



June 14, 2021

Re: Thrive Montgomery 2050

From: Montgomery County Water Quality Advisory Group
To: County Council Members:

Purpose: The Water Quality Advisory Group (WQAG) provides a formal stakeholder group for public involvement in the County's watershed protection and restoration strategies. It provides recommendations to the County Executive and the County Council on water quality management goals and policies, program priorities, and funding.

In December 2020, the WQAG reviewed the Thrive Montgomery 2050 Public Hearing Draft Plan and highlighted that the plan does not mention the importance of drinking water quality in the County, which is a current issue facing the County and is likely to become more problematic under the current climate change scenarios.

Recently, the WQAG reviewed the Thrive Montgomery 2050 April 2021 Planning Board Draft. Although the plan mentions water quality in the context of stream restorations, this draft did not mention "upgrading the county's water supply and distribution systems", which was provided in the Public hearing draft, and again, the April 2021 draft did not mention the importance of the quality of drinking water in the County.

Because quality drinking water is so critical to Montgomery County and its citizens, the WQAG respectfully recommends the following to be included in the Thrive Montgomery 2050 April 2021 Planning Board Draft. Changes to the current Plan's sentences are in **bold**.

Page 115:

"Nonetheless, the environmental performance of green infrastructure on public land must keep getting better to improve water quality, **improve drinking water sources, protect water supply**, limit property damage and erosion from flooding, and add tree and forest cover."

Page 122:

"Selectively acquire additional land where needed to protect sensitive natural resources, improve water quality **and drinking water sources, protect water supply**, increase

tree cover, enhance wildlife corridors, curb invasive species, and achieve other environmental goals.”

Appendix A, Page 142:

Environmental Protection

“The Plan emphasizes the role of ‘smart urbanism’ incorporating a compact form of development, preservation of land for agriculture and conservation and natural resources, a strong park system, and reduced reliance on driving is the most effective way to make population growth and economic activity more sustainability. The Plan includes ambitious recommendations designed to reduce vehicle miles traveled, encourage more energy efficiency buildings, and a variety of other steps to cut greenhouse gas emissions, protect water quality **and drinking water sources, protect water supply**, and enhance tree cover and other environmental resources.”

We thank you for the opportunity to provide our comments to the Thrive Montgomery 2050 Plan. We believe these small, yet effective changes, can emphasize the importance of drinking water quality issues that exist within Montgomery County and would be addressed by this new plan.

Sincerely,

Pamela Rathbone
and
Tracy Rouleau

Co-chairs of the Montgomery County Water Quality Advisory Group