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To: county.council@montgomerycountymd.gov
Subject: Thrive Montgomery 2050 - June 17 Hearing at 7:30 pm written testimony
Date: Wednesday, June 16, 2021 3:11:26 AM

June 15, 2021

Montgomery County Council
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- sent by email 06/16/2021

Gentlemen:

Regarding Thrive Montgomery 2050, for the June 17 2021 hearing at 7:30 pm, I want to testify with two written comments. These are:

First, on page 96, the Thrive Montgomery 2050 report states: "Expansion and diversification of our housing stock is an essential step toward reducing these kinds of racial and socioeconomic inequality. By 2045, the people of color are forecast to make up 73 percent of the county's population, with a significant percentage earning less than \$50,000 a year. In order to match the anticipated incomes and housing types suited to the county's future population, about half of all new dwellings will need to be rental units in multifamily buildings (including both apartment and townhome, duplex, triplex, and quadplex units) and more than one quarter will need to be for-sale units in multifamily buildings (including condominiums and other attached and semi-detached building types). With more than one-third of the county's land area currently zoned for single family residences, these needs will be difficult to meet."

Rental units do not build equity. Other sources have complained that some racial minorities do not have a high level of wealth and assets, as they have not inherited houses and property passed from parent to child. If people are RENTING, they cannot pass a house appreciated in home value to their children. Furthermore, giving a condo apartment unit to an adult child is lower value than a stand-alone house with yard, as it has no or very little land and its value depends on how well the total building is kept up. One beautiful unit in a building of ten co-op apartments or townhouses, where nine are in disrepair, 30 years out from when the parents bought, is not going to be high value.

Do not be so negative on single-family houses with yards. Many neighborhoods in Gaithersburg are mixed ethnicity, with Hispanic, white, Asian and black homeowners living next door to each other. Do not deny people of all races the opportunity to buy a house and enjoy the yard, while they raise children.

Second, consider this June 12 2021 article on a subdivision of houses built in the Southwest United States. See <https://www.zerohedge.com/economics/wealth-redistribution-blackrock-and-other-institutional-investors-buying-entire> .

To quote two paragraphs from the article, " As an example, a 124 new home neighborhood was bought in its entirety in Texas. Average Americans were outbid to a tune of \$32 million. Homes sold at an average of 20% above listing. Now the entire neighborhood is made up of SFR's. What are SFR's?? <https://t.co/luVQEXUeKy>
— CulturalHusbandry (@APhilosophae) June 9, 2021 [SFR is Single Family Rental.]

" This is wealth redistribution, and it ain't rich people's wealth that's getting redistributed. It's normal American middle class, salt of the earth wealth heading into the hands of the worlds most powerful entities and individuals. The traditional financial vehicle gone forever.

— CulturalHusbandry (@APhilosophae) June 9, 2021"

Montgomery County MD has less open land than the southwest United States. But try to take care that neighborhoods of post WWII ramblers with small yards are not bought up and demolished to create space for new, crowded and densely packed housing with minimal yards, that will be a boon to developers, placing three houses, say, where one once stood, all with new appliances, lay-out, and structure, so more expensive. The older Rambler could have been bought by a young family and "fixed up" by their own and extended family labor, with a yard for children to enjoy.

Note that similar renewal took place in Fairfax VA. See "In Fairfax, High-Density Suburban Renewal," Washington Post, Tues, Sept 03, 2002, page A01. This article states, "At the end of this month, the quiet Fairfax communities of Dixie Hill, Centennial Hills, and Legato Acres will begin to be wiped out. Gone will be the ramblers, Colonials, and split-levels built on generous wooded lots from the 1950s through the 70s. Gone too will be the trees, playground,

"DixGenGato, as the communities came to be called, is a prime example of ...[older] Fairfax... [situated on] ample lots and detached homes. When its demolition is complete, this piece of Washington's suburban history will have been erased.... a harbinger ... as developers seek to convert older neighborhoods to more profitable use.

"One by one, 88 of the 100 homeowners in DixGenGato sold out earlier this summer to Centex Homes, a national home builder. The lots, most ranging in size from a half-acre to an acre, went in some cases for as much as \$500,000. ...

"On the 80-plus-acre site will eventually rise more than 1,000 townhouses and apartments and a handful of detached houses, densely packed onto new streets. It will be one big development, with one new name, Fair Chase."

".... The neighborhoods and their large wooded lots became either an oasis or an anomaly in the era of 'smart growth.'

"Centex spent more than two years negotiating to buy the properties for about \$36 million overall, but its success followed about 15 years of DixCenGato homeowners fighting and negotiating with a succession of developer hopefuls....

"[One homeowner said] some neighbors 'were taken advantage of. Some were intimidated into selling.'

"[Another homeowner who was offered a property contract, but countered it, found that] When four of her neighbors either didn't sign or weren't included, she said Centex simply left her out.

"'I get mad every time I see the surveyors,' said Herring. 'I never realized that the land could be consolidated and that they wouldn't buy all the houses.'"

[NOTE: This newspaper article runs four 8.5 x 11 inch pages when printed. As it is from 2002, one may need to go to the library to find and print a copy.]

Sincerely,

K. George