

June 16, 2021

Tom Hucker, President  
and the Montgomery County Council  
100 Maryland Ave.  
Rockville, Md 20850

It is an outrage that our County Council would even allow such an incomplete special interest giveaway to developers to the detriment of the health safety and welfare of the public. It is clearly not comprehensive and does not address the environment and our commitment to reduce our carbon footprint or how to cope with the falling job growth which is and has been plaguing our County for over a decade.

Thrive Montgomery is a misnomer, it contradicts its stated goals of diversity and equitable solutions to affordability and thriving cohesive communities. This plan dismantles neighborhood compatibility, diversity, and cohesion which these communities have spent the last 60 years creating. It is important to recognize these communities built neighborhoods. This plan dissolves our neighborhoods, with sweeping changes, using so called "words" like complete and compact communities.

This plan does not consider major impediments which exist today. It ignores the deleterious effects of over densification of the past which has led to neighborhood flooding (Sligo Creek, Rock Creek, Turkey Branch Stream Valley and others), contamination of our streams, waterways and drinking water. This plan does not consider major aging infrastructure needs (Storm Water, Water and Sewer and Electric Grid), which today is overburdened; this plan exacerbates these impacts.

The plan speaks to affordability yet displaces tens of thousands of hard working families which are in need and currently live along these corridors. This plan chooses to create gentrification and further divides neighborhoods.

On the East side of our County, this plan does not give substantive solutions to our growing problems with overcrowded schools, low SAT scores which it must be noted Kennedy High School has the lowest achievement scores in the County as stated in Thrive Montgomery. This Plan does not offer solutions to the challenges of these schools such as high ESOL populations, farm rates, mobility rates, yet the plan proposes to exacerbate these challenges with doubling of density along our major corridors and activity centers. This Plan ignores the realities of commuting and climate changes which is causing extensive storms beyond the one-year storm which is the minimum review and mitigation required for new development.

The Plan was developed in the dead of night during a pandemic when attention was diverted to more threatening concerns and did not take into account the valuable historical knowledge and experience of our residents. This Plan is a boom for developers and a bust for the quality of life and character of our neighborhoods. This Plan did not include the public in its creation and this is apparent from the draft being considered today.

For these, and many other reasons, I request the Council reject this draft, remand it back to Park and Planning, and require a complete roll out including all residents. What is the rush? We are better than this. Our County is nationally renowned for including community.

Cary Lamari