

**BOS Chair Candidate: Alicia Plerhoples**

NAACP Candidate Questionnaire

1. Will you support the renaming Robert E. Lee High School? (For School Board candidates “support” means voting to change the name?)

Yes

2. What is your opinion of the current AAP program?

It is imperative that FCPS meet the needs of all students where they are. FCPS should challenge those that need it and support those who need more help, but the AAP program is not working as it was intended. The current AAP program leaves many students of color and low-income students behind, putting them on a lower academic path than they could otherwise excel at. It has created overcrowding in some neighborhood schools and long bus rides in others. AAP has perpetuated inequities in opportunity across the county, as well as among our black and Latinx students. If ever there were a more necessary instance to apply our One Fairfax equity lens, it is to the AAP program.

3. Do you support the use of police body worn cameras? (For Supervisor candidates “support” means voting to fund use of body worn cameras for all Fairfax police)

Yes, but more importantly, police should have on-going training focused on recognizing racial bias, crisis intervention, and de-escalation techniques. Our officers are valued members of our community and should be given the tools necessary to ensure good community relations and positive interactions.

4. The county has determined a need for new housing to shelter 15,000 new families making less the \$70,000. Because of rising land and construction costs, new units in that price range require some form of public loans or grants. How many of these families should Fairfax County attempt to accommodate and how would you do it? What should happen to those who can find no affordable housing here?

Housing affordability is one of my top priorities. Our residents deserve fair and affordable housing. The Board of Supervisors’ Affordable Housing Resources Panel has recommended that an additional one penny, in addition to the existing half penny of the real estate tax allocated to housing, be dedicated to developing affordable housing (approximately \$38 million). I support this proposal but think that we must and can do more to fund affordable housing. Fairfax County has several programs and policies to support affordable housing but it is not doing them at a scale that matches the need. Arlington County has promised to provide an additional \$70 million over the next 10 years; Alexandria has promised \$80 million as well. Fairfax County has some catching up to do to adequately fund affordable housing. Our solutions to the affordable housing crisis must be multi-pronged and include budgetary,

zoning, and public-private solutions. For example, I support a comprehensive analysis of the 82.25% of residential developable area that is zoned exclusively for single-family detached housing to increase affordable housing supply by rezoning for duplexes, triplexes, and 2-4 unit structures. I also support an affordable housing overlay zone like Arlington County has that supports preservation or one-to-one replacement of affordable housing. We must modernize our land use and zoning policies to expand development opportunities for affordable housing. I also support a review and analysis of our lengthy permitting and site approval process -- there is potential to introduce a streamlined process exclusively for market affordable, affordable, and workforce housing. We must also preserve our market affordable homes. When we revitalize an area, we should insist on a plan of "no net loss" of market affordable units.

I support living wages -- one of the causes of the affordable housing crisis is that household incomes have only experienced modest increases while rents and housing prices have soared. Finally, I have pledged to not accept any political contributions from real estate development companies in my campaign for Chairman. I think it is a conflict of interest to accept such contributions while also trying to fix the affordable housing crisis in the county. We must incentivize real estate development companies to build more affordable and workforce housing units, including units for families and units for residents who are not at the top of the AMI scale.

5. Would you support increasing the power of the civilian review panel?

Yes

6. What do you believe county should do to address the overcrowding in schools?

Research: The Fairfax County School Board recently agreed to spend \$1-billion in order to expand and build onto schools throughout Fairfax County, as well as approving the 2020-2024 2020-24 Capital Improvement Program. Due to the overcrowding at McLean High school, parents have begun pushing for an action plan and building an expansion for the high school. We must address overcrowding in our schools. The Board of Supervisors and School Board have a memorandum of understanding capping the capital facilities projects annually at \$180m. I support the requested \$25m increase to capital facilities that School Board Chair Karen Corbett Sanders has requested.

I also support a comprehensive review of school boundaries, which has not been done since 1984. School boundary adjustments will help to alleviate some overcrowding.

Long term, we must expand sources of revenue to support our schools, including re-introduction of the Meals Tax. As Chairman, I will also work collaboratively to continue the current Board's legislative priority for increased state funding for our public schools through our Legislative Program.

7. Many jurisdictions have stopped prosecuting possession of marijuana, do you believe Fairfax County should adopt a similar policy?

Prosecution of marijuana possession disproportionately affects African Americans, Latinx, and low-income communities where transactions are conducted in public spaces. The county should

review the trends and statistics on convictions and the subsequent impact on residents and support the Commonwealth Attorney in adopting a policy that is more equitable, including stopping the use of the Commonwealth Attorney's limited resources to prosecute simple marijuana possession.

8. Many jurisdictions are ending the use of cash bail, what is your position on this issue?

I support ending the use of cash bail. Only those who are deemed by a court to not be dangers to the community are eligible for pretrial release. Therefore, this is not a public safety issue but an equity issue. Poor people should not have to remain in jail until their trial simply because they cannot afford cash bail. I support other non-monetary conditions of release.

9. Do you believe that Amazon moving to the area will have a negative impact on Fairfax County? If so, please explain what should be done. If not, please explain.

Businesses that move to our area strengthen our local economy. However, thirty percent of Amazon employees are projected to live in Fairfax County while we do not receive the commercial property tax revenue from Amazon because it will be located in Arlington. This will impact housing affordability, traffic patterns, and our public school division. The Board of Supervisors and School Board have a duty to ensure that these impacts are mitigated so that economic growth does not come at the expense of our residents. Solutions include addressing housing needs and overcrowding in our schools (which I've addressed in response to the other questions in this questionnaire).

We also need transit solutions. My three transportation priorities for Fairfax County are (1) to make Fairfax County the premiere U.S. hub for autonomous, connected vehicles to reduce traffic congestion, greenhouse gas emissions, and traffic fatalities; (2) to solve Fairfax County's "first-mile / "last-mile" transportation problem to increase metro and bus ridership, reduce traffic congestion, greenhouse gas emissions; and (3) to focus on transit-oriented development and new transit links in Fairfax County's aging commercial corridors.

10. What is the most important policy the County can promote or adopt to live up to the One Fairfax resolution?

One Fairfax is an excellent policy that needs to be implemented across County programs. There are no silver bullets to implementing equity -- a single policy could not singularly uphold or live up to One Fairfax. I say this not to be glib, but because I have experience in implementing equity. I have served as the Chair of Diversity and collaborated closely with our Chief Equity Officer at the law school where I teach. Implementing equity is challenging, hard work that requires a multi-pronged approach and the political courage to intentionally and systematically break down barriers that create inequities and gaps in opportunity.

11. When the Housing and Community Development office opened its housing choice voucher waiting list this winter, 12,000 people applied and 2,000 were chosen by lottery to be on a wait list of about 2 years. What should be done to assist the other 10,000 very low-income people who applied to the list?

The federal Housing Choice Voucher program provides these rental subsidies, but the need is much greater than the federal government provides. The county must assist those unable to access these subsidies. Fairfax County has several programs and policies to support affordable housing but it is not doing them at a scale that matches the need. One avenue to build affordable housing at the lowest end of the AMI scale is county collaboration with faith-based institutions like churches and mosques who have available land on their sites and can also provide other services like daycare facilities on site. Another avenue is to provide public land for affordable housing. Finally, Fairfax County should expand its Affordable Dwelling Unit Rental Program for people who qualify for federal housing vouchers but are not assisted.

12. A new survey shows there are 9,500 market rate housing units affordable to families making less than \$70K in Fairfax County. As land values rise driving rents up and many of these older units are turned into townhouses, we are in danger of losing affordable housing. The county policy is that there should be “no net loss, if possible” of affordable housing. What does “if possible” mean to you? To the county?

“If possible” expresses a lack of commitment. The county has lost affordable housing at an alarming rate. Fairfax County has several programs and policies to support affordable housing but it is not doing them at a scale that matches the need. I’ll set the agenda to increase workforce and affordable housing to ensure that everyone benefits from the economic growth of the county and we’re not pushing people out.

Every Fairfax County resident deserves the opportunity to live somewhere affordable, convenient, and safe. But housing development has not kept pace with

job growth in our county. Seniors cannot afford to age in place. Millennials cannot afford to return to where they grew up. Teachers, nurses, and county employees cannot afford to live where they work. Our county is not sufficiently addressing its affordable and workforce housing crisis. Affordable and workforce housing is a values issue; it’s the right thing to do. But it is also an economic issue. The county’s current approach to housing is not sustainable for economic growth—businesses need an accessible workforce to do business here.