

For 36 years I lived in downtown Silver Spring. My immediate neighborhood of 90 homes was (and still is) composed of its own "United Nations" diversity. A rainbow of colors and the rainbow itself is represented in our community, yet there is a blatant socioeconomic inequality between the east and west side of the county primarily caused by the county's own policies. Silver Spring is inundated with affordable housing while Bethesda continues to build more million-dollar condos. Silver Spring apartments are mostly RENTALS depriving an opportunity for building EQUITY while most of the apartments in Bethesda are condos. "Thrive" will only exacerbate this problem. "Thrive" will clearly impact the more modest neighborhoods such as Silver Spring and will attract speculators looking to make quick & fat profits, which in turn will increase property values (taxes) causing displacement of older homeowners and those of modest means. Where's the "Racial Equality and Social Justice" in that?

This "Thrive" plan will only exacerbate the blatant inequality and division of Montgomery Co. It will clearly impact mostly modest neighborhoods such as Silver Spring under the guise of a new "vision" in creating Missing Middle Housing (MMH). It will NOT likely be applied to job rich/better schools Bethesda.

I have come to realize the underhanded reasons for segregating the "haves" & "have nots". Montgomery county has a reputation for the BEST schools in the country. Of course, that applies to schools primarily in the WEST side of [MO.CO.](#) interestingly enough, minority numbers have no bearing on how well a school does. POOLSVILLE High School rates #1 with 49% minority students but only 6% receive free lunch benefits. Whitman H.S. rates #2 with 33% minority students with only 2% free lunch(ers). #3-Wootton H.S.-56% minority, 5% free lunch(ers). #4-W. Churchill-50% minority, 4% free lunch(ers). Then comes #14-BLAIR H.S.-77% minority, 36% free lunch(ers). #17-Weaton-92% minority, 50% free lunch(ers).

I think you get the picture. So, the best and ONLY way to retain the HIGH RATINGS and great reputation of "great schools" in Montgomery County is to keep the free lunch(ers) OUT of the best schools because the higher the free lunch ratios the poorer the schools perform. Hence, the reasoning to promote this Missing Middle Housing plan for areas already saturated by affordable housing, adding to the segregation in this county.

What promoters of "Thrive" do NOT see is the potential of an adverse effect as speculators replace smaller, modest homes with larger, more expensive homes/duplexes, quads, etc., adding to already burdened infrastructure, water run-off, impacting the environment with loss of trees, and increasing density in neighborhoods already high in density. Clearly, only the RICH and WHITE neighborhoods will thrive with "Thrive".

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