

Testimony for June 17 2021 Council Meeting on Thrive 2050

Submitted by Robert Bein

There are a lot of ideas raised in Thrive 2050 that ignore reality. For example, the draft plan doesn't take into account how life in MoCo will change as a result of the pandemic, whether it relates to a likely reduction in revenues to the county, or how permanent working from home will become, with its concomitant effect on commuting, or how many people will remain unemployed with all of those ramifications.

Also, the elderly aspect is particularly important given the likely growth in that population over the next 20-30 years. It's unrealistic to expect this age group will be walking and biking or standing out in the rain/snow/heat/cold waiting for public transportation--in fact that would be downright dangerous. A Montgomery County Planning Dept. report projects that by 2040, those over 65 in MoCo will be more than 20% of the population, the second largest population group!

And given the weather conditions in the general Bethesda area as an example, it's not just the elderly who won't be riding bikes or walking to work. Did you know that in 2020, there were **263** days when there was precipitation, temperatures below 32°, or temperatures above 85°???

Thrive 2050 anticipates significant zoning changes that can destroy the character of many of our beautiful neighborhoods. Allowing duplexes, triplexes and quadplexes to be built in single family residential areas *without the input of community opinion* is dictatorial and doesn't consider the impact of increased traffic, loss of parking, school overcrowding. This is not the way to provide the so called missing middle market housing, especially since developers would be charging market rates!

Here's a better idea: convert all those office buildings that will no longer be filled after the pandemic, into apartments! Then people can really walk to work and to shops without getting into their cars. Let the Planning Dept. spend some time developing the details of that plan.

In its present form, the County Council MUST NOT approve this plan.