THE BANNER

Baltimore County Council District 5

Banner Staff

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2026 Voter Guide: Baltimore County (The Banner)

What's the job: The legislative branch of Maryland's county governments. Responsible for introducing and voting on legislation, approving county spending and providing oversight of county operations. Elected to a four-year term.

Jump to a candidate

Candidates are listed in order of appearance on the ballot

Shawn McIntosh (D) | Nino Mangione (R) | Cory Shaffer (U)

Democratic

Name: Shawn McIntosh

Shawn McIntosh. (Diane Fink)

Age: 61

Personal: Married and part of a blended family of five children.

Education: Bachelor's degree, dramatic arts, St. Mary's College of Maryland.

Experience: Director of public health programs, Center for a Healthy Maryland; executive director, Sugar Free Kids Maryland; program manager, American Public Health Association; director of programs and advocacy, American Diabetes Association; executive director, Washington Village/Pigtown Neighborhood Planning Council; vice president of development, Center for Poverty Solutions.

Questionnaire

Q: What is the number one issue in your district, and how do you plan to address it?

A: The number one issue in our district is managing growth and development in a way that increases our population while preserving community character and addressing affordability. Residents are concerned about preserving the Urban-Rural Demarcation Line (URDL), protecting farmland and green space, and ensuring that new development doesn't outpace our infrastructure or change the character of our neighborhoods.

I will address this by strengthening long-term, data-driven planning and ensuring that development only occurs where roads, schools, water, and public safety services can support it. That includes enforcing and improving our Adequate Public Facilities policies, using impact fees responsibly, and focusing new growth in already developed areas where infrastructure is in place. This means revitalizing existing communities, thoughtfully reusing underutilized properties, and introducing

well-planned additions that fit the character of surrounding neighborhoods. Equally important, I will push for earlier and more meaningful community engagement in the planning process. I will bring residents into conversations before plans are finalized, not after. By aligning growth with infrastructure, protecting the URDL, and making planning more transparent and collaborative, we can meet our housing needs without sacrificing the character and sustainability of our district.

Q: What policies would you pursue to address rising costs of living and affordability concerns in Baltimore County?

A: To address rising costs of living and affordability concerns in Baltimore County, I would pursue a set of practical, locally focused policies that help families stay and thrive without sacrificing the character of our communities.

First, I would expand attainable housing by encouraging the construction of starter homes, smaller-scale housing options, and opportunities for seniors to downsize. This includes prioritizing the reuse of vacant and underutilized properties and making it easier to add well-designed housing that fits within existing neighborhoods, especially in areas where infrastructure is already in place. Second, I would support relief for homeowners and renters facing rising costs. That includes exploring targeted property tax relief for seniors and working families, strengthening tenant protections, and expanding access to first-time homebuyer programs. Third, I would ensure that growth pays for itself by enforcing strong Adequate Public Facilities policies and impact fees so that new development does not place additional financial strain on existing residents. Finally, I would address everyday costs by supporting access to affordable childcare, investing in workforce development, and promoting good-paying local jobs. Taken together, these

strategies can help ease financial pressure while maintaining the quality of life that draws people to Baltimore County.

Q: Baltimore County is facing a 19,000-unit deficit in housing. How do you plan to address this?

A: Addressing a 19,000-unit housing deficit requires a targeted, balanced approach that includes the right types of housing in the right places.

First, I would unlock existing capacity by updating zoning to allow smaller homes, accessory dwelling units, and modest infill that fits within existing neighborhoods. This expands options without changing community character. Second, I would prioritize the reuse of vacant and underutilized properties, like aging commercial sites, by streamlining approvals and offering incentives when projects include attainable housing. Third, I would revise and modernize the permitting process to reduce delays and uncertainty, which are major drivers of housing costs. Clear timelines, better coordination, and transparency will help move projects forward more efficiently. Fourth, I would require that a portion of new development includes attainable units through targeted incentives. Fifth, I would ensure growth aligns with infrastructure by strengthening Adequate Public Facilities policies so development occurs where schools, roads, and utilities can support it. Finally, I would expand homeownership opportunities through first-time buyer programs and partnerships to preserve and rehabilitate existing, older housing stock.

Q: Baltimore County has long faced accusations about backdoor dealing and limited transparency. How do you plan to earn people's trust in local government?

A: Transparency and accountability are core reasons I'm running for County Council using public financing. I believe our community deserves not just to be heard, but to be truly listened to, starting with changing how decisions are made and who is included in the process.

Too often, residents are brought in after decisions are made. I will prioritize early, meaningful community engagement by bringing residents into conversations at the beginning, when their input can genuinely influence outcomes. I will push for greater transparency in development and budgeting, including clear, accessible information about proposals, timelines, and decision-making criteria. That means strengthening public notice requirements, making materials easier to find and understand, and ensuring meetings are accessible both in person and online. Just as important, I will be visible and accessible through regular community forums, attending local meetings, and maintaining open lines of communication so residents know their concerns are not only heard, but acted on. Trust is built through consistent, transparent actions. My goal is to create a culture of openness where residents are true partners in shaping Baltimore County's future.

Q: As the council expands and becomes more diverse, how will you work to build consensus and collaborate with colleagues who hold different perspectives?

A: This new Council may be the most diverse Baltimore County has ever had across age, race, gender, and ideology and I see that as a strength. My years of coalition building have prepared me to be a consensus builder, bringing together people with different perspectives to find common ground and move shared priorities forward.

My approach starts with listening to understand. I take the time to understand the values and concerns that shape others'

positions, even when we disagree. That foundation builds trust and helps identify areas of agreement. I also focus on shared goals. In many cases, we want the same outcomes. We all want safe communities, strong schools, and responsible growth, even if we differ on how to get there. Keeping that in focus helps move conversations toward solutions. I rely on a data-driven and transparent decision-making process, using facts and community input to guide discussions and keep them grounded in real impacts. Finally, I bring a collaborative, solutions-oriented mindset, with a willingness to compromise when it leads to better outcomes for residents. Consensus doesn't mean everyone gets everything they want, it means everyone has been heard and that the final decision reflects a thoughtful, inclusive process.

Republican

Name: Nino Mangione

Candidate did not respond to The Banner's voter guide questionnaire.

Unaffiliated

Name: Cory Shaffer

Age: 39

Personal: Husband and father to two girls.

Education: Dual bachelor's degrees in Family and Community Relations and Political Science, East Carolina University.

Experience: Founder and owner of a mental health practice; helped build a national coalition of more than 100 organizations and organized a national economic action; built a community of more than 2,000 organizers across the country.

Questionnaire

Q: What is the number one issue in your district, and how do you plan to address it?

A: The number one issue is affordability. Housing, electricity, taxes. Everything is more expensive. We're paying more for the same things and we're getting less. When that happens, it's hard not to fall behind. We can't keep trying the same old solutions. I'll bring innovative approaches to lower costs and help residents earn more. I'd introduce countywide electricity purchasing to give residents more bargaining power over energy prices. I would use the county's power over zoning and permitting to produce more attainable housing and I'd tie economic-development to higher-paying jobs, instead of just counting jobs created. I'd also expand targeted property-tax relief so seniors aren't priced out of their homes.

But affordability isn't only about individual policies. Residents are fighting against institutions that are well funded and connected. They have lawyers and lobbyists, we have families and a life. Of course government works better for them. I'd use the Council office to build a network connecting neighborhoods, civic groups, and residents across the district so people can actually stand up to powerful interests. The same resources that donors and developers have should exist for regular people, too. Lowering costs will make life better. But giving communities the tools to fight for themselves helps make sure it stays that way

Q: What policies would you pursue to address rising costs of living and affordability concerns in Baltimore County?

A: Affordability has two sides. The cost of living and what people earn. We need to address both. For lowering costs, I'd start with BGE. We can use our bulk buying power to get lower rates. We have hundreds of thousands of homes and businesses all buying a product from the same company. We should be getting a discount, not paying a premium. This legislation will help fix that. In addition, I'd demand stronger community benefits and more attainable housing when developers ask for permits or zoning changes. Developers and donors can't get all the benefits while residents are stuck paying the price.

But lowering costs is only half the equation. We need to change how Baltimore County measures economic development. Right now we measure success by jobs announced or companies recruited. But the people working there can barely afford to live here. If a company wants county incentives, contracts or workforce dollars, I want to know what its jobs actually pay and how to give residents a path to obtaining them. Economic development should be measured by whether more Baltimore County residents can afford housing and childcare while still being able to build up savings. I won't pretend county government can raise everyone's salary overnight. Some changes will take a long time. But we can start using every tool we have to lower costs today while deliberately building an economy where residents earn more tomorrow.

Q: Baltimore County is facing a 19,000-unit deficit in housing, according to its Department of Housing and Community Development. How do you plan to address this? Please be more specific than: "I will build more housing."

A: Baltimore County doesn't just need more housing. It needs a way to produce more housing that ordinary people can actually afford. Simply approving more development doesn't guarantee that. And it leaves too much of the county's future in developers' hands. I'd create a public-private housing partnership modeled on successful approaches already used in Maryland. Baltimore County could identify appropriate county-owned, distressed, or underused properties and partner with private builders to create more attainable housing. The county could coordinate permitting and infrastructure, all while eliminating unnecessary delays. The private partners would bring construction expertise and assume much of the development work. The majority of the homes would have to remain attainable for the average person.

Most importantly, it can be structured so money comes back to the county when projects are completed and can then be invested into the next project. Instead of spending more money over and over, we create revolving public financing. We don't have to simply hope private developers solve the shortage. We can use use private-sector expertise, cut unnecessary red tape, build housing people can actually afford, then do it all again with the same funds on the next project.

Q: Baltimore County has long faced accusations about backdoor dealing and limited transparency. How do you plan to earn people's trust in local government?

A: You don't earn trust by talking about trust. You earn it over time through consistency and service. You show up. You answer people. You do what you said you would do.I know because I've already had to do it. To get on the ballot as an independent, I collected thousands of signatures and built relationships with hundreds of people across this district. Nobody had to give me their time or trust. I had to earn it. Backroom dealing is a big reason I'm running as an

independent. Too often, politicians become more accountable to donors, political relationships and getting reelected than to the communities they're supposed to represent. I am passionate about fighting it and cannot believe it's as bad as it's gotten. I'd require public disclosure of meetings between council offices and developers, lobbyists and major interests, including what was discussed. Major development proposals should have all documents available online before residents are asked to weigh in. I'd also create a public tracker showing major county commitments, who's responsible, and when the next deadline hits.

I don't want people discovering what government already did. I want them actively involved in what government is doing. We rebuild trust by giving people information before decisions are made and by giving them the power to do something about it.

Q: As the council expands and becomes more diverse in gender, race and ideology, how will you work to build consensus and collaborate with colleagues who hold different perspectives?

A: Consensus doesn't require everyone to think alike. It requires finding what needs to be accomplished and working together to get there. I will continue listening to people who live in different communities and learning from those with different life experiences. Different perspectives challenge our own assumptions and make solutions stronger. If another council member has an idea, I want to hear it. That's how I've always worked. I've built businesses, managed teams and organized people with very different backgrounds and beliefs. I helped bring together more than 100 organizations across the country to push for unified action. You don't accomplish that by requiring everyone to agree on everything. You identify what people have in common and figure out what they can accomplish together.

I'll bring that same approach to the Council. I'll fight hard for what I believe in while respecting the perspectives of the other members and looking for places where we can work together.We may disagree about how to get there, but ultimately we're all there for the same reason. To build stronger communities and a better Baltimore County.

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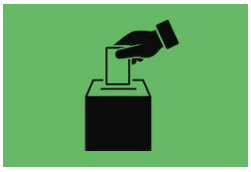

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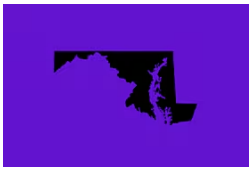

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