



MONTGOMERY HOUSING ALLIANCE

www.montgomeryhousingalliance.org

A coalition of organizations focused on increasing the rate of preservation and development of affordable housing in Montgomery County

TESTIMONY ON THRIVE MONTGOMERY 2050 Montgomery Housing Alliance

June 17, 2021

Good evening, Council President Hucker and members of the Council. My name is Mary Kolar, and I am testifying on behalf of the Montgomery Housing Alliance. MHA is a coalition of organizations focused on increasing the rate of affordable housing preservation and development in Montgomery County. MHA members include non-profit developers, organizations that serve people in need of affordable housing, and other groups who count affordable housing as one of their policy goals.

MHA strongly supports the proposed draft of Thrive Montgomery 2050, especially its recognition of the need for increased housing development and affordability, specifically missing middle housing. We also value the included actions around adaptive reuse, incentivizing accessible housing through non-tax incentives, flexible zoning, and financial and administrative help for affordable housing developers. We do, however, feel that Thrive can take an even stronger position on housing issues to ensure that into the future Montgomery County neighborhoods are affordable to households of all incomes, including those with the lowest incomes.

As you know, the need for affordable housing in Montgomery County is acute and is projected to increase. In 2018, the County estimated a gap of 48,000 units affordable to households with incomes at or below 50% of the area median income, and between 2020 and 2040 this gap is projected to grow. We are pleased to see increased support for existing housing programs, like the MPDU Program and the Housing Initiative Fund, included in Thrive, but feel it is critical for Thrive to include more explicit messaging around subsidized housing and around meeting the housing need of those with the lowest incomes, including through expansion of shelter space, permanent supportive housing, and rental assistance programs.

We also support Thrive's call for reform of single family zoning. It is crucial to expand the range of housing types to meet diverse needs and foster a diverse population. It is important to ensure that households of all incomes can afford homes in all parts of the County. Thrive presents an opportunity to reform single family zoning in predominantly white, high income areas – a necessary step towards undoing policies that have perpetuated racial and economic



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segregation in our region. Toward this end, we encourage socioeconomic integration be more explicitly included in the vision Thrive articulates.

Again, we are pleased to see the attention Thrive gives to housing development and affordability and feel that with an expanded focus on subsidized housing and meeting the housing needs of those with the lowest incomes it will be an even stronger blueprint for the County's future.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input as you consider Thrive Montgomery 2050.



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