What policies should the city pursue that you would support as an ANC Commissioner to help reduce car-dependency?

As with the Complete Streets philosophy, I'll start with pedestrians and users of public infrastructure. Along with making our public infrastructure more suited for all individuals, we need to make our public transit more robust. Currently, DC takes an approach of reducing public transit service where there is lower demand to reduce costs. This is the wrong way to think about public transit. Study after study has shown that more reliable, robust, and frequent public transit leads to a larger percentage of farebox recovery, which is the money made from public transit systems. When people trust public transit, they use it more, and the transit system recovers more of its cost. Unfortunately, the city keeps reducing public transit options, thereby reducing the use of public transit and increasing car use. I would use my experience in urban transit to improve public transit in Cleveland Park by encouraging the city to increase Metro and bus frequency and safety. Second, the city needs to construct protected bicycle lanes, which make it easier for people to bicycle between city hubs. Currently, the safest way to bike from Cleveland Park southeast towards Woodley Park is to go almost a mile northwest towards Tilden street and then southeast! A bicycle lane down Connecticut Avenue that connects to Calvert Street would help connect bicyclists to their destinations.

3) Should this part of the city be contributing more new housing as the city grows? Why?

Ward 3 has contributed the least towards new housing as the city grows. I agree with Councilmember Mary Cheh when she says that all of Ward 3 needs more housing and more affordable housing. In fact, our neighborhood contributing towards more housing will help reduce the gentrification going on in other parts of the city, help the city grow sustainably, and increase foot traffic to local businesses. We should welcome well-designed apartments along Connecticut Avenue, like the Macklin project, which I support but my opponent does not. Such projects promote equity and are good for business and the planet. The proposal to expand Inclusionary Zoning that requires a percentage of affordable units for upzoned properties is something I will be looking into as well.

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3a) If yes, what are some of the ways in which your Single Member District and your broader Advisory Neighborhood Commission area can add housing?

My neighborhood can contribute its fair share by allowing modest multi-family homes in a diversity of places where they could not be built today due to relatively recent zoning restrictions. We have good examples of what has been called "missing middle housing" throughout Cleveland Park — duplexes, small apartments that look like large homes, and row houses. Much of it would be illegal if built today. By concentrating on such missing middle housing our neighborhood can easily contribute to housing while maintaining its historical character.

4) ANC 3C includes the Woodley Park Historic District and most of the Cleveland Park Historic District, while 3F includes part of the Cleveland Park HD (Sedgwick & Tilden Gardens). How will you approach Historic Preservation applications in your SMD (if applicable) and in your ANC generally?

I am not an expert on historic preservation, so I will heavily depend on the Historical Preservation Review Board for their suggestions. I will also be sure to incorporate the community's views about historic preservation. I think we can make balanced decisions about historic preservation that ensure our community maintains its historic look and feel. This is one area where our neighborhood excels. We have a strong track record of preserving historic architecture on our residential streets. However, we have recently had to make decisions about historic preservation in our commercial area. Here, we need to balance preservation and other public policy priorities. We can promote our commercial district while preserving the charming art-deco facades on our block. I think DC's Historic Preservation Office is doing a good job striking that balance right now.

5) What steps would you take to make your ANC more transparent, inclusive and engaged with your community?

Because of COVID, we have seen the advantage of online ANC meetings. Online ANC meetings promote participation from residents who would otherwise have trouble physically attending. Because these meetings are recorded, another advantage is a permanent record of ANC commissioner statements during meetings, something that did not exist before; this helps keep commissioners accountable. The interactive online option should be continued even if in-person resumes. This increases participation and is fair to people who have work or family obligations that cannot show up in person. I would also advocate for more transparency in general by publicly posting draft resolutions at the same time commissioners share them with their fellow commissioners. This gives the public a sense of where the debate is headed and time to weigh in. I would also like our specific ANC 3C to have more community input through a more robust committee structure. We have experts among us who live in our community, but 3C has only one active committee. There are no community committees focused on housing, transportation, pedestrian infrastructure, schools, parks, or recreation.

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6) What else do you want neighbors to know about you and why you are running to represent them?

I love Cleveland Park and have been volunteering for our community in several ways over the past five years. I serve on the board of the Cleveland Park Citizens Association, where I am chair of the Transportation committee and inaugural co-chair of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee. I also support Main Street as a volunteer and community member, and I am looking forward to partnering with them to ensure they have the support of the ANC as they enter their second year. Our businesses are facing unprecedented struggles due to COVID, in addition to challenges that have been ongoing for years. My hope is, together, we can make our commercial area not just a place for quick business transactions, but a place where people want to spend time, interact with neighbors, and support our businesses. As a current professor in Environmental Science and a former professor in Civil and Systems engineering, I have the relevant background for understanding urban infrastructure and design. Given my background and training, I believe in using empirical evidence to guide policy, and I will always make sure my decisions are driven by data. Cleveland Park is the coziest neighborhood in DC, and I will work very hard to keep it that way.

Use as much space as needed in your responses. Please save your responses to PDF format, include your last name in the file name, and email to cpsmartgrowth@gmail.com by 5pm, October 5th. Thank you!

About Cleveland Park Smart Growth

CP Smart Growth is a community of over 500 Cleveland Park-area residents who share an interest in promoting and discussing urbanist issues. Our mission is to advance smart growth policies in Cleveland Park to ensure an economically vibrant, environmentally sustainable, and socially inclusive neighborhood. We do this through education, organizing, and advocacy.

Learn more at cpsmartgrowth.com