

My name is Naomi Spinrad and I'm speaking on behalf of the Chevy Chase West Neighborhood Association, nearly 500 homes south of Bradley Boulevard and west of Wisconsin Avenue.

My community has four points to make tonight.

First, Thrive has a limited, single-track view of the future. It is the legal predicate for legislation and zoning changes but it ignores potential long-term alterations in how we live and work due to technology and environmental, health, and even national security concerns.

It is too prescriptive. Too often it says "must" instead of "should," a distinction with a difference when it comes to adopting actions to achieve its goals. "Must" is a command. "Should" is a recommendation. "Should" allows flexibility as successful policies, actions, and practices are identified. Thrive promises to achieve its goals based on concepts that have not been applied widely or long enough for us to be reasonably certain they will work as advertised, or at least not cause harm or unintended negative consequences.

Second, without broad and transparent public participation you cannot achieve public buy-in. With Thrive, extensive engagement has been impeded by the pandemic and the lack of charrettes or a diverse citizens advisory panel. The council must embrace extensive public engagement as it moves forward with Thrive and with implementation. The master planning process must be the primary mechanism for implementation.

Third, demand evidence from the Planning Board. It objected to OMB's fiscal analysis but provided none of its own, and has not adequately answered concerns raised by agencies and departments. The Board claims Thrive will be better for our economy but we haven't seen the data.

Finally, Thrive is too important to rush through the established process.

I will be submitting more detailed written testimony. Thank you for the opportunity to speak.