

Michael Shapiro

November 30th, 2021

Montgomery County Council

Michael Shapiro

President

The Sustainable Growth Project

Dear County Council,

My name is Michael Shapiro, I am a junior at Bethesda-Chevy Chase high school, as well as the founder and president of the Sustainable Growth Project. The Sustainable Growth Project is a student-led activism initiative my team and I launched, looking to ensure that local growth is socio-economically sustainable. Looking at 'Thrive Montgomery 2050', we find that the framework actively conforms to the project's objectives, as well as the needs of my peers and Montgomery County in the long run. Thus, as the next generation of Montgomery County residents, my peers and I overwhelmingly support the passing of Thrive Montgomery 2050 as not only the framework of Montgomery County's future, but our future.

There hasn't been a comprehensive framework for development passed in over 50 years, and we are currently following an extremely outdated platform. Montgomery County today is nearly unrecognizable to its state in 1969, and our framework should reflect that. The 'Wedges and Corridors' plan addressed the problems of its time, but this time has since passed. Now, more than 50 years later, we need a plan that addresses the objectives of our time most effectively. By 2050, when our generation is adults, the last thing we would want is for our county's potential to be the premier place to work, live, and raise a family to be unfulfilled.

Many of the greatest demands of our progressive generation are not only answered by Thrive, but actively developed by it as well. This can be seen time and time again in the layers of 'Thrive Montgomery 2050'. It could be mitigating climate change by not only promoting access to alternative transportation, but also promoting green energy alternatives. It could also be promoting ease of access to housing by not only suggesting the construction of new housing, much of it affordable, but also by laying the framework for the development of existing communities. The point is, no matter which approach you take, Thrive Montgomery 2050 is a plan that properly represents our values, our goals, and our future.

To make sure our opinions were consistent with our fellow MCPS students, we cast a survey to gauge the consensus among MCPS students. We got overwhelmingly strong results in favor of Thrive 2050 from all around Montgomery County. In just a few short days, we surveyed 100 students across 10 different MCPS high schools, with 97 percent of students in support of the framework. Whether it be a student from Quince Orchard High School attributing her support to the public transportation improvements, or a student from Wootton High School attributing her support to the formation of equitable growth opportunities, there are many different reasons why students across the county support Thrive Montgomery 2050's passing. Thus, the consensus around 'Thrive Montgomery 2050' among our generation, the generation of greatest impact, is overwhelmingly in favor of its passing.

Seeing the consensus among my fellow Montgomery County Public School students, we strongly encourage you, as the elected representative body of Montgomery County, to be representative of the future desired by us, the county's future, and vote in favor of Thrive Montgomery 2050.

Sincerely,

Michael Shapiro