

Dear Montgomery County Council,

I'm writing in support of the letter submitted by the Stormwater Partners of Montgomery County commenting on the Thrive Montgomery 2050 plan.

We must be moving towards gaining forested areas to help protect our waterways, address climate change, combat air pollution, reduce heat islands and last but most definitely not least, to maintain the biodiversity that is crucial to all of life.

Simply replanting following a project is not at all the same as protecting existing forests and stream valleys. The density and complexity both in terms of species and genetics cannot simply be replanted. It is very likely that once a forest is removed for development or other purposes, it's full function is never fully recoverable.

Please modify the plan and rewrite it with a holistic ecological approach. Our entire region will benefit from that approach through improved quality of life, reduced costs to mitigate stormwater, and a host of other benefits that come with a complex and ecologically balanced system.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lauren Hubbard". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lauren Hubbard, Ph.D.