

MEMORANDUM

September 15, 2021

TO: Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee

FROM: Pamela Dunn, Senior Legislative Analyst
Linda McMillan, Senior Legislative Analyst
Glenn Orlin, Senior Analyst
Gene Smith, Legislative Analyst
Keith Levchenko, Senior Legislative Analyst

SUBJECT: Thrive Montgomery 2050

PURPOSE: Worksession to review the Planning Board Draft Thrive Montgomery 2050 Plan

Councilmembers may wish to bring their copy of the Plan to the meeting.

This is the Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee's fourth worksession on the Planning Board's Thrive Montgomery 2050 Draft Plan. The first worksession provided contextual information on general plans—what they are, what they contain, and how they differ from area master plans and functional plans. At the second worksession, the Planning Department provided a briefing to the Committee, presenting more detail on the creation of the Plan and a more thorough explanation of the Plan's vision. The third worksession, on July 26, covered the introductory section of the Plan¹.

This worksession covers the first two chapters in the Plan—the chapters on Compact Growth and Complete Communities. On September 27, the Committee worksession will cover the chapters on Design, Arts and Culture, and Transportation and Communication Networks. The chapters on Affordable and Attainable Housing, and Parks and Recreation will be the topic of the October 4 worksession. And, on October 11, the Committee will hold a final worksession on any remaining or follow up issues as well as the Conclusion and a revised Introduction. Once the Council receives the Executive's Fiscal Impact Statement (FIS), a review of the FIS will be added to one of the scheduled worksessions.

¹ Following a review of the remaining chapters in the Plan, edits to the Introduction will be covered in the final Committee worksession.

Background

The Committee's review of the introductory section of the Plan established that this Plan is not a whole scale rewrite of the wedges and corridor plan, but a refinement of the ideas introduced by the wedges and corridor concept - to concentrate growth in downtowns, town centers, and rural villages, and to promote growth along major transportation corridors to maximize the efficient use of land. As noted in the introduction, the policies and practices put forth in this general plan are centered on three overarching objectives: economic health, racial equity and social justice, and environmental resilience. The Planning Board Draft weaves these objectives through each chapter in a departure from the Public Hearing Draft and earlier general plans that included chapters or sections dedicated to the economy and the environment. The Committee supports the change in format; however, they requested that each chapter provide a clearer connection between the three overarching objectives² and the content of the chapter. Attached on © 1-16 is a revised version of Chapter 1 that incorporates suggested edits³ to text made by the Committee and Council staff during the July worksessions.

To help orient readers for this review, it is useful to know that the first three chapters of the Plan lay out the foundation for the County's growth at three different scales: Compact Growth, which defines growth from a regional & Countywide perspective; Complete Communities, which lays out the vision for communities and neighborhoods; and the Design, Arts and Culture chapter, which provides guidance at the "ground level", focusing on the design of blocks and buildings. The following three chapters in the Plan define how certain infrastructure or land use functions (transportation, housing, parks) should support the pattern of growth defined in the first three chapters.

In addition to understanding the format of the Plan, it is also important to keep in mind the vision for growth that Thrive 2050 is designed to encourage and support. In their briefing to the Committee on July 21, the Planning Department summarized its vision of Montgomery County in 2050 as one which will:

- Maintain a constrained growth area;
- Reintroduce East County growth corridors as key to racial equity and economic competitiveness;
- Place an emphasis on East/West growth corridors with transit;
- Protect the Agricultural Reserve and make it more accessible and relevant to the whole County; and
- Look for new ways of thinking about growth such as Parking Lots to Places, Complete Communities, and 15-Minute Living.

Last, given the volume of correspondence regarding Thrive 2050, the Attainable Housing Study, and the rezoning of single-family detached homes, it may be helpful to reaffirm that the General

² Section headings for text related to each objective and icons attached to each policy statement indicating the objective it supports (Economic Health (Ec), Racial Equity and Social Justice (Eq), and Environmental Resilience (Env)) have been added to the Draft Plan.

³ The edits include the addition of definitions and information/explanations and some reorganization of text where necessary for clarity and readability.

Plan is a policy document. It does not change the zoning on any property, nor change current regulations related to land use such as development approvals, transportation infrastructure, or environmental requirements.

Chapter 1: Compact Growth: Corridor-Focused Development

As noted above, compact, corridor-focused growth is not a new idea. In this chapter, the Plan reinforces the land use goal of concentrating growth in downtowns, town centers, and neighborhood villages and promotes greater growth along the County's major transportation corridors. The rationale for policies that support this goal is to establish a web connecting residents to existing and future centers of activity and to make the most efficient use of land.

2050 Growth Map

How the corridors, growth areas, and centers are defined and where they are located establishes a framework for expectations regarding future growth. During the briefing to the Committee on July 21, Planning staff provided more thorough definitions of the growth areas and centers. The Committee requested this information be added to the Plan. The following are the definitions provided by Planning staff:

Corridor-Focused Growth⁴ area: Envisioned to have the largest share of new growth. It encompasses the most developed part of the County with the highest-density population and employment centers, and the infrastructure to support existing and new development.

Limited Growth⁵ area: Contains mainly suburban, residential communities where limited, organic growth is envisioned to meet localized needs for services, provide a diverse range of housing choices, and increase racial and socioeconomic integration to achieve Complete Communities.

Rural Areas and the Agricultural Reserve⁶: Continue to be dedicated primarily to agriculture, rural open space, and environmental preservation. It can absorb some growth as agriculture evolves and existing residential communities' needs change over time.

In addition to the growth areas, the 2050 Growth Map identifies several existing and potential centers of activity at a variety of scales. The centers are categorized as either Large, Medium, Small, or Villages and Neighborhood Centers.

Large Centers are envisioned as the highest intensity areas, generally characterized by significant residential and/or commercial density either existing or planned. They include the County's Central Business Districts, existing and future employment centers, the municipalities of Gaithersburg and Rockville, and most of the Metrorail stations that provide an opportunity for significant redevelopment.

⁴ Lightest blue shaded area on the Growth Map.

⁵ Medium-shaded blue area on the Growth Map.

⁶ Darkest blue shaded area on the Growth Map.

Medium Centers are seen as less intense, covering a smaller geography than Large Centers. The Medium Centers could include significant clusters of existing or planned residential density, as well as clusters of commercial density, including large shopping centers and office campuses.

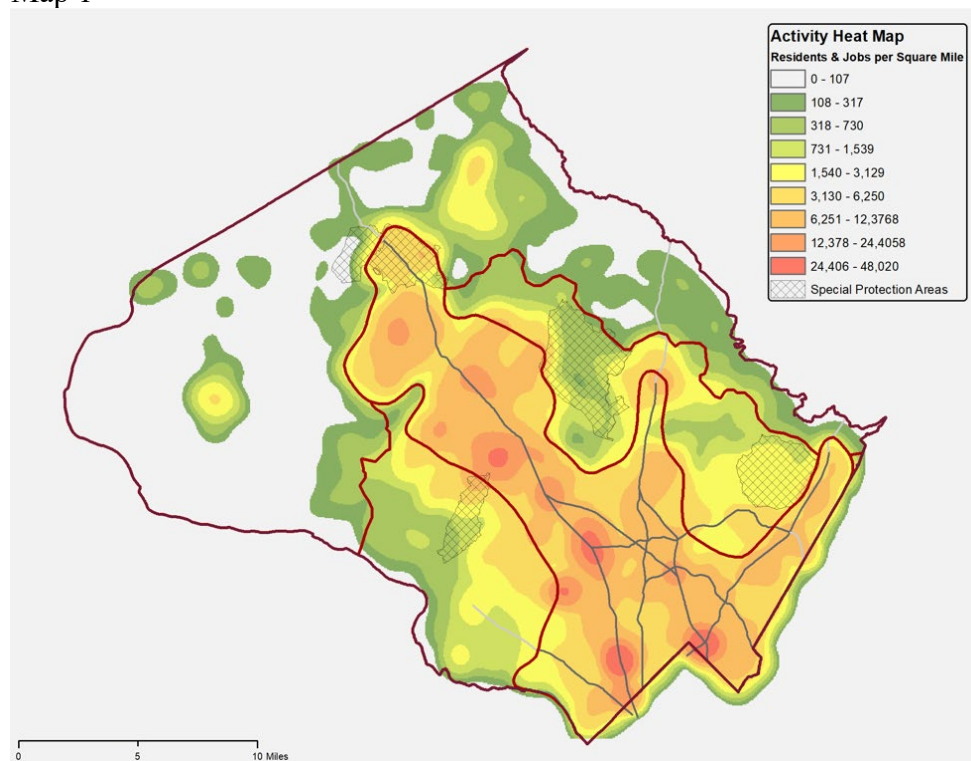
Small Centers are generally characterized by low- to medium-density residential neighborhoods, with clusters of commercial activity, including shopping centers and neighborhood-serving retail.

Villages and Neighborhood Centers are the lowest intensity centers, containing a small number of neighborhood-serving uses and located in rural areas and low-density residential neighborhoods.

On page 31, Figure 29 illustrates the 2050 Growth Map. It identifies the growth areas defined above and several centers; however, the centers shown are not exhaustive of all existing or potential centers. They are included to demonstrate that centers of activity, where existing and future compact growth should be concentrated, occur throughout the County – in urban, suburban, and rural areas. While future growth is expected to occur in these centers, the Plan maintains that the amount of growth and intensity of development should be commensurate with the center's location and context.

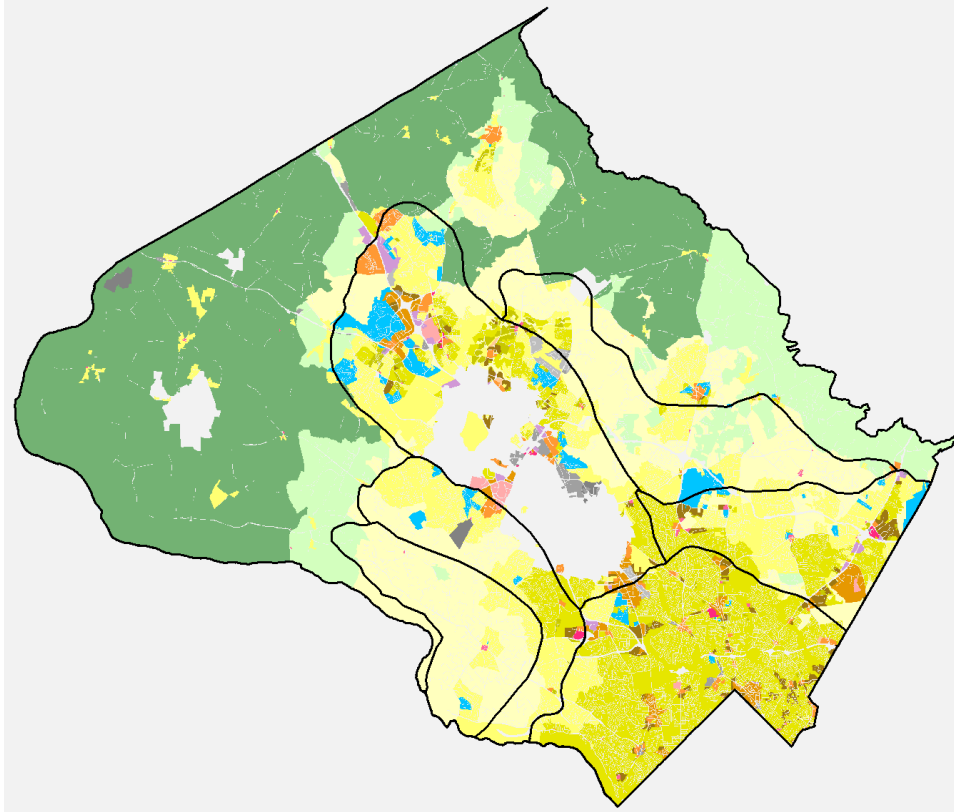
This figure is likely the most important graphic in Thrive and provides the basis for understanding policies recommended in this chapter. During the briefing on July 21, the Planning Department presented several maps to demonstrate how the Board landed on the version in the Plan. Below are the maps from this presentation.

Map 1



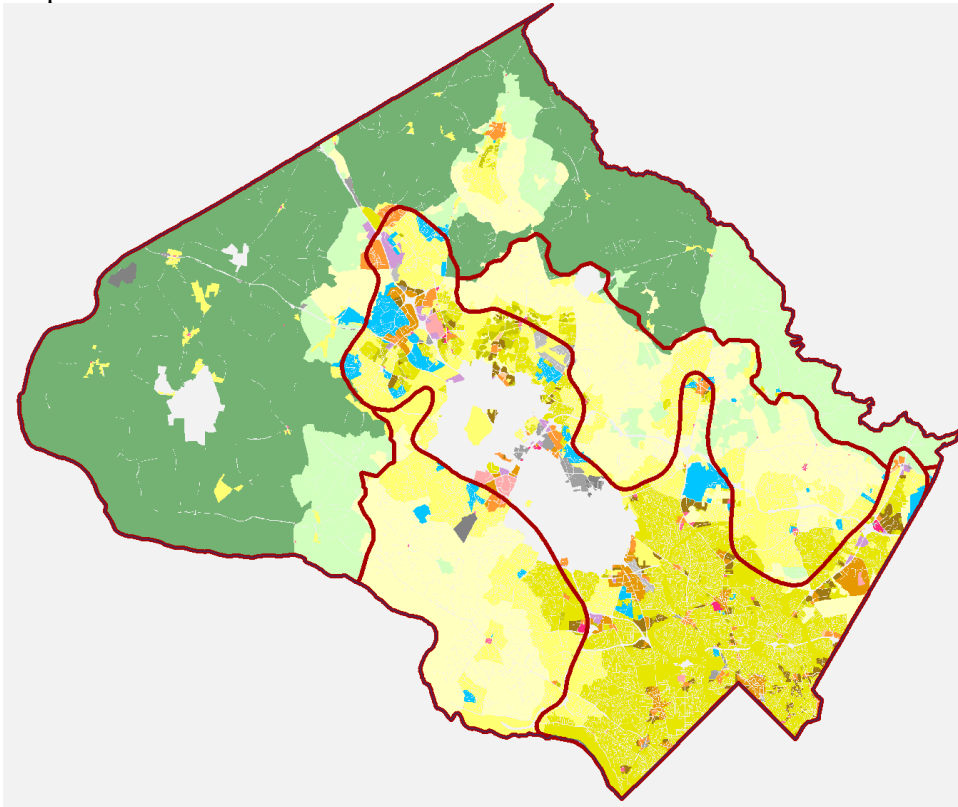
The first map showed Thrive growth boundaries overlaid on a current “level of activity heat map” and Special Protection Areas (SPAs). Corridor-focused growth areas were designed to match current areas of higher activity in the County and avoid SPAs (shown in crosshatch).

Map 2



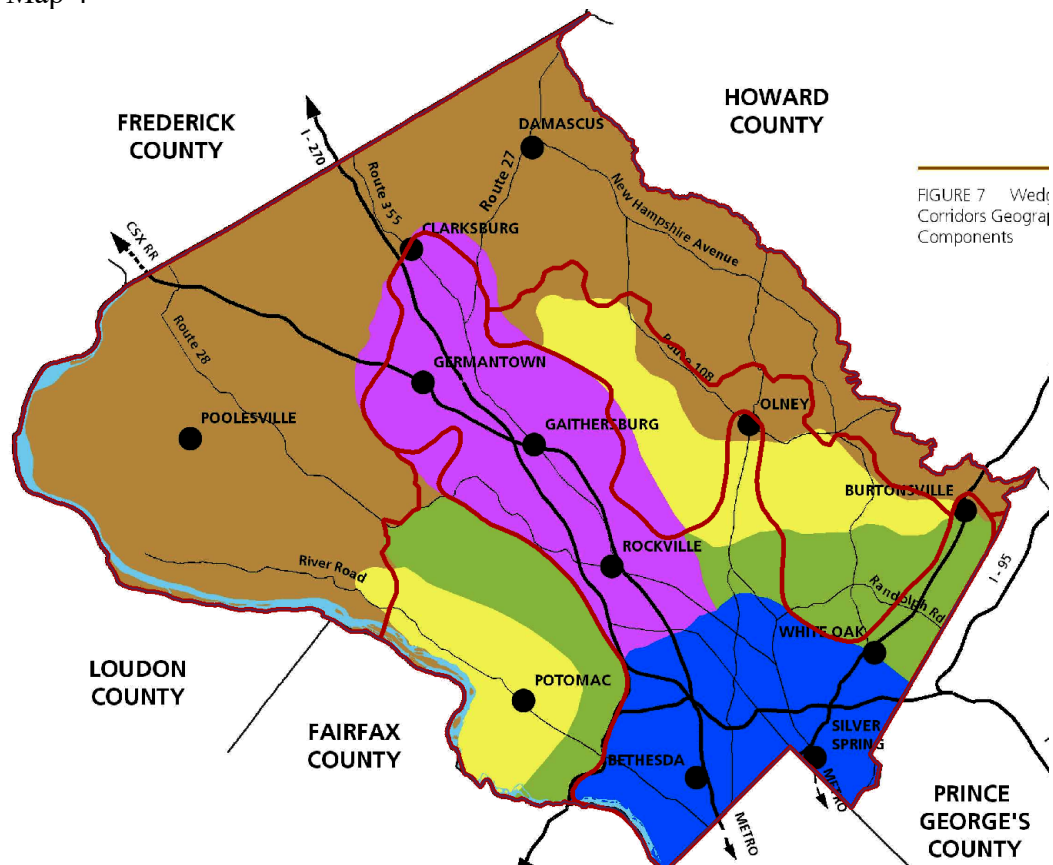
The second map showed the 1993 General Plan Refinement, Wedges & Corridors map overlaid on current zoning. The proposed growth map was adjusted to address “gaps” between the 1993 map and current zoning (i.e., Olney Town Center outside the residential wedge).

Map 3



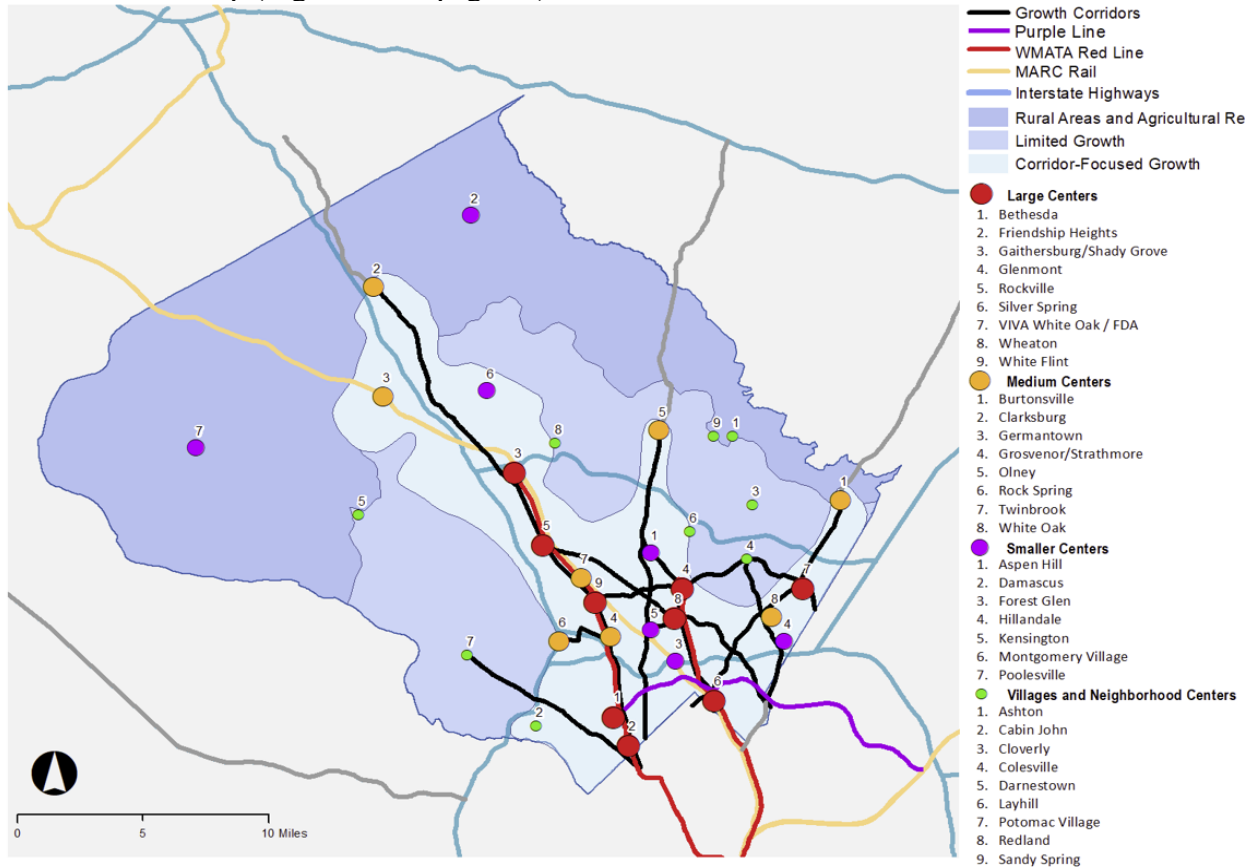
The third map showed Thrive growth boundaries overlaid on current zoning. The proposed growth map more closely reflects current zoning than the 1993 General Plan Refinement map.

Map 4



The fourth map showed Thrive growth boundaries overlaid on the 1993 General Plan Refinement map. The proposed growth map advances the concept of corridors, adding Georgia Avenue and Route 29 corridors. It refines the Rural Areas and Agricultural Reserve boundary to more closely match zoning and protected areas. It also refines the I-270 corridor boundary to more closely follow zoning and areas of activity and to avoid SPAs.

2050 Growth Map (Figure 29 on page 31)



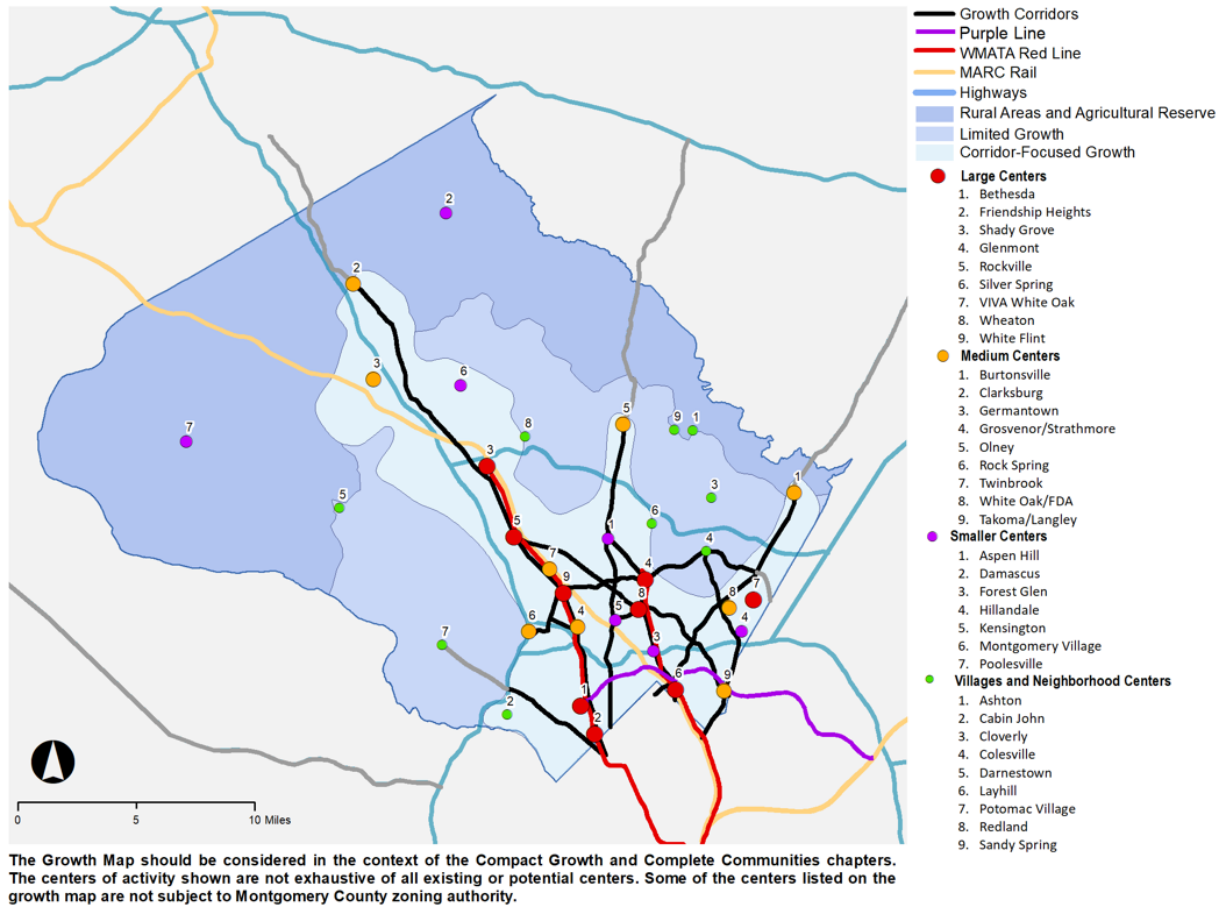
The explanation of how the proposed 2050 Growth Map evolved provides greater insight into the growth areas and centers. With this in mind, the Committee should weigh in on the following:

- Are the three growth areas—the corridor-focused growth area, the limited growth area, and the rural area and Agricultural Reserve—the appropriate designations and locations for future growth?

Council staff recommends the Committee support the Planning Board’s descriptions and illustration of the growth areas, including some minor edits that have been made to the map for clarity and accuracy.⁷ Below is the updated map (included in the revised Chapter 1 on © 1-16).

⁷ The legend description for Interstate Highways should be revised to include Freeways, as the ICC is not an Interstate. The Forest Glen (Small) Center should move from the MARC line to Forest Glen Metro/Montgomery Hills at I-495/Georgia Avenue. The Germantown (Medium) Center should move from the MARC Station to the Town Center. The Gaithersburg/Shady Grove (Large) Center should just reference Shady Grove. The size of the dots should be decreased and the difference between the dots made more subtle so that the map is easier to read. A footnote should be added to clarify that some of the centers listed on the growth map are not subject to Montgomery County zoning authority.

Updated 2050 Growth Map



A larger illustration of the map (perhaps by moving the list of centers below the map instead of beside it) with more detail (such as labeled major roadways) would help readers interpret and understand the map. The 1993 General Plan Refinement map is customarily included in the beginning of each area master plan for context. The 2050 Growth Map will be similarly used; therefore, providing one that is easier to read is essential.

Correspondence/Comments: Most of the correspondence received by the Council in response to Thrive 2050 was in opposition to the concurrent review of Thrive and the Attainable Housing Study. The remaining correspondence was directed at a handful of topics such as environmental sustainability, economic development, and the designation/description of growth areas and centers.

With respect to growth areas and centers, the Council received correspondence from the Darnestown Civic Association requesting that the Rural Areas and Agricultural Reserve illustrated on the Growth Map be modified to match the Damascus, Rural East and Rural West policy areas as depicted in the Growth and Infrastructure Policy (GIP) map (see © 17). **Council staff does not recommend this change.** The policy area boundaries shown on the GIP map are primarily based on major physical features, jurisdictional boundaries, and the transportation characteristics of a policy area. And while transportation is an important component of land use, it only represents one facet of land use and growth.

- Are the types (i.e., Large, Medium, Small, Village/Neighborhood) and definitions of activity centers sufficient to characterize the variety of communities to which the policies in Thrive will apply?

Council staff recommends that the Committee support the number and descriptions of the centers, with one suggested change. While the descriptions are broad enough to remain relevant over the life of the Plan, staff believes that the descriptions of the large and medium centers should reference proximity to major transportation infrastructure. Since a fundamental theme of this Plan is corridor-focused growth, a description connecting large and medium centers to a transportation corridor seems appropriate and would reinforce this theme.

- Are the center designations shown on the map appropriate and are there additional centers that should be represented on the map?

Looking at the activity centers shown, **Council staff does not recommend a change to any center designations.** The Plan states that not all existing and planned centers are shown on the Growth Map. Given the number of Small and Village/Neighborhood Centers in the County, and the possibility of a yet unknown center forming in the next 30 years, **Council staff recommends the Committee support a representative number of centers being shown on the map.** With respect to adding certain centers to the map, at the briefing on July 21, Councilmember Riemer requested that Takoma/Langley Crossroads be added to the map. It has been added to the updated map.

Correspondence/Comments: In the correspondence received from the Darnestown Civic Association, they also request that Darnestown be removed from the map as a Village/Neighborhood Center. Currently, Darnestown has a small neighborhood-serving retail area at the intersection of Darnestown Road and Seneca Road (zoned Commercial/Residential Neighborhood with a Rural Village Overlay). Darnestown currently fits well within the definition of a Village/Neighborhood Center and its inclusion on the Growth Map maintains this characterization through 2050. **Council staff does not recommend removing Darnestown from the map.**

The Council also received correspondence questioning the depiction of River Road from DC to Potomac Village as a growth corridor. **Council staff and Planning staff agree that, consistent with other corridors on the map, River Road should transition from black to gray once River Road enters the limited growth area.** This change has been made to the updated map.

Policies and Practices

In addition to the Growth Map, Thrive 2050 recommends the following policies and practices to maximize the efficient use of land in the development of centers and corridors while preserving land for agriculture, recreation, and natural resource conservation. Minor edits to the policies and practices have been made for clarity and are consistent with the Chapter 1 revisions (© 1-16).

1. Concentrate growth in centers of activity and along corridors through compact infill development and redevelopment to maximize efficient use of land.

- Focus future land use and public infrastructure planning on growth corridors so as to direct development in ways that facilitate the emergence of Complete Communities. Evaluate appropriate land uses, transportation facilities, and community design that will encourage and enable full use of centers of activity and creation of Complete Communities. (Ec, Env, Eq)
- Amend land use, design, and zoning regulations, including the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations, to support corridor-focused compact development. Appropriate densities will vary but should be sufficient to support, at a minimum, the efficient provision of transit service along these corridors. (Ec, Env, Eq)
- Improve the environmental sustainability of growth by encouraging infill and redevelopment to curb sprawl and bring areas built out in an era with little or no environmental regulations up to robust standards for stormwater management and other state-of-the-practice environmental standards. (Env)

Council staff recommends the Committee support this policy and the associated practices without change.

2. Promote and prioritize public investment in infrastructure along growth corridors and leverage it to attract future private investment in a compact form.

- Consider new methods of financing public infrastructure, such as value capture, tax increment financing, and other mechanisms to facilitate investment and provision of appropriate infrastructure in areas identified as appropriate for more intensive development. (Ec)
- Establish high-quality transit infrastructure along growth corridors through capital investment and ensure reliable, frequent service through operational investment. (Ec, Env, Eq)
- Leverage federal, state, and local incentive programs, publicly-owned land, and land investment opportunities for corridor infill development and redevelopment. (Ec, Env, Eq)

Council staff recommends the Committee support this policy and the associated practices without change.

3. Limit growth beyond corridors to compact, infill development and redevelopment in Complete Communities to prevent sprawl. Apply principles of urbanism at an appropriate scale along a rural-to-urban transect as outlined in the Complete Communities chapter.

- Sustainably manage land outside growth corridors and Complete Communities to increase biodiversity, improve the health of natural habitats, preserve privately-owned forests, protect watersheds and aquifers, and improve water quality while providing expanded opportunities for outdoor recreation, including vigorous physical activity. (Env, Eq)

Council staff recommends the Committee support this policy and practice. However, comments provided by the County's Department of Environmental Protection suggest expanding the list of proposed practices to further support environmental resilience and sustainability. **In response, Council Staff recommends adding the following practice under this policy:**

- Support alternative clean energy generation, distributed energy, battery storage and grid modernization; and better facilitate composting/food waste recovery and other circular economy⁸ initiatives.

4. Preserve and enhance the Agricultural Reserve and manage it to maintain a rural pattern of development for the benefit of the entire County.

- Maximize the benefits of the Agricultural Reserve through policies designed to ensure the continued viability of farming as an economically productive and sustainable activity, discourage sprawl, facilitate a broad range of outdoor recreation and tourism activities, conserve land and natural resources, and promote practices that advance environmental quality. (Ec, Env)
- Improve awareness of and access to the Agricultural Reserve for the public to experience and directly benefit from this valuable resource for locally grown food, outdoor recreation, and tourism. (Ec, Eq)

Council staff recommends the Committee support this policy and associated practices. However, the Council received correspondence from several agricultural groups⁹ advocating for policies and actions recommended in the Public Hearing Draft, not retained in the Planning Board Draft. **In response, Council staff recommends adding the following practice under this policy:**

- Maintain agriculture as the primary land use in the Agricultural Reserve through policies, regulations, easements, and incentives, including those that maintain a critical mass of contiguous farmland.

A reference that farming should remain the primary use in the Agricultural Reserve appears at the top of page 39 in the Plan. However, placing text under the policy recommendations in the

⁸ A circular economy is a regenerative system in which resource input and waste, emission, and energy leakage are minimized.

⁹ The Agricultural Advisory Committee, the Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board, and the Office of Agriculture.

Plan further supports this intent and remains consistent with prior general plans regarding agriculture as the primary use in the Reserve.

Economic Health, Racial Equity and Social Justice, and Environmental Resilience

As noted earlier, policies and practices in the Plan will be denoted with an icon indicating the objective(s) the policy supports. In addition, following the recommended policies and practices, every chapter will have a section on each overarching objective to elaborate on how the policy recommendations further the objective. The Planning Board Draft contains much of this text currently; however, as noted in the beginning, headings have been added to identify each section and some of the text rearranged for clarity.

Council staff recommends the Committee support the Planning Board Draft sections (as revised).

Metrics

The final sections of each chapter provide lists of proposed metrics designed to assess the success or failure of the policies put forth in the chapter. Below are the metrics for Chapter 1:

- Amount of infill development/redevelopment along growth corridors.
- Proportion of new population, employment, and housing within a mile (or half-mile) of growth corridors.
- Non-auto driver mode share (walking, biking, transit use) and corresponding reduction in VMT.
- Public and private investment in infrastructure, services, and amenities along corridors, overall and by area of County.
- Acres of farmland, natural habitats, forests and environmentally sensitive areas protected.
- Economic productivity of farming.
- Amount of space for outdoor recreation and variety of activities supported.
- Percentage increase in environmental performance of buildings and sites, overall and by area of County.
- Number of visitors from outside the Agricultural Reserve for recreation, commerce, and tourism.
- Maintenance and improvement in measures of stream water quality.
- Reduction in impervious cover and increase in area of impervious cover treated.

Council staff suggests enhancing the implementation section of the Plan with specific direction for the evaluation and review of the metrics. The implementation section will be discussed at a later worksession as part of the Conclusion.

Actions

The actions proposed to implement the Plan's policies and practices are in an appendix titled Actions List of Resources (see © 39-62). The appendix notes that it is not an exhaustive list of all possible actions that will be undertaken to implement the Plan, suggesting that the listed

actions be updated regularly as new tools and resources become available to respond to changing conditions. It also suggests that the actions be organized and prioritized based on level of importance and resources available to implement them, noting that some should be short-term actions that need to be completed in the next five years to jump-start Plan implementation. Other actions will take place over the medium term (roughly 6 to 15 years) or long-term (16+ years), building on the work done through prior actions.

There are 31 actions associated with this chapter. Given the time needed to review the Planning Board Draft Plan, Council staff suggests that the Committee set up a plan to review the Action Appendix in detail following the adoption of Thrive 2050.

Chapter 2: Complete Communities: Mix of Uses and Forms

According to the Plan, Complete Communities are places that include the range of land uses, infrastructure, services and amenities that allow them to meet a wide range of needs for a variety of people. They include housing suitable for different household types, income levels, and preferences, helping to support racial and socioeconomic integration. The specific mix of uses and building types in Complete Communities varies, depending on factors such as the size and location of the neighborhood or district; proximity to transit, parks and public facilities; variation in physical features such as topography and environmental resources; and other factors unique to the history and context of each place.

Similar to Compact Growth, the vision of mixed-use, mixed-intensity development is not new. While the 1964 Plan did not yet embrace a mix of commercial and residential uses within a community, the 1993 Refinement envisioned both the Urban Ring and Corridor as places where mixed-use, mixed intensity development would flourish. And in these areas (inside the Beltway and along the I-270 corridor), mixed-use zoning and construction followed. In fact, recent plans recognizing the value of diverse housing types, commercial uses, and access to shopping, transit and open space have focused on creating opportunities to develop these types of places.

Thrive 2050 expands these efforts by advocating for Complete Communities¹⁰ across all areas of the County. The rationale for the emphasis now is that our efforts to date have resulted in only a handful of locations successful in attracting investment in office, retail, and residential uses (and that most of these places lack one or more elements of a Complete Community). Furthermore, the Plan explains, the historical separation of uses coupled with the commitment to barriers, buffers, and transitions has had the effect, whether intentional or not, of discouraging connections among people and places and sharpening racial, social, and economic divisions between neighborhoods and parts of the County.

This text should not be taken as an indictment of areas currently defined in terms of single-use zoning such as the residential wedge or the suburban communities. However, it may be easy to feel defensive reading this chapter if you live in one of these areas. While much of the correspondence received by the Council focused on the connection between Thrive, the

¹⁰ Communities that provide access to housing, shops, workplaces, schools, parks, and essential civic facilities within an easy walking distance from each other.

Attainable Housing Study, and zoning, a significant portion also expressed this sentiment – a concern that this general plan does not value single-family detached home neighborhoods.

There are two things to note: one, the promotion of Complete Communities should be viewed in the context of the Chapter 1 recommendations. Recall that Chapters 1, 2, and 3 are “nested”, with Chapter 1 focusing on regional and Countywide growth and Chapter 2 focusing on neighborhood level growth. Support for Complete Communities is not equivalent to suggesting they occur at any scale, anywhere throughout the County. Considered in tandem with Chapter 1, Complete Communities are likely to evolve from an existing center or develop along a corridor. And even then, the development of each Complete Community (i.e., Center) will be predicated on the scale, location, type of neighborhood, and unique physical and environmental features in which it is planned.

To clarify this in the Plan, Council staff worked with Planning staff to reorganize and add text to Chapter 2, primarily to provide a more thorough explanation of the vision for Complete Communities across the County. Attached on © 18-24 is a revised version of Chapter 2. It contains the following additional text:

Thrive Montgomery 2050 envisions increasing the variety of uses and achieving a people-oriented public realm within the corridor-focused growth areas and centers discussed in the Compact Growth chapter at scales appropriate to their context, so as to provide people in all parts of the County access to a wider range of services and amenities in closer proximity to their homes and workplaces.

The section below was moved from the end of the chapter closer to the beginning, to reinforce the understanding that Complete Communities will differ across the County.

Different Ingredients for Different Communities

The combination of strategies that can help create a more Complete Community in any particular place depends heavily on context. The scale (village vs. town center vs. downtown), location (inside vs. outside the growth footprint), and type of district or neighborhood (e.g., office park vs. central business district vs. residential neighborhood vs. suburban shopping center) all influence which elements should be incorporated and how they should be tailored. Despite the varying needs and conditions of different parts of the County, however, the concept of encouraging more diversity of use and form is relevant in almost every location.

Another term referenced in correspondence that has caused some confusion and concern is “15-minute living”. The concept of “15-minute living” has emerged as a way of reimagining existing communities to maximize their attractiveness and efficiency by mixing housing, offices, and retail uses in each neighborhood or district so services, infrastructure, facilities, and amenities to serve the daily needs of people who live or work there are within walking or biking distance.

However, there are many areas of the County where this is unlikely to be achieved. To this end, the Plan is clear that a literal or rigid application of “15-minute living” may not be practical outside of the corridor focused growth areas and centers; nonetheless, it sees the concept as a

useful way to generate concrete recommendations to make communities more complete and help them succeed.

Policies and Practices

To ensure that demand for future development in Montgomery County is channeled to embrace Complete Communities and “15-minute living” – both by building new centers of activity along corridors and by making existing ones more complete – the Plan proposes the following policies and practice, which must be suitable for all areas of the County. Minor edits to the policies and practices have been made for clarity and are consistent with the Chapter 2 revisions (© 18-24).

1. Identify and integrate elements needed to complete centers of housing, retail, and office development and plan to make “15-minute living” a reality for as many people as possible.

- Promote zoning allocations and standards to encourage the integration of varied uses, building types, and lot sizes. (Ec, Env, Eq)
- Apply flexible approaches to accommodate infill and redevelopment that improve access to amenities, active transportation, parks, and open spaces, and a broader range of housing types at the neighborhood scale. (Ec, Env, Eq)
- Prioritize neighborhood-level land use planning as a tool to enhance overall quality of community life and avoid reinforcing outdated land use patterns. (Eq)
- Allow sufficient densities to make a wide range of uses economically viable in Complete Communities. Encourage densities sufficient to support convenience retail and other local-serving amenities at the neighborhood level. Provide guidance for accommodating additional density in a context-sensitive manner. (Ec, Env, Eq)
- Ensure that Complete Communities are integrated into their surroundings and supported by a public realm that encourages walking, biking and rolling¹¹, as well as social interaction through the configuration of sidewalks, paths, landmarks, and gathering spaces. (Ec, Env, Eq)
- Adopt planning approaches that prioritize providing more Complete Communities in service to improving the quality of community life throughout the County. (Eq)

Council staff recommends that the Committee support this policy and the associated practices without change.

2. Encourage co-location and adjacency of all essential and public services, especially along growth corridors and in Complete Communities.

- Maximize the utility of public facilities by locating them in places that promote integration with other public and private uses and infrastructure. (Env, Eq)
- Promote active transportation improvements that prioritize walking, biking, rolling, and transit use to enhance public access to these co-located facilities. (Env, Eq)

¹¹ Rolling refers to movement via a scooter, wheelchair, or other non-motorized transportation that rolls.

- Develop standards for co-location of public facilities that promote mixing of uses or services and compact development strategies. Encourage public-private partnerships and ensure they promote social interaction and physical activity. (Ec, Env, Eq)

Council staff recommends that the Committee support this policy and the associated practices without change.

3. Retrofit centers of activity and large-scale older facilities such as shopping centers, abandoned federal campuses, office parks, and other single-use developments to include a mixture of uses and diversity of housing types and to provide a critical mass of housing, jobs, services, and amenities for vibrant, dynamic Complete Communities.

- Ensure employment uses in economic clusters develop in a mixed-use format along with housing, retail, amenities, and transit, and ensure they are integrated into the surrounding communities. (Ec, Env, Eq)
- Allow creation of co-located housing, discussed further in the Affordable and Attainable Housing Chapter, including for industries that employ large numbers of employees (permanent or seasonal). (Ec, Env, Eq)
- Encourage higher-density economic and housing cooperatives (live/work areas such as home occupations, artist villages, farmers' market/villages, tech/life-science startup incubators). (Ec, Env, EQ)

Council staff recommends that the Committee support this policy and the associated practices without change.

Economic Health, Racial Equity and Social Justice, and Environmental Resilience

Consistent with the format in Chapter 1, following the recommended policies and practices, the Plan provides a section on each overarching objective explaining how the policies and practices further the objective. The Planning Board Draft contains much of this text currently; however, as noted in the beginning, headings have been added to identify each section and some of the text rearranged for clarity.

Council staff recommends that the Committee support the Planning Board Draft sections as revised.

Metrics

In assessing proposals related to the creation of Complete Communities and measuring the success or failure of the approaches recommended in this Plan, relevant measures may include:

- Population density in centers of activity along corridors as well as within existing downtowns, town centers, and rural villages
- Diversity of uses and structures
- Racial, ethnic, and income diversity
- Median age/life stages concentration

- Percentage of employment growth overall and by area of the County
- Car ownership levels
- Transit usage for inter-county travel
- Weekend transit usage
- Numbers of co-located facilities/amenities
- Public investment ratios for walking, biking, rolling, transit, and automobile
- Median vehicular expense per County household
- Median housing expense per County household
- Emergence of key population and mixed-use centers
- Increasing commercial activity in otherwise residential neighborhoods

Actions

As mentioned above, the actions proposed to implement the Plan's policies and practices are in an appendix titled Actions List of Resources (see © 39-62). There are 13 actions related to Complete Communities. Given the time needed to review the Planning Board Draft Plan, Council staff suggests that the Committee set up a plan to review the Action Appendix in detail following the adoption of Thrive.

<u>Attachments</u>	<u>© Pages</u>
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COMPACT GROWTH

Corridor-Focused Development

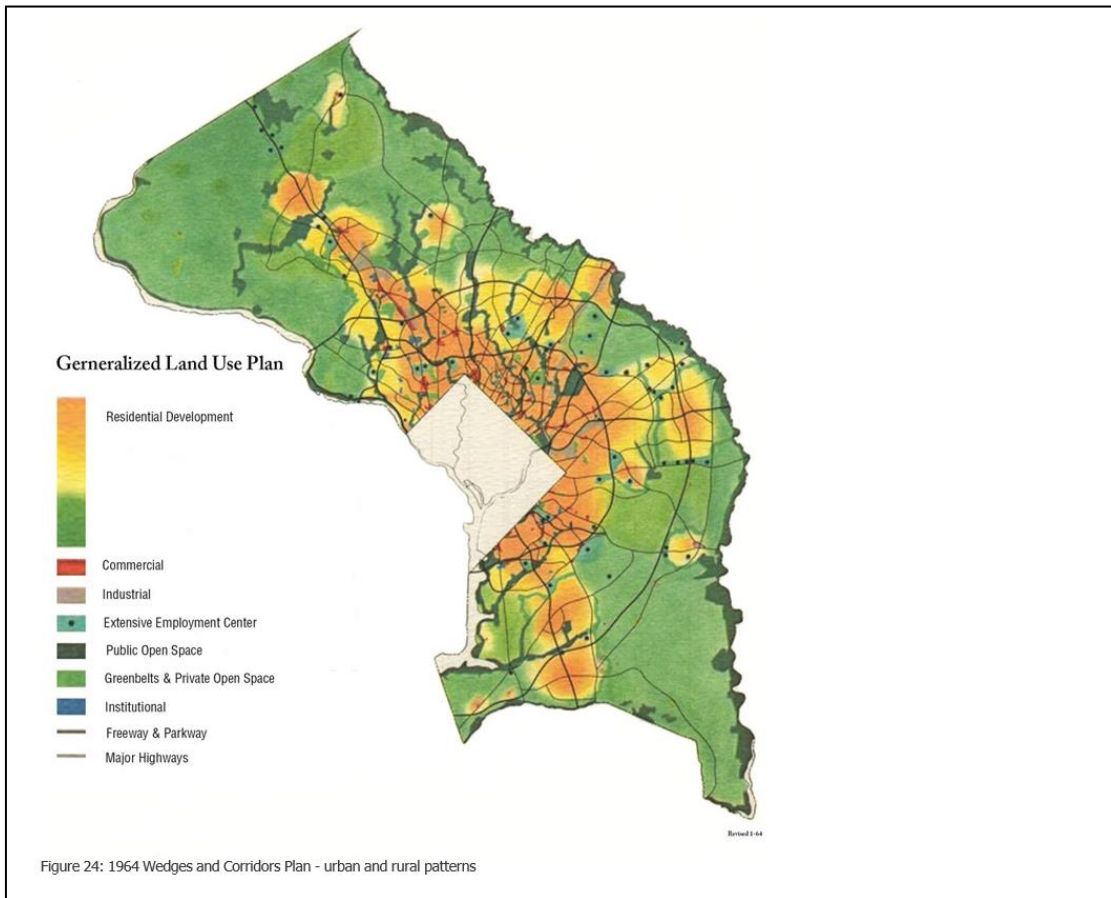
Introduction: Compact Footprints along Multiple Corridors are Central to Future Growth

When the Wedges and Corridors Plan was adopted much of Montgomery County was undeveloped. The plan recognized, however, that what seemed to be abundant available land must be used wisely:

“Land should be treated as one of our most precious possessions, using efficiently what we need for accommodating expected urban growth, and conserving the rest for the unforeseeable future. Land is too valuable an asset to be heedlessly wasted by allowing it to be developed aimlessly in a scattered pattern.”

Accordingly, the Wedges and Corridors Plan recommended two distinct patterns of growth: the urban pattern and the rural pattern. The urban pattern was envisioned as a compact form of urban development, concentrated in the existing urban ring and proposed corridor cities along significant transportation corridors within the region, including the I-95/Route 29 corridor as well as the I-270/Route 355 corridor. The rural pattern, by contrast, was envisioned as serving four broad purposes:

“1) to help mold the urban pattern into an efficient and pleasant one; 2) to provide and protect large open spaces for the “change of pace” and recreational opportunities needed by present and future generations; 3) to provide a favorable rural environment in which farming, mineral extraction, hunting, fishing and other natural resource activities can be carried on without disruption; and 4) to conserve natural resources and protect the public water supply.”

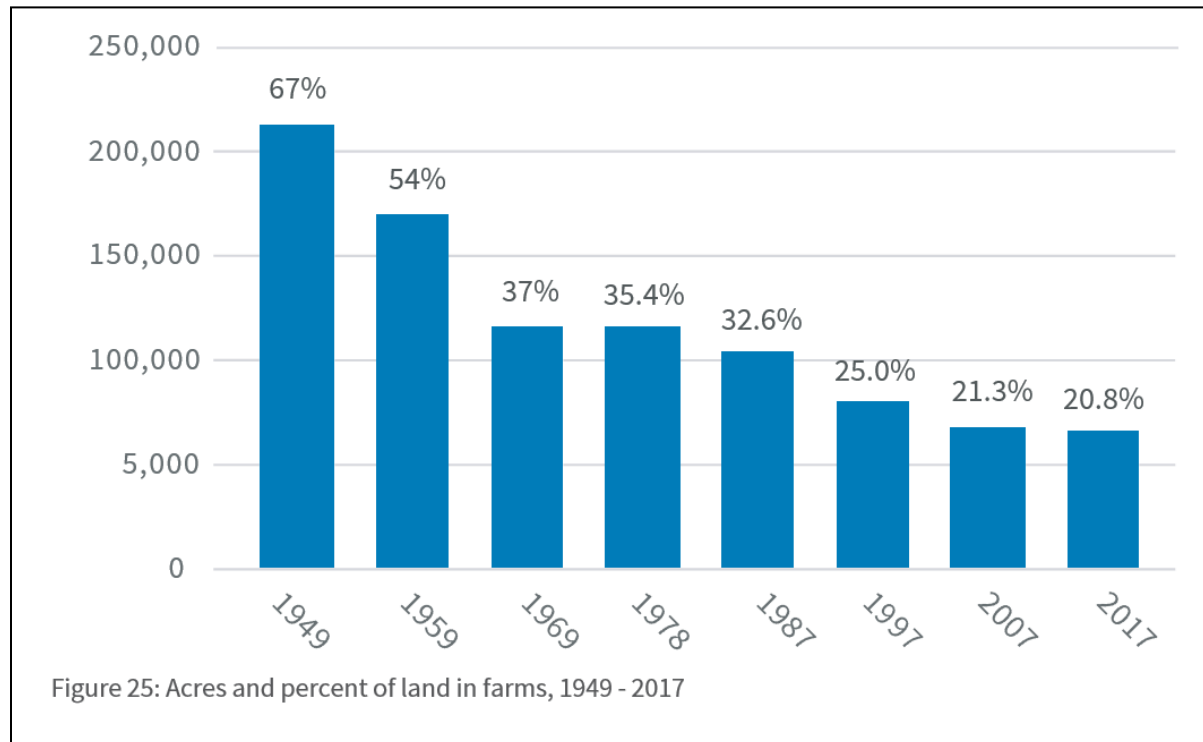


What is the problem we are trying to solve? Focusing Growth, Connecting Communities, and Reinvigorating East County

While the Wedges and Corridors Plan was visionary in recognizing the consequences of sprawl and the value of land preservation, subsequent land use and transportation planning decisions did not always adhere to the 1964 plan's guidance, illustrating the political economy of sprawl. On one hand, resistance to the kinds of dense infill and development in areas within the growth footprint identified by the 1964 plan left the urban form unrealized in many areas, with – for example – only a few Metrorail station areas developed with high density. On the other hand, the desire of property owners to maximize the value of their land in some cases led to more development in outlying areas than contemplated in 1964, with a proliferation of garden apartments and townhouses in places like Aspen Hill. The absence of tighter limits allowed development to disperse, consuming large amounts of land and increasing the cost of roads, water, sewer, and other public infrastructure by limiting economies of scale. This pattern of development also limited opportunities to offer cost-effective transit service.

Conversely, the 1964 plan envisioned corridor cities along I-270, I-95, and Route 29, yet subsequent planning decisions, including the 1993 Refinement, disregarded and ultimately removed the growth corridor along Route 29 and I-95 in the eastern portion of the county. The excision of the Route 29 corridor contributed to effectively directing new public and private investment away from the East

County and toward the established urban ring and I-270 corridor. As a result, the I-270 corridor has benefited from successive cycles of investment and reinvestment, even as other corridors – including Georgia Avenue, where Metrorail’s Red Line was built – were largely left behind. This recurring pattern aggravated the racial and economic disparities between the eastern and western parts of the county that remain today.



Moreover, the Wedges and Corridors plan neglected to fully articulate how the broader public should expect to benefit from maintaining a rural pattern over much of the county’s land area. The plan explained that land preservation is important to recreation, agriculture and conservation of natural resources but did not describe how people living in urban parts of the county would access these opportunities. The result is that many people who live outside what became the Agricultural Reserve are unfamiliar with it and do not take full advantage of opportunities to visit, enjoy and develop an appreciation for the value of continued preservation of land for farming, recreation, and environmental stewardship. Awareness of -- and access to -- the Agricultural Reserve should be improved by providing ways for people throughout the county to experience and take full advantage of this unique resource. Our residents and visitors should not miss out on opportunities to learn about the county’s rural heritage, eat and drink locally produced food and beverages, and participate in outdoor activities such as hiking, biking, camping, and fishing.

If we fail to make efficient use of land, the available space for growth, outdoor recreation, agriculture and natural resource conservation will rapidly diminish. The cost of building and maintaining water and sewer infrastructure, roads, and public services will become harder to manage. Problems such as traffic congestion and climate change will be exacerbated.

What policies will solve the problem? Refining – and Recommitting to - a Compact Footprint

Thrive Montgomery 2050 proposes redoubling and refining efforts to concentrate growth in downtowns, town centers, rural villages, and intensively developed centers of activity, or nodes, and a new commitment to promoting growth along major transportation corridors to maximize the efficient use of land and create Complete Communities. These corridors establish a web, connecting residents to existing and future centers of activity and Complete Communities. These corridors also either have robust transit service in place or planned or are located close to existing concentrations of jobs, services, and infrastructure in ways that lend themselves to supporting more intensive development to produce the kinds of Complete Communities described later in this plan.

The intensity of development along these corridors should be aligned with the urban, suburban, and rural context and calibrated to account for existing or planned transit and other transportation infrastructure. Detailed analysis of each area will come through future planning efforts. Some corridors, such as Rockville Pike, connect several centers of activity, making these corridors appropriate for more intensive development. Other corridors will have less intensive development due to their context and level of transit service.

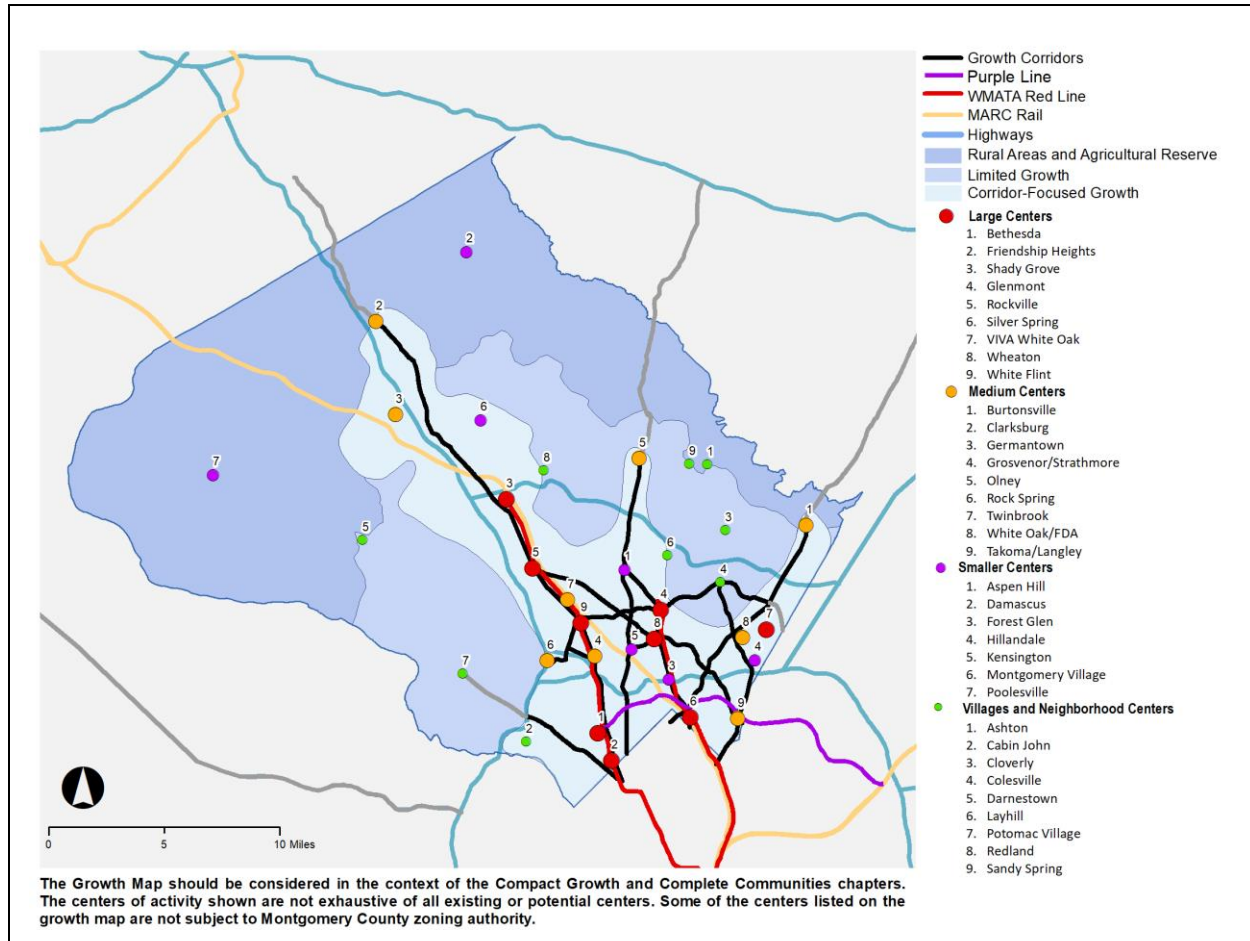
Outside of these corridors, limited, organic growth should be allowed to meet localized needs for services and provide a balanced, diverse, and appropriate range of housing choices; increase racial and socioeconomic integration; and achieve more Complete Communities in all parts of the county. This limited development must be managed in ways that help to form more Complete Communities without expanding established development footprints or encouraging significant intensification of land uses outside of Complete Communities. Preservation of land for recreation, agriculture and environmental management must be ensured for the benefit of the entire county.

Figure 26: Georgia Avenue looking south from Evans Parkway Neighborhood Park—today

Figure 27: Georgia Avenue looking south from Evans Parkway Neighborhood Park—possible future

The concept of corridor-focused growth is a fundamental organizing element for Thrive Montgomery 2050, as it recognizes not only that intensively developed centers of activity and preservation of land both play a vital role in our quality of life but that neither pattern can exist without the other. By identifying the places where growth should be encouraged, this chapter establishes the foundation for Complete Communities, which depend on a compact footprint to give them the coherence, focus, and mix of activities necessary to succeed. The scale of development, building types, and diversity of uses envisioned within this footprint are discussed in greater detail in the Complete Communities chapter. In turn, the design elements that complement and reinforce Complete Communities are discussed in the Design, Arts, and Culture chapter.

Figure 28: Major transit corridors can be transformed from existing unsafe traffic arteries to a series of Complete Communities with a variety of housing and other uses.



The Corridor-Focused Growth area (lightest blue) should have the largest share of new growth. It encompasses the most developed part of the county with highest-density population and employment centers, and the infrastructure to support existing and new development. The Limited Growth area (medium blue) contains the mainly suburban residential communities where limited, organic growth is envisioned to meet localized needs for services, provide a diverse range of housing choices, and increase racial and socioeconomic integration to achieve Complete Communities. Rural Areas and the Agricultural Reserve (in dark blue) will continue to be dedicated primarily to agriculture, rural open space, and environmental preservation. It can absorb some growth as agriculture evolves and existing residential communities' needs change over time.

The Growth Map identifies several existing and potential centers of activity at a variety of scales, including Large, Medium, and Small as well as Villages and Neighborhood Centers. The centers identified are not exhaustive of all existing or potential centers, but rather are included to demonstrate that centers of activity, where existing and future compact growth should be concentrated, occur within the county's urban, suburban, and rural areas. While future growth should occur in these centers, the amount growth and intensity of development should be commensurate with the center's location and context.

Large Centers are envisioned as the highest intensity areas generally characterized by significant residential and/or commercial density either existing or planned. They include the county's Central Business Districts, existing and future employment centers, the municipalities of Gaithersburg and Rockville, and most of the Metrorail stations which provide an opportunity for significant redevelopment.

Medium Centers would be less intense and cover a smaller geography than Large Centers. The Medium Centers could include significant clusters of existing or planned residential density, as well as clusters of commercial density, including large shopping centers and office campuses.

Smaller Centers are generally characterized by low- to medium-density residential neighborhoods, with clusters of commercial activity, including shopping centers and neighborhood-serving retail.

Villages and Neighborhood Centers are the lowest intensity centers containing a small number of neighborhood-serving uses and located in rural areas and low-density residential neighborhoods.

More specifically, the following policies and practices should be adopted in order to maximize the efficiency of land use and public investment and establish the building blocks for development of vibrant centers of activity while preserving land for recreation, resource conservation, and agriculture:

Concentrate growth in centers of activity and along corridors through compact, infill development and redevelopment to maximize efficient use of land.

- Focus future land use and public infrastructure planning on growth corridors so as to direct development in ways that facilitate the emergence of Complete Communities. Evaluate appropriate land uses, transportation facilities, and community design that will encourage and enable full use of centers of activity and creation of Complete Communities. (Ec, Env, Eq)

- Amend land use, design, and zoning regulations, including the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations, to support corridor-focused compact development. Appropriate densities will vary but should be sufficient to support, at a minimum, the efficient provision of transit service along these corridors. (Ec, Env, Eq)
- Improve the environmental sustainability of growth by encouraging infill and redevelopment to curb sprawl and bring areas built out in an era with little or no environmental regulations up to robust standards for stormwater management and other state-of-the-practice environmental standards. (Env)

Promote and prioritize public investment in infrastructure along growth corridors and leverage it to attract future private investment in a compact form.

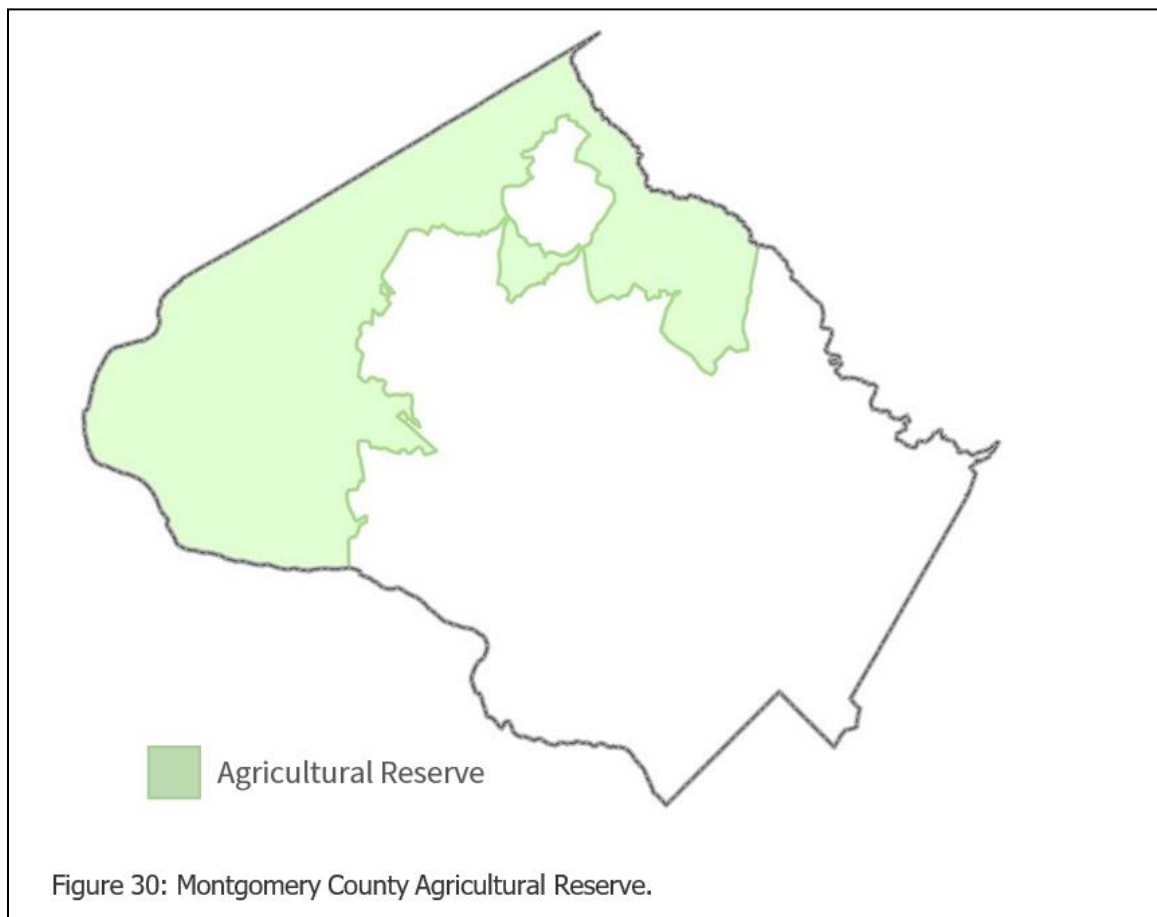
- Consider new methods of financing public infrastructure, such as value capture, tax increment financing, and other mechanisms to facilitate investment and provision of appropriate infrastructure in areas identified as appropriate for more intensive development. (Ec)
- Establish high-quality transit infrastructure along growth corridors through capital investment and ensure reliable, frequent service through operational investment. (Ec, Env, Eq)
- Leverage federal, state and local incentive programs, publicly owned land and land investment opportunities for corridor infill development and redevelopment. (Ec, Env, Eq)

Limit growth beyond corridors to compact, infill development and redevelopment in Complete Communities to prevent sprawl. Apply principles of urbanism at an appropriate scale along a rural-to-urban transect as outlined in the Complete Communities chapter. (Env, Eq)

- Sustainably manage land outside growth corridors and Complete Communities to increase biodiversity, improve the health of natural habitats, preserve privately owned forests, protect watersheds and aquifers, and improve water quality while providing expanded opportunities for outdoor recreation, including vigorous physical activity. (Env, Eq)

Preserve and enhance the Agricultural Reserve and manage it to maintain a rural pattern of development for the benefit of the entire county.

- Maximize the benefits of the Agricultural Reserve through policies designed to ensure the continued viability of farming as an economically productive and sustainable activity, discourage sprawl, facilitate a broad range of outdoor recreation and tourism activities, conserve land and natural resources, and promote practices that advance environmental quality. (Ec, Env)
- Improve awareness of and access to the Agricultural Reserve for the public to experience and directly benefit from this valuable resource for locally grown food, outdoor recreation, and tourism. (Ec, Eq)



How will these policies further the key objectives of Thrive Montgomery 2050? Compact Development to Support Vibrant, Diverse, and Sustainable Places

Montgomery County's population is projected to grow by approximately 200,000 people over the next 30 years, and these policies and practices are critical to not only accommodating this growth but also to achieving Thrive Montgomery 2050's key objectives, including combating and adapting to climate change. Nearly 85 percent of the county's land is already developed or otherwise constrained. If we fail to maintain effective barriers to sprawl, we will paint ourselves into a corner where space for farming, recreation, and resource management is exhausted along with space for additional growth.

We must encourage compact, infill development and redevelopment to accommodate anticipated population growth in a way that supports dense, vibrant, energized communities. The strategy of concentrating growth within nodes along corridors will direct population and employment to locations served by infrastructure, services, and amenities – including transit – and create focused centers of activity. This focus will in turn reduce the cost of public infrastructure and deliver more favorable returns on both public and private investment. Compact, infill development and redevelopment also align with the increasing desire of residents, businesses and employers seeking walkable, transit-oriented communities, as demonstrated by transit-oriented areas across the region and country.

Economic Health: Compact Form as the Foundation for More Appealing Places

Keeping the county's development footprint and growth in a compact form along corridors will help to create the kind of places that are attractive to employers and attract new investment. Studies of trends in office development show that major employers are looking for amenity-rich, walkable areas near transit. Traditional, low-density office parks are no longer in favor. The related ideas of Compact Form, Complete Communities and Design Excellence will result in places that attract both businesses and residents.

Compact development footprint is an important tool in creating the kind of centers that support a strong economy. The lack of large tracts of vacant, unconstrained land does not mean that Montgomery County cannot grow its economy. However, the focus needs to switch to thinking differently about where growth happens and compactly developing areas that have not been considered in the past, such as surface parking lots and colocation of facilities. Even though the county is running out of greenfields to accommodate sprawling employment centers or new residential neighborhoods, this plan does not recommend expanding our development footprint well beyond the Corridor-Focused Growth area. Instead, it emphasizes that the current supply of redevelopable land – if developed compactly and creatively – is sufficient to attract and retain a variety of employers, especially advanced knowledge-based industries looking for vibrant centers and a highly trained, diverse workforce.

It is important to note that form alone will not create more jobs. Increased density, great transit options and a regulatory environment that supports investment are all required. Other changes are needed in terms of financial incentives, tax reform and investment in infrastructure.

Racial Equity and Rebalancing the Geographic Distribution of Opportunity

The identification of growth corridors in the East County – particularly along Route 29 and the Georgia Avenue corridor along Metrorail's Red Line – is vital to reversing decades of no growth and ensuring that the benefits of growth are more equitably distributed across lines of geography, class, and race. Political opposition to development in the East County – most clearly expressed by the removal of the I-95/Route 29 corridor in the 1993 Refinement of the Wedges and Corridors Plan from the areas identified as appropriate for growth – pushed public and private investment to the west. Subsequent public and private investment was focused along the I-270 corridor because this area appeared to offer the best prospects for growth and success. Meanwhile, the East County became relatively less attractive for employers and residents, feeding a cycle of stagnation.

This pattern is consistent with what real estate developer and scholar Christopher B. Leinberger has described as the phenomenon of the "favored quarter." Leinberger observes that in many metropolitan areas, decisions about the geographic allocation of resources made decades in the past are reinforced and repeated. Once an area receives resources and attention from the government and private sector, Leinberger argues, future investment tends to follow in the same location, reinforcing its head start and leaving other areas farther behind.

Figure 31: Colesville Road/Columbia Pike (Route 29) looking east from its intersection with New Hampshire Avenue—today

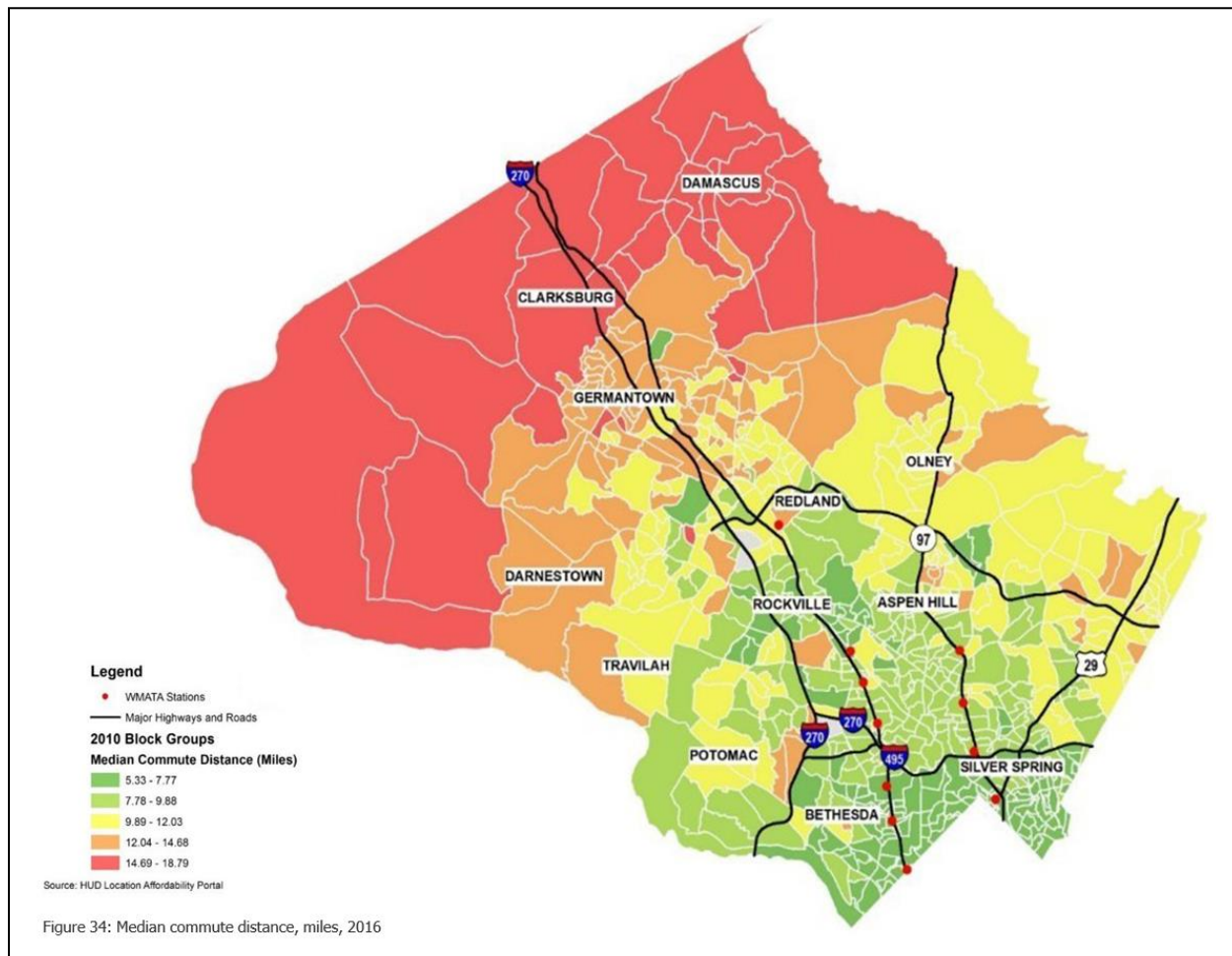
Figure 31: Colesville Road/Columbia Pike (Route 29) looking east from its intersection with New Hampshire Avenue—possible future

The evolution of the I-270 corridor as the “favored quarter” and accompanying limits on development in the East County were not the sole – or even the most important – cause of the racial and economic divide between the eastern and western part of the county. The logic of the favored quarter, however, was and is a significant factor in reinforcing disparities in access to investment, infrastructure, and services as well as the concentration of poverty and diminished access to opportunity. While the potential for displacement must always be considered – and this plan calls for monitoring and addressing dislocation caused by rising real estate values – by the same token public and private investment are essential to expanding economic opportunity for people and communities that have been left behind or economically and socially isolated. By focusing investment and encouraging development along corridors in the East County, this plan will establish the foundation for Complete Communities that will create a more prosperous and equitable future in all parts of the county.

Compact Growth and Environmental Performance: Improved Air and Water Quality with More Efficient Use of Land

Among the most clear-cut benefits of the efficient use of land, including compact corridor-focused growth together with reinforcement of the rural pattern outside of the corridors, is to make development more environmentally sustainable in general and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in particular. By concentrating development in a limited footprint, corridor-centered growth facilitates walking, biking, and transit use and reduces emissions from motor vehicles. A compact form of development reduces driving even among people who continue to rely on cars, because trip distances decline as a wider range of needs can be met within a short distance, reducing vehicle miles traveled.

Figure 33: Lining corridors with appropriate densities provides housing options (Before and after of Georgia Avenue north of Silver Spring)



Compact growth also improves the environmental performance of both sites and buildings, as it allows the redevelopment of areas developed prior to the adoption of modern stormwater controls and often characterized by high proportions of impervious surface cover. A compact form of infill development or redevelopment can reduce stormwater runoff and heat island effect by using green infrastructure, green roofs, and other green cover, as well as building design and orientation to reduce urban temperatures.

Finally, compact, corridor-focused development is essential to the continued protection of the Agricultural Reserve and preservation of land for environmental stewardship and recreation. As our population grows and the region continues to develop, pressure on rural areas and natural systems will increase. The preservation of the Agricultural Reserve reinforces the concentration of growth and maximizes the land available for farming, recreation and natural resource conservation.



Figure 35: At Pike and Rose, infill development reduced stormwater runoff flows by over 70 percent.

While farming should remain the primary use in the Agricultural Reserve, the area set aside for the rural pattern also provides opportunities for recreation, tourism and natural resource conservation, uses that must be acknowledged and supported. The Agricultural Reserve improves the attractiveness and livability of the county because it provides opportunities for locally grown food, outdoor recreation, education, and tourism. The continued preservation of the Agricultural Reserve, along with the county's park system, also protects the county's forests, wetlands, meadows and streams, supports biodiversity and natural habitats, and protects watersheds, aquifers, and water quality.

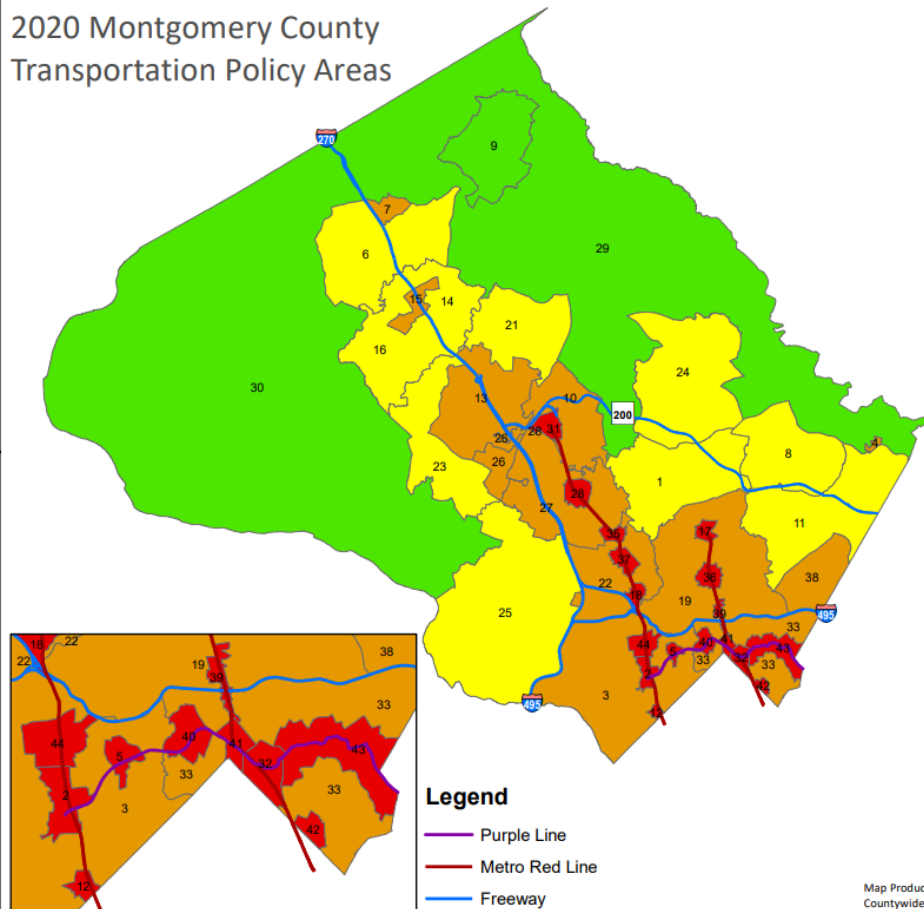
How will we evaluate progress?

In assessing future plans, projects, and proposals related to the efficient use of land and measuring the success or failure of the approaches recommended in this plan, relevant measures may include:

- Amount of infill development/redevelopment along major corridors.
- Proportion of new population, employment and housing within a mile (or half-mile) of priority corridors.
- Non-auto driver mode share (walking, biking, transit use) and corresponding reduction in VMT.
- Public and private investment in infrastructure, services, and amenities along corridors, overall and by area of county.
- Acres of farmland, natural habitats, forests and environmentally sensitive areas protected.
- Economic productivity of farming.
- Amount of space for outdoor recreation and variety of activities supported.
- Percentage increase in environmental performance of buildings and sites, overall and by area of county.
- Number of visitors from outside the Agricultural Reserve for recreation, commerce, and tourism.
- Maintenance and improvement in measures of stream water quality.

- Reduction in impervious cover and increase in area of impervious cover treated.

2020 Montgomery County Transportation Policy Areas



Red	
2	Bethesda CBD
5	Chevy Chase Lake
12	Friendship Heights
17	Glenmont
18	Grosvenor
28	Rockville Town Center
31	Shady Grove
32	Silver Spring CBD
35	Twinbrook
36	Wheaton CBD
37	White Flint
39	Forest Glen
40	Lyttonsville
41	Woodside
42	Takoma
43	Purple Line East
44	Medical Center
Orange	
3	Bethesda/Chevy Chase
4	Burtonsville Town Center
7	Clarksburg Town Center
10	Derwood
13	Gaithersburg City
15	Germantown Town Center
19	Kensington/Wheaton
22	North Bethesda
26	R&D Village
27	Rockville City
33	Silver Spring/Takoma Park
38	White Oak
Yellow	
1	Aspen Hill
6	Clarksburg
8	Cloverly
11	Fairland/Colesville
14	Germantown East
16	Germantown West
21	Montgomery Village/Airpark
23	North Potomac
24	Olney
25	Potomac
Green	
9	Damascus
29	Rural East
30	Rural West

Map Produced by the Montgomery County Planning Department
Countywide Planning and Policy Division (CPP) November 11, 2020

COMPLETE COMMUNITIES -MIX OF USES AND FORMS

Wedges and Corridors and the Separation of Uses – and People

While the Wedges and Corridors Plan was extraordinarily progressive in advocating a transit- oriented, compact form of development, it rejected the idea of mixed commercial and residential uses. The plan said the spaces designated for different uses should ultimately work together to achieve a “pleasant and economically feasible whole” but that these uses should be physically separated. It recommended Euclidean zoning, with areas set aside for multifamily, townhouse, and single-family housing along with isolated commercial and industrial zones, saying:

“[C]ommercial and industrial zones should exclude residences both because good residential neighborhoods cannot be maintained in such areas, and because business and industry can function more effectively where space allotted them is uninterrupted by housing.”

In addition to a rigid separation of uses, the plan insisted on the desirability of barriers, buffers and transitions between land uses to achieve harmony and compatibility:

“[L]ong established commercial centers expand into nearby residential neighborhoods, causing more transitional problems. The end result is a disease known as urban blight. This disease is contagious and is almost sure to spread where preventative measures are not taken.”

What is the problem we are trying to solve? A Mixed Record with Mixed Use

While the polycentric urbanism embodied by the 1964 plan’s corridor cities concept was fundamentally sound, its approach to the separation of uses and emphasis on transitions and buffers was at best not entirely successful in producing pleasant and economically vibrant commercial districts and at worst served to justify land use decisions that reinforced racial and socioeconomic segregation. Other shortcomings have become increasingly obvious, namely:

- The separate-and-buffer approach failed to anticipate – much less meet – the demand for housing in mixed-use centers of activity. For the most part, the corridor cities neither achieved the densities nor provided for the variety of uses, building types and services necessary to maximize their value in attracting residents and workers looking for more vibrant and appealing places to live and work.
- A handful of locations in Montgomery County have attracted investment in office, retail, and residential uses, but most lack the combination of elements – including a compact form with diverse housing types, commercial uses, transit and a walkable public realm – that support the kinds of human interaction common to the most successful places. Meanwhile, the areas surrounding our most eclectic centers of activity largely remain characterized by a separation of land uses and uniform lot sizes, lot coverage, and building forms.

The separation of uses and associated homogeneity in lot sizes, development standards and building forms, coupled with the commitment to barriers, buffers and transitions had the effect – whether

intentional or not – of discouraging connections among people and places and sharpening racial, social and economic divisions between neighborhoods and parts of the county.

The implementation of these approaches also made access to the full range of economic, educational and cultural opportunities (as well as services, amenities, and infrastructure) far too dependent on access to cars. By separating uses and investing heavily in roads, we have historically made driving the only practical way for many residents and workers to meet their daily needs – including trips that should be feasible on foot, on a bicycle, or on a train or bus.

The preservation and protection of neighborhoods dedicated exclusively to detached single-family houses has left residents disconnected from retail and other services, encouraged the construction of stand-alone public facilities, and perpetuated the inefficient use of land.

Our land use policies have evolved in recent years to reflect a changing social and demographic context as well as changing preferences. The county also has evolved from a bedroom community to the District of Columbia to a county with several distinct employment centers. These changes have coincided with the emergence of increasingly strong market preferences for transit-oriented, mixed-use communities with a unique sense of place. Our plans have been responsive to these trends, but implementation of transit-oriented, mixed-use development has been limited due to economic and regulatory constraints. The basic underlying pattern persists in much of the county despite the 1993 refinement's endorsement of mixed uses and subsequent changes to the zoning code. Of course, some suburban and rural areas may not achieve the mix of uses or support the kinds of transit service that should be expected in more urban areas. Thrive Montgomery 2050 envisions increasing the variety of uses and achieving a people-oriented public realm within the corridor-focused growth areas and centers discussed in the Compact Growth chapter at scales appropriate to their context, so as to provide people in all parts of the county access to a wider range of services and amenities in closer proximity to their homes and workplaces.

Beyond Transit-Oriented Development: Complete Communities and 15-Minute Living

Thrive Montgomery 2050 recognizes the benefits of transit-oriented development, which often uses mixed use zoning as a complement to high-quality transit service, but it updates and recalibrates ideas about the role of mixed uses by adding “complete communities” and “15-minute living” as organizing principles for thinking about planning of neighborhoods and districts.

Complete Communities are places that include the range of land uses, infrastructure, services and amenities that allow them to meet a wide range of needs for a variety of people. They include housing suitable for different household types, income levels, and preferences, helping to support racial and socioeconomic integration. The specific mix of uses and building types in Complete Communities vary depending on factors such as the size and location of the neighborhood or district; proximity to transit, parks and public facilities; variation in physical features such as topography and environmental resources; and other factors unique to the history and context of each place.

The related concept of “15-minute living” has emerged as a way of reimagining existing communities to maximize their attractiveness and efficiency by mixing housing, offices, and retail uses in each neighborhood or district so services, infrastructure, facilities, and amenities to serve the daily needs of

people who live or work there are within walking distance. While a literal or rigid application of 15-minute living may not be practical outside of the corridor focused growth areas and centers, the concept is a useful way to generate concrete recommendations to make communities more complete and help them succeed.

Different Ingredients for Different Communities

The combination of strategies that can help create a more Complete Community in any particular place depends heavily on context. The scale (village vs. town center vs. downtown), location (inside vs. outside the growth footprint) and type of district or neighborhood (office park vs. central business district vs. residential neighborhood vs. suburban shopping center) all influence which elements should be incorporated and how they should be tailored. Despite the varying needs and conditions of different parts of the county, however, the concept of encouraging more diversity of use and form is relevant in almost every location. For example:

- Existing suburban office parks in locations such as Rock Spring or Clarksburg's COMSAT site have large existing buildings that can accommodate employment but lack the integration of uses, services, and amenities necessary to succeed in an increasingly competitive office market. Complete community strategies can help reposition these employment centers through infill and redevelopment to incorporate housing, restaurants, and public spaces along with better transit service, making them more attractive to both residents and employers.
- Likewise, for places the county hopes to see emerge as important centers for office employment, such as White Flint, White Oak, or Germantown, the integration of additional housing options can help to encourage activity beyond regular business hours, creating the sense of energy and activity during the evening and on weekends.

Centers of activity in suburban and rural areas, which range from large retail shopping centers such as Aspen Hill, to clusters of commercial and neighborhood serving retail uses like the shopping areas in Potomac Village or Four Corners, offer convenience retail for surrounding subdivisions but often lack safe pedestrian accommodations, good transit connections, or high-quality parks and public spaces. In some places, new kinds of commercial development, such as medical offices, will be viable even where office space or other employment-related uses are difficult to attract. The recommendations in this chapter and elsewhere in the plan can help make these neighborhoods more walkable and livable.

The Connection Between Complete Communities and Corridor-Focused Growth

As explained in the chapter on Compact Growth, development of new or substantially expanded centers of activity should be focused along growth corridors to avoid sprawl and achieve the critical mass required for each center to be economically sustainable. Limited, organic development beyond the corridors and defined growth areas should be allowed to increase the diversity of housing types in existing residential neighborhoods and make these areas more complete, particularly near existing centers of activity or development. Opportunities for increased housing diversity outside the defined growth areas will allow neighborhoods to evolve over time to address current and future housing needs and become more racially and socioeconomically integrated.

Implementation will be organic and incremental, through infill and redevelopment within centers of activity along corridors as well as within existing downtowns, town centers and rural villages. This implementation will be primarily market driven, using the development review process to funnel contributions from private developers to streetscape improvements, dedication and construction of parks and public spaces, and the addition of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Specific strategies will be needed to recognize and minimize the negative impacts of gentrification on communities and businesses at risk of displacement, including the recommendations described in the chapter on housing together with policies outside the scope of this plan, such as direct assistance to small and minority-owned businesses.

What policies will solve the problem?

To ensure that demand for future development in Montgomery County is harnessed to embrace Complete Communities and 15-minute living – both by building new centers of activity along corridors and by making existing ones more complete – the county should pursue a number of policies, which must be suitable for all areas of the county. The specific policies and practices recommended to further Complete Communities and 15-minute living include:

Identify and integrate elements needed to complete centers of housing, retail, and office development and plan to make 15-minute living a reality for as many people as possible.

- Promote zoning allocations and standards to encourage the integration of varied uses, building types and lot sizes. (Ec, Env, EQ)
- Apply flexible approaches to accommodate infill and redevelopment that improve access to amenities, active transportation, parks, and open spaces, and a broader range of housing types at the neighborhood scale. (Ec, Env, EQ)
- Prioritize neighborhood-level land use planning as a tool to enhance overall quality of community life and avoid reinforcing outdated land use patterns. (EQ)
- Allow sufficient densities to make a wide range of uses economically viable in Complete Communities. Encourage densities sufficient to support convenience retail and other local-serving amenities at the neighborhood level. Provide guidance for accommodating additional density in a context-sensitive manner. (Ec, Env, EQ)
- Ensure that Complete Communities are integrated into their surroundings and supported by a public realm that encourages walking, biking and rolling, as well as social interaction through the configuration of sidewalks, paths, landmarks, and gathering spaces. (Ec, Env, EQ)
- Adopt planning approaches that prioritize providing more Complete Communities in service to improving the quality of community life throughout the county. (EQ)

Encourage co-location and adjacency of all essential and public services, especially along growth corridors and in Complete Communities.

- Maximize the utility of public facilities by locating them in places that promote integration with other public and private uses and infrastructure. (Env, EQ)
- Promote active transportation improvements that prioritize walking, biking, rolling, and transit use to enhance public access to these co-located facilities. (Env, EQ)

- Develop standards for colocation of public facilities that promote mixing of uses or services and compact development strategies. Encourage public-private partnerships and ensure they promote social interaction and physical activity. (Ec, Env, EQ)

Retrofit centers of activity and large-scale older facilities such as shopping centers, abandoned federal campuses, office parks, and other single-use developments to include a mixture of uses and diversity of housing types and to provide a critical mass of housing, jobs, services, and amenities for vibrant, dynamic Complete Communities.

- Ensure employment uses in economic clusters develop in a mixed-use format along with housing, retail, amenities, and transit, and ensure they are integrated into the surrounding communities. (Ec, Env, EQ)
- Allow creation of co-located housing, discussed further in the Affordable and Attainable Housing Chapter, including for industries that employ large numbers of employees (permanent or seasonal). (Ec, Env, EQ)
- Encourage higher density economic and housing cooperatives (live/work areas such as home occupations, artist villages, farmers' market/villages, tech/life-science startup incubators). (Ec, Env, EQ)

How will these policies further the key objectives of Thrive Montgomery 2050?

Economic Health: Complete Communities as Magnets for a Variety of People, Businesses, and Jobs

Montgomery County has reached a stage where greenfield opportunities largely have been exhausted and the general locations of business districts, residential neighborhoods, and farmland have been established, or are at least planned. For example, the downtowns of Silver Spring and Bethesda; the new life sciences hubs anticipated in the Great Seneca Science Corridor and White Oak; and the emerging town centers in Germantown and White Flint have zoning capacity as well as physical space for tens of millions of square feet of development.

The task of this plan, therefore, is less about identifying new locations for large government or corporate tenants and more about making parts of the county that already have been developed or planned more attractive to residents and workers, which in turn will help attract employers. The central premise is that making individual neighborhoods and districts more complete is among the most effective ways to accomplish this goal. Combined with a compact development footprint, clear standards to ensure quality of design; complementary transportation infrastructure to support walking, rolling, and riding; and appealing parks and recreation offerings for active lifestyles; more complete communities are essential to our competitiveness.

Planning for Complete Communities, with a true integration of uses, diversity of building types, and variety of lot sizes, represents a departure from the automobile-oriented land use planning of the last several decades and the embrace of a planning paradigm that is far more likely to help attract

employers, workers, and residents by offering convenience, walkability and a quality of place only available when the needs of people are considered ahead of the needs of cars.

As previously explained, the creation of vibrant, dynamic Complete Communities that include housing, a diversity of jobs, services, amenities and opportunities for social gathering and interaction will attract employment, advancing our economic performance and competitiveness. This approach will not be sufficient standing alone and it is not intended as a substitute for other elements of a comprehensive economic development strategy. In an era with limited demand for new office construction and a strong market preference for locating businesses in high-quality, mixed- use, walkable and transit-oriented areas, however, it is one of the best strategies available to local government to attract and retain employers.

“Completeness” and Equity: Diverse Places to Support Diverse People

In addition, flexible use and development standards that allow variety in lot sizes, building types, and building placement offer an opportunity to increase commercial and residential diversity within neighborhoods. A broad assortment of retail, office, and live-work spaces designed to fit the needs of individual businesses can support different kinds of work and employment arrangements. The diversity of housing and employment types provides a means for renters, first-time homebuyers, or new business owners to access and participate in competitive markets.

Diversity in development is especially important to producing housing that matches the needs of our future. The integration of accessory dwelling units, duplexes, and multi-family buildings within the same community supports a broader range of households and incomes, reduces the concentration of poverty, and increases racial and economic equity. A mixture of housing types – coupled with strategies to use the built environment to encourage social interaction – can help create integrated communities where people across the ethnic, racial, social, and economic spectrum not only live and work together but develop a sense of shared purpose and community. These elements also create opportunities for housing suitable to every stage of life, allowing residents to stay in the same neighborhoods as they age.

The Role of Complete Communities in Environmental Resilience: Community Gap-Filling as Sustainability Strategy

Finally, Complete Communities will also create long-term sustainability for both human and environmental health. A mixture of uses and forms, together with a built environment that facilitates active lifestyles, allows more trips to be completed by walking, biking, rolling, and transit, reducing vehicle miles traveled and dependence on cars while increasing physical fitness and opportunities for social interaction. Establishing Complete Communities in the corridor-focused growth areas and within centers throughout the county reduces the distance that people, particularly those within suburban and rural areas, must drive to meet their daily needs, further reducing vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions. Likewise, the mixture of uses, co-location and adjacency of public services and amenities improves sustainability by reducing building footprints, and cutting energy use. Co-location also helps to maximize community use and social interaction.

How will we evaluate progress?


In assessing proposals related to the creation of Complete Communities and measuring the success or failure of the approaches recommended in this plan relevant measures may include:

- Population density in centers of activity along corridors as well as within existing downtowns, town centers and rural villages
- Diversity of uses and structures
- Racial, ethnic, and income diversity
- Median age/life stages concentration
- Percentage of employment growth overall and by area of the county
- Car ownership levels
- Transit usage for inter-county travel
- Weekend transit usage
- Numbers of co-located facilities/amenities
- Public investment ratios for walking, biking, rolling, transit, and automobile
- Median vehicular expense per county household
- Median housing expense per county household
- Emergence of key population and mixed-use centers
- Increasing commercial activity in otherwise residential neighborhoods

MEMORANDUM

June 10, 2021

TO: Tom Hucker, Council President

FROM: Marc Elrich, County Executive 

SUBJECT: County Executive's Comments on Thrive Montgomery 2050 amendment to the General Plan

Pursuant to Sec. 33A-7 of the Montgomery County Code, here are my comments on Thrive Montgomery 2050 amendment to the General Plan.¹

I. INTRODUCTION— Montgomery County residents are confused and inadequately informed about Thrive Montgomery 2050 and know little, if anything, about the Attainable Housing Strategies Initiative’s complicated rezoning proposals that will make sweeping changes to their neighborhoods. I request that the Council separate the two projects and ask the Planning Board to stop work on elaborate rezoning proposals that would implement Thrive Montgomery before the plan has even been approved.

The Executive objected to the county’s moving forward with Thrive Montgomery 2050 during an historic pandemic that overwhelmed government and residents with unceasing concerns about working and schooling while confined to home and experiencing economic hardship, business dislocations, and potential illness, and even death. These have not been circumstances in which our residents have had time to consider the first revision of the General Plan in 28 years, one that will shape the county’s future development over the next 30 years.

Similarly, residents certainly are not able to understand and participate simultaneously in esoteric, elaborate rezoning proposals through an expedited, opaque Attainable Housing Strategies Initiative (AHSI) with an insider’s group called the Housing Equity Advisory Team (HEAT), as described in detail below. The rezoning proposals are moving ahead even though the Thrive Montgomery 2050 principles that would justify these proposals have not yet been enacted or even considered by the County Council. In

¹ I am also attaching OMB’s request, pursuant to Sec. 33A-7, for an Extension of Time for filing the Financial Impact Statement, as well as updating the Council president that the Executive branch will submit further technical comments from county agencies, prior to the Council’s work sessions.

the meantime, hundreds of thousands of county homeowners have absolutely no idea what AHSI is, or what is about to happen to their properties in the next few months.

AHSI has already developed complex proposals to rezone large swaths of the entire county with different densities and housing types, and different rules for certain housing types for different locations. The new zoning proposals were presented for the first time on May 18 to HEAT.²

The Planning Department held four meetings with HEAT, and three meetings with the Community. HEAT's fourteen members³ were selected by the Planning Department to advise Planning on the AHSI. It appears that there was no public process or criteria for the selection. The names of the members are available in the meeting videos and in the PowerPoint for the new zoning proposal. There are no biographies, although the Planning Department and the members have mentioned generally HEAT members' occupations.⁴ Videos of the meetings are posted online, and as of Meeting #3, the general public could "attend" the meeting by sending a request to Planning beforehand. Participation was limited to sending in questions. Planning has also included the Chat discussions in most of the videos. Planning posted its written presentations, including the zoning proposal, with the video of the meeting.

The virtual Community meetings were accessed by signing up. Residents were able to speak directly to the Planning Staff and to each other. Planning didn't share its rezoning proposals directly with the community until the June 2nd Community meeting.⁵ There were, and are, virtual "Office Hours" where residents can ask questions.⁶ Unfortunately, attendance at, and viewing of these virtual meetings has not been robust.

The process allowed the HEAT members to have direct access to Planning Staff for the drafting of the zoning proposals and were asked their opinions on important decisions that were part of the Thrive review - for example, whether the new zoning rules would extend a half-mile or one mile from transit. It is

² <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/HEAT-Meeting-4.pdf>

³ The members of HEAT are Dave Ager, Liz Brent, Karen Cordry, Amanda Farber, David Flanagan, Tracy Grisez, Ryan Hardy, Bill Kirwin, Gerrit Knapp, Cary Lamari, Jane Lyons, Damon Orobona, Sarah Reddinger, and Xiaochen Zhang.

⁴ <https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/housing/attainable-housing-strategies-initiative/housing-equity-advisory-team/>

Here's how the Planning department described HEAT:

As part of the [Attainable Housing Strategies Initiative](#), we created an external advisory team called the Housing Equity Advisory Team, or HEAT. The HEAT consists of county stakeholders that approach this issue from different perspectives. It includes developers (both for-profit and non-profit), a realtor, civic activists, housing activists, an economist and someone from the banking industry.

⁵ By then the proposals had already had some revisions, according to HEAT members.

⁶ There is no doubt that Planning staff has worked very hard to reach as many members of the community as possible. In fact, they are continuing to engage in community outreach through meetings and social media. The problem is that the outreach for AHSI only started at the beginning of March. During this time, communities were focused on understanding Thrive with the goal of participating at the County Council's Public Hearings on June 17 and 29. Residents have also been dealing with the unrolling of the vaccinations and the ever-changing school policies with regard to reopening this spring. As a result, AHSI has been under the radar.

important to note that some HEAT members are developers and real estate professionals who may benefit from the changes in the zoning.

In the meantime, there were different community participants at each of the sessions, and they did not receive the zonings proposals until more than two weeks after HEAT members had received them. Thus the process favored developers and supporters of the rezoning who successfully impacted the legislative recommendations. Despite their best efforts, Planning Staff was unable to achieve the broad community outreach that is necessary to allow informed input from a broad group of community stakeholders. The Planning Staff recommendations will be presented to the Planning Board in two weeks—and while Planning Staff continues to pursue other kinds of public outreach, the AHSI has so far accommodated insiders over the general public at a crucial point in the process.

I request that the Council separate the two projects and ask the Planning Board to stop work on proposals that would implement Thrive Montgomery before the plan has even been approved.

Once the General Plan is enacted after receiving a full vetting that a thirty-year plan deserves, the AHSI can be considered along with other strategies necessary to move the county forward. The parallel courses of the General Plan and the AHSI are not only confusing but suggest a predetermined outcome before the public has even been able to offer testimony about the Thrive plan. The situation is compounded by the tight and overlapping time frames for review of these two major land use proposals, with the Planning Board's review of the Attainable Housing Strategies Initiative sandwiched between the Council's two public hearing dates on Thrive.

II. THRIVE MONTGOMERY SHOULD ADDRESS THE COUNTY'S DYSFUNCTIONAL SYSTEM FOR DEVELOPMENT REVIEW.

The General Plan, until now referred to as the Wedges and Corridors Plan, is an important document that has guided the county's physical development since 1964.⁷ Its goal is to frame the county's built future and to embrace new, achievable concepts—bold ideas—that will better serve the county and the people who live here. These ideas may take a long time to reach fruition, but it is important that they be included: food for thought for our future.

Two bold ideas that came out of Wedges and Corridors and its amendments are the MPDU program—that originated in Montgomery County—and the Agricultural Reserve, which was an idea long before it became a reality. While both the 1964 General Plan and the 1969 Amendment⁸ supported the preservation of farmland, the Agricultural Reserve was not created until 1980.⁹

Thrive Montgomery should continue the tradition of bold, forward-looking ideas by including a recommendation for the county to study merging all functions of the development approval and permitting process under one agency.

The current system for development review is dysfunctional. The Executive Advisory Group's report, "An Economic Roadmap to Recovery and Long-Term Success", states, "The combination of a unique structure for real estate projects including an independent planning function and a separate County

⁷ <https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/master-plan-list/general-plans/wedges-corridors-general-plan-1964/>

⁸ <https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/master-plan-list/general-plans/updated-general-plan-1969/>

⁹ <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/PreservationAgricultureRuralOpenSpaceFunctionalMasterPlan1980ocr300.pdf>

permitting process has created inefficiencies and frustrations.”¹⁰ Thrive should recommend that this “unique structure” be re-examined. It is off-putting to developers considering working in the County and to residents who must become mired in the complexities in order to have a voice. Fixing the approval and permitting process is essential. A more normative approval and permitting system will attract more developers, enhance competition, and lead to better community participation.

Thrive does not address these issues. Instead, it recommends adding workarounds to avoid the system entirely. **Planning’s proposal for by-right infill development relies on cookie cutter Pattern books to be used in every circumstance in every part of the county with no community input. It is a clumsy idea for a county of our size and maturity, seemingly intended to circumvent a development approval system badly in need of change.** We should find a better way, by adding reform of the development system to our policy goals for the next 30 years.

III. THE GENERAL PLAN MUST INCLUDE SUBSTANTIVE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL RESILIENCE, AND EQUITY THAT WILL BUILD ON THE COUNTY’S SUCCESSES AND ADDRESS ITS CHALLENGES.

The Planning Board draft focuses too much on national and international planning trends for Missing Middle Housing (MMH) and 15-minute living which is for cities. While it has been adopted by the Mayor of Paris, it isn’t suitable for a county encompassing 507 square miles. In fact, it glosses over the most pressing land use needs of Montgomery County over the next 30 years.¹¹ The draft presents many salient facts about the county—the lack of job growth over the last 10 years, the lack of diversity in some parts of the county, and the real harms from climate change that have already begun. But instead of recommending a comprehensive, fine-grained plan with a range of land use options, the Planning Board advocates MMH and Complete Communities as a one-size-fits-all plan for 32 activity centers and 11 corridors throughout the county.

Unfortunately, the county will not solve its economic development, environmental resilience, and Equity issues simply by rezoning most of the county’s residential zones—we tried that by rezoning our commercial areas with CR zones, with little success. Retrofitting with infill housing is very complex. Infill development must address not only the needs of new residents but also the needs of the existing community, environmental impacts, and potential displacement and gentrification. These complex planning issues are best done through small, context-sensitive plans, not through county-wide form based zoning with Pattern books. Washington, D.C.—with many of the same concerns—is beginning to use Small Area Planning (SAP) to achieve its goals.¹² We should, too.

A. Economic Development: The 1964 Wedges and Corridors Plan states that “Already urbanized areas should be encouraged to develop to their fullest capacity.”⁸ The county should affirm this recommendation and prioritize economic development that will bring jobs to our large urban centers like White Flint and Silver Spring.

¹⁰ https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OPI/Resources/Files/2020/EAG_Roadmap_11-2020.pdf, p. 7.

¹¹ The draft glosses over the county’s land use needs in two ways: 1) the narrative is much broader than the recommendations; and 2) even where there are recommendations, many of them are vague and generic, almost an aside to the main topic of urbanizing the county through Complete Communities.

¹² https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/local-opinions/mary-cheh-gentrification-dc-comprehensive-plan/2021/03/11/c0f1d58a-802f-11eb-ac37-4383f7709abe_story.html

These urban centers are the county's economic engine. The county's first priority must be to bring jobs that will lead to the completion and revitalization of our large centers where we have high-quality transit. Thrive's recommendations to spread our limited CIP funds over 32 centers of activity and 11 corridors is contrary to what should be the #1 priority.

That's why I have proposed, and this Council has supported, a pandemic center in White Flint. And this is just a start. Recent reports by the Planning Department confirm this, raising red flags about White Flint¹³ and Silver Spring.¹⁴

1. Low levels of job growth in Montgomery County are presenting the principal challenge to housing projects moving forward in White Flint.

The Planning Department's excellent study, *Advancing the Pike District*, paints a picture of what needs to happen in White Flint. It has staging capacity under the White Flint Sector Plan and there are large undeveloped parcels that could develop quickly if market conditions change. The report, however, makes clear that one of the principal reasons that White Flint development is stalled is the lack of job growth that has depressed the formation of new households. "Developers interviewed cited the low levels of job growth, the resulting slow pace of household formation and reduced demand for new apartments in the Pike District, as the principal challenges limiting their ability to advance new projects." p. 11

2. Silver Spring Downtown, not the Adjacent Communities, needs the county's full attention.

In preparation for the Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Master Plan, Planning Staff with the help of the consultant Partners for Economic Solutions (PES) prepared a market study for the downtown Silver Spring retail and office market. The findings of the study are attention-grabbing:

- a. Office: "Currently, 18 percent of office space in downtown Silver Spring is vacant, sharply up since Discovery Communication's decision to relocate...." At the average pace of absorption between 2010 and 2020, even though 2018 was a very good year, it would take 53 years for office vacancy to decline to 9%.
- b. Retail: "PES estimates that 11% of retail space is vacant and that at the average pace of a absorption from 2017 to 2019 it could take 7 to 8 years for vacancy to fall to a healthier 5 per cent level."

The consultants recommended that the County provide incentives, an active recruitment of tenants, and a focused marketing and management plan. They also predicted that some offices would be converted to residences.

These concerns must be addressed as soon as possible, while also pressing forward with White Oak, Wheaton, and the redevelopment of office parks. Bethesda, too, must have the resources to stay competitive. We must focus on job growth in our large centers with high quality transit and not disperse employment throughout the county.

B. Environmental Resilience— The absence of *direct* recommendations related to environmental resilience is glaring. A new chapter, drawing on the substantive staff

¹³ <https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/communities/midcounty/white-flint/advancing-the-pike-district/>

¹⁴ https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Development-Trends-Report_FINAL_HR.pdf

recommendations in the *Healthy and Sustainable Solutions* chapter in the Public Hearing Draft, along with DEP recommendations, should be included in the General Plan.

1. While environmental issues such as energy efficient buildings, modern/enhanced stormwater management and others are mentioned throughout the draft, they are mostly *implied* as opposed to being *explicit*. Similarly, most of the environmental recommendations are *indirect* and flow from the thrust of the draft - “urbanism,” compact development, infill, complete communities. The Planning Board draft appears to assume that urbanism by itself is sufficient to address our environmental challenges. It is not.

There may be significant environmental benefits associated with urbanism, such as shorter and fewer vehicle trips, although achieving this result may be more difficult in a large county, as opposed to a city. However, the plan must include actions that are restorative and regenerative as opposed to simply doing less harm by “minimizing the negative externalities associated with the development of land and intensification of its uses...”¹⁵

The General Plan should include substantive and *direct* actions to require state-of-the-art energy efficiency in new buildings, and modern/enhanced stormwater management--**including recommendations to address the repeated concentration of stormwater management waivers in certain areas of the county.**

The plan should also include substantive and *direct* actions that increase green space, forested area, and tree canopy; support regenerative agriculture; enhance pollination and biodiversity; facilitate distributed energy; battery storage and grid modernization; and better facilitate composting/food waste recovery and other circular economy solutions.

2. **Montgomery County is already experiencing the impacts from climate change. These will only get worse. The General Plan should include specific recommendations related to enhancing resilience.**

There should be explicit actions to address supply chain and utility service disruptions such as the creation of resilience hubs, innovative food security strategies such as more widespread community gardens and “edible forests” and import-substitution strategies to build greater economic self-sufficiency.

3. **The county must reaffirm its unconditional support for the Agricultural Reserve and reject the Planning Board’s attempts to weaken the Reserve by no longer supporting farming as the preferred use in the Reserve.**

The Planning Board draft recommends that the county “...manage the areas designated within the footprint [of the Reserve] for a rural pattern of development for the benefit of the entire county.” The draft retreats from the support of farming as the preferred use in the Reserve, instead supporting the economic viability of farming and policies to “facilitate a broad range of outdoor recreation and tourism...” p. 20

¹⁵ Planning Board draft, p. 132.

The General Plan must reaffirm the county's commitment to the Agricultural Reserve, and to the 1980 Preservation of Agriculture and Rural Open Space, Functional Master Plan as it did in the 1993 General Plan Refinement.¹⁶

C. Equity—The Planning Board should have paused the Plan when it learned through its own housing study for the Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Master Plan that the MMH housing it was proposing was not affordable to Equity groups in the very locations where racial and income diversity were desired. The high cost and high profits of the new housing¹⁷ raise the specter of displacement and gentrification in Wheaton, Silver Spring, and other communities. Thrive must include safeguards against these unintended consequences, as well as many more housing strategies that right now are no more than a line on a page in the Planning Board draft. At a minimum, these strategies should be given equal weight with market rate housing. Finally, new housing should be located near high-quality transit, with the first priority being housing for those with the greatest need.

- 1. The Planning Board errs by focusing on the housing type as the Equity solution, rather than the housing cost.**

The Planning Board's type is unmoored from the price—the affordability--of the housing type. This is because the Planning Board draft's recommendations for MMH were made before the Planning Board had any sense of the relative cost of the new housing types, or their feasibility. But now we do.

The Planning Department's Silver Spring Missing Middle Housing Study found that no MMH types were feasible in downtown Silver Spring except for dense and moderate townhouses that cost \$715,000 and \$855,000, respectively. Similarly, an EYA-built 1500sf triplex on an R-60 lot in the Town of Chevy Chase, would, according to EYA, cost \$875,000!¹⁸

Contrast this to the Planning Board draft's graph of median incomes—Blacks and African Americans and Hispanics have a median income ranging from \$72,000-\$76,000.¹⁹ That income is enough to purchase a home costing \$300,000. Clearly, the county must do more than MMH/Attainable Housing in order to assure Equity in housing.

- 2. The Planning Department was supposed to define Attainable Housing through the AHSI, but so far there is no clear definition. This definition is essential, as is an understanding of the levels of income that will be needed to purchase new market rate housing.**

Right now, there is a complete disconnect between the asserted objective and the reality of who could purchase the new housing.

¹⁶ <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/GeneralPlanRefinement1993ocr.pdf>, p. 33.

¹⁷ See EYA presentation cited in footnote 19.

¹⁸ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FMao-BHI69m21Xla502LgJNWigHYcDhS/view>

¹⁹ <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Thrive-Planning-Board-Draft-web.pdf>, p. 14.

3. **Here are multiple, interlocking strategies to make the necessary connections between objectives and costs, and achieve Equity in housing, defined as “the integration of neighborhoods by race and income,”²⁰ with priority for those with the greatest need:**
- a. **Preserve Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH)** as a stated goal for all Plans, as discussed in the Planning Board Preservation of Affordable Housing Study of 2020²¹ and the Planning Board Thrive Public Hearing Draft of October 2020.²² Without effective preservation, the Study predicts that the county will lose between 7,000 and 11,000 housing of 25,900 existing units by 2030. As part of preservation, **the county should discourage teardowns.**
 - b. **Establish a Policy of No Net Loss of market and restricted affordable housing in any redevelopment — ensuring equal numbers and sizes of affordable units, rather than the Planning Board draft language of “refine regulatory tools and financial incentives...without erecting disincentives for the construction of additional units.”²³**
 - i. In order to minimize displacement of people of color and lower income households, the General Plan must state a clear policy objective, as was included in the Public Hearing Draft as part of Goal 5.5.
 - ii. Examples of workable approaches include the Halpine View property in the Veirs Mill Corridor Master Plan²⁴ and Fairfax County’s endorsement of a Preservation and No Net Loss Program in April 2021 for inclusion in its Consolidated Plan.
 - c. **Adopt policies for Rent Stabilization.** This tool of land use planning was recommended in the Affordable Housing Preservation Study, p. 16, and identified as a need in the Planning Board Thrive Public Hearing Draft Goal 5.5, as a way to maintain mixed income communities and minimizing displacement.
 - d. **Modify the MPDU policy to increase the numbers and level of affordability of units.** Increasing the numbers of MPDUs required is consistent with the Public Hearing Draft Goal 5.3 and the Planning Board’s 2020 Housing Needs Assessment. In addition, the Council of Governments (COG) Housing Goals define the County’s need for at least 25% and as much as 50% of new units made affordable at lower income; these goals cannot depend on public subsidy alone. The Planning Board Draft language does not establish a goal of increasing MPDUs, recommending only that the county “calibrate the applicability of the MPDU program ... to provide units appropriate for income levels ranging from deeply affordable to workforce.” This is not enough.
 - e. **Revise and strengthen the Planning Board draft’s statement with respect to housing dedicated to special needs populations across all communities, including people**

²⁰ Ibid. p.

²¹ <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/200914-Montgomery-County-Preservation-Study.pdf>

²² <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Public-Hearing-Draft-Plan-Thrive-Montgomery-2050-final-10-5.pdf>

²³

²⁴ <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Veirs-Mill-Corridor-Master-Plan-Approved-and-Adopted-WEB.pdf>, p. 101

transitioning from homelessness, those with disabilities, and the elderly. The draft states the goal of integrating these populations into attainable housing; the goal must be to integrate these populations into suitable housing of any kind, including housing for limited incomes.

- f. Use SAP—Small Area Planning**—in our mature communities near transit to assure that we minimize the unintended consequences of new development—displacement and gentrification caused by loss of affordable housing.
- g. Identify suitable tracts of land for development throughout the county**, as was done in the Centers and Boulevards Study, 2006.²⁵ Identifying larger parcels—3 to 5 acres—would allow excellent planned development with economies of scale.

IV. Transportation-- The Public Hearing draft's Goal 7.1 recommended that growth be focused on infill development and redevelopment concentrated around rail and BRT, but the Planning Board removed the transit underpinning. The General Plan should return to the Public Hearing draft's recommendation.

- A. The Planning Board's recommendation to designate communities with limited public transit for urbanization with MMH is a new form of sprawl.**

The Public Hearing draft recommended that Complete Communities with infill development be located around rail and BRT in Goal 7.1. The Planning Board, however, removed the transit element.²⁶ The current draft recommends MMH and Complete Communities in 32 centers of activity and 11 corridors dispersed throughout the county, including some centers served by only infrequent bus service.²⁷ By adding remote centers with inadequate transit located in areas not designated for intense growth,²⁸ the Planning Board encourages more driving with more Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMTs). The General Plan should return to the recommendation for transit in the Public Hearing draft.

- B. The Planning Board draft needs to establish a narrative to explain how the county will transition in the next 30 years from its current level of auto use to biking, rolling, and walking either as independent trips or as a means of getting to transit.**

In these uncertain times, the Transportation chapter envisions that Montgomery County will be able to add infrastructure for biking, rolling, and walking that will encourage the use of transit, thus allowing a reduction of the current number of car lanes and the narrowing of the streets in our centers of activity to increase walkability. I welcome that outcome, but the draft plan simply jumps from the present to the Plan's desired outcome, without explaining interim steps. That needs to be done.

- C. I support the Planning Board draft's recommendation that no more highways be built and would add the recommendation to remove M-83 from the Master Plan of Highways.**

²⁵ http://montgomeryplanning.org/strategic_planning/centers/Framework_Report_Final.pdf Executive Staff has not been able to find a copy of the final report, or the list of properties that the report identified.

²⁶ Comments of Chair Casey Anderson at meeting with Montgomery for All members on March 25, 2021.

Montgomery for All is an organization that supports Thrive, created by Jane Lyons of Coalition for Smarter Growth.

²⁷ See the list of centers on page 31 of the Planning Board draft.

²⁸ See the Growth Areas in the schematic map on p. 31 of the Planning Board draft.

V. Parks—This new chapter²⁹ recommends that urban parks receive priority without analyzing how this recommendation squares with the 2017 Park, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan.³⁰ The General Plan should contain a recommendation that the Planning Board shall develop criteria for balancing the competing park needs in the urban areas and surrounding neighborhoods.

- A. The Planning Board draft should be revised to include a broader discussion and understanding of general park needs, not just urban parks. That discussion should include a recommendation that Parks establish and follow objective criteria for park selection.**

The Planning Board draft has no discussion of the 2017 PROs Plan and relies on the 2018 Energizing Public Spaces Functional Master Plan (EPS) as the policy basis for its recommendations. The PROS plan establishes a hierarchy of park needs based on resident surveys. In 2017 “residents ranked trails, natural space, wildlife habitat, and nature recreation as the top three (sic) priorities for parks, across a variety of demographic segments.”³¹ This, and other PROS findings, need to be rationalized with the Planning Board’s recommendation to prioritize urban parks.

The need for objective criteria for park selection is highlighted by the Planning Board’s recent approval of a dog park in the heavily used Norwood Park. The Board approved the dog park without any analysis of the impact of the dog park on the existing uses: the toddler playground, free play area, and permitted ballfields, even though under Park standards the dog park was too close to the surrounding homes.

- B. The General Plan must clearly convey that the existence and careful stewardship of park land is in no way a substitute for county-wide policies that foster sustainability and environmental resilience throughout the entire county.**

The removal of the chapter on the environment and its recommendations, and then the addition of a long discussion of Parks’ dedication to Environmental Stewardship in the new Parks chapter is confusing.³² The Parks chapter should be clarified to show that the county understands that its environmental responsibilities go far beyond taking good care of its parks. This is particularly important, because in the 1964 and 1969 Wedges and Corridors plans, before the federal government passed landmark environmental legislation, “environment” was a general word that included conservation, natural resources, and many other concepts.³³ In the 1993 Refinement, the General Plan sets out a new definition of the environment grounded in the federal legislation, and an increased understanding of the environmental context in which land use decisions are made.³⁴

- C. Finally, the Planning Board draft should delete its suggestion that “conservation-oriented parks” would be improved if there were better access in the park for bicyclists, walkers and transit users.³⁵**

Conservation parks are for the preservation of nature, and access to a conservation park is achieved with natural trails for hiking. It is contrary to principles of conservation to open these parks potentially to bike

²⁹ The Public Hearing draft did not have a chapter on Parks.

³⁰ <https://www.montgomeryparks.org/uploads/2018/06/508-2017.PROS-COMPLETE.pdf>

³¹ PROS Plan, p. 6.

³² Planning Board draft, pgs. 115, 122, 1124

³³ https://montgomeryplanning.org/community/general_plans/wedges_corridors/part1-3.pdf, p. 44

³⁴ <https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/master-plan-list/general-plans/general-plan-refinement-goals-and-objectives-1993/> pgs. 66-68

³⁵ Planning Board draft, p. 115.

trails and pedestrian paths, and as routes for transit users. That is the function of urban parks, like the Western Grove Urban Park, with its hard surface, impervious path that encourages walking to the Friendship Heights Metro.

VI. The AHSI's zoning proposal must contain clear parameters to assure context sensitive planning, the active participation of the community, and sound planning principles.

A. Zoning changes in the R-40, 60, 90, and 200 residential zones may be done only through the master plan process, and any rezoning must be recommended in an approved and adopted master plan.

B. Where proposed zoning changes raise issues of gentrification, loss of NOAH, and/or environmental degradation, the master plan process shall include Small Area Planning (SAP).

C. Require Site Plan for infill development in both the single-family neighborhoods and the denser development in the corridors.

D. Retain compatibility standards. The concept of compatibility is a foundation of our zoning code, part of the DNA of county planning, and must be retained. Form based zoning may work well for large projects on open land where the planner has control of the relationships between all of units. It is not a substitute for compatibility for infill projects in established neighborhoods, or dense projects along our corridors.

CC: Marlene Michaelson, Executive Director, County Council
Pamela Dunn, Senior Legislative Analyst
Casey Anderson, Planning Board Chair
Natali Fani-Gonzalez, Planning Board Member
Gerald Cichy, Planning Board Member
Tina Patterson, Planning Board Member
Partap Verma, Planning Board Member
Gwen Wright, Director of Planning

Attachments: Extension Request



OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET


Marc Elrich
County Executive

Jennifer Bryant
Director

M E M O R A N D U M

June 09, 2021

TO: Tom Hucker, President, County Council

FROM: Jennifer Bryant, Director, Office of Management and Budget 

SUBJECT: Extension Request: Fiscal Impact Statement for Thrive Montgomery 2050
Planning Board Draft, April 2021

As required by Section 33A-7 of the County Code, we are informing you that transmittal of the Fiscal Impact Statement for the above referenced General Plan, Thrive Montgomery 2050, will be delayed because additional time is needed to coordinate with the affected departments, collect information, and complete our analysis. We will transmit the statement no later than Friday, June 25, 2021.

JB:ps

cc: Claire Iseli, Special Assistant to the County Executive
Debbie Spielberg, Special Assistant to the County Executive
Dale Tibbitts, Special Assistant to the County Executive
Dominic Butchko, Office of the County Executive
Barry Hudson, Director, Public Information Office
Meredith Wellington, Office of the County Executive
Mary Beck, Office of Management and Budget
Pofen Salem, Office of Management and Budget
Chrissy Mireles, Office of Management and Budget

TO: Hans Riemer, Chairman
Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee

FROM: Adam Ortiz, Director
Department of Environmental Protection

SUBJECT: Comments on Thrive 2050

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) would like to provide the following comments to the PHED committee on the Thrive 2050 plan developed by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC).

1. The absence of *direct* recommendations related to the environment and resilience is of great concern. A new chapter, drawing on the substantive staff recommendations in the *Healthy and Sustainable Solutions* chapter in the Public Hearing Draft, along with DEP recommendations, should be added back in.
2. While environmental issues such as energy efficient buildings, modern/enhanced stormwater management, and others are mentioned throughout the plan, they are mostly implied as opposed to being explicit. Similarly, most of the environmental recommendations are indirect and flow from the plan's focus on urbanism, compact development, infill, and complete communities.
3. The plan must include actions that are restorative and regenerative as opposed to simply doing less harm by, to use the words from the Planning Board draft, "minimizing the negative externalities associated with the development of land and intensification of its uses."
4. The plan should include substantive and *direct* actions that increase forested areas and tree canopy; improve water quality; support regenerative agriculture; enhance pollination and biodiversity; facilitate distributed energy, battery storage and grid modernization; and better facilitate composting/food waste recovery and other circular economy solutions.
5. Since the impacts from climate change are already bearing down on Montgomery County, and likely to get worse, the plan should include specific recommendations related to building resilience.
6. There should be explicit actions to address supply chain and utility service disruptions such as the creation of resilience hubs, innovative food security strategies such as more widespread community gardens and "edible forests," and import substitution strategies to build greater economic self-sufficiency.

July 19, 2021

Hans Riemer, Chair
Planning, Housing and Economic Development Committee
Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

Re: Thrive Montgomery 2050 Planning Board Draft--The Planning Board Recommendations

Dear Chair Riemer:

On behalf of the Montgomery County Office of Agriculture-OAG, please accept this letter with our thoughts on the Montgomery County Planning Board recommendations for the Planning Board Draft - Thrive Montgomery 2050.

We support the recommendations from the Agricultural Advisory Committee, the Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board, as well as those from the County Executive as outlined in his June 10, 2021 letter.

The Agricultural Reserve was created in 1981 to establish a preferred area for farming as the primary use. The OAG does not believe the Planning Board's recommendations fulfill the legislative spirit and intent of the Master Plan that established the Agricultural Reserve to protect farmland and agriculture.

By moving the Planning Staff recommendations on the Agricultural Reserve into a separate appendix that will not be included in the new General Plan, the Planning Board draft diminishes the County's sustained commitment to agriculture. Instead, it deemphasizes the importance of this unique nationally recognized land resource at a time when climate change promises to present challenges to food and water supplies. The new General Plan should provide policy and program recommendations that reinforce the importance of the Reserve and provide critical support for the success of farming and agricultural operations in Montgomery County. The County's working farms, pick-your-own fruit farms, wineries, breweries, bike routes, pastoral scenic vistas, and water resources need your continued support.

We ask that you do not support the Planning Board recommendations on the Thrive Montgomery 2050 that pertain to the Agricultural Reserve.

Sincerely,

Jeremy V. Criss, Director

July 7, 2021

The Honorable Tom Hucker, President
Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear Council President Hucker:

Thrive 2050 Public Hearing Draft- The Planning
Board Recommendations are not helpful

On behalf of the Montgomery County Agricultural Advisory Committee-AAC, please accept this letter with our concerns surrounding the recommendations of the Planning Board for the Thrive 2050 Public Hearing Draft.

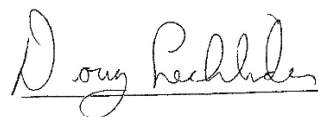
Several leaders of the agricultural community began meeting with the Planning Staff in 2019 to discuss the Thrive 2050 update to the County's Master Plan-1964 Wedges and Corridors Plan and the 1993 General Master Plan Refinement. Please see the attached report titled - **The Profitability and Viability of the Agricultural Sector** that was developed by the leaders of the agricultural community and remitted to the Planning Staff.

The agricultural community was encouraged that Planning Staff incorporated many of our recommendations into the Thrive 2050 Master Plan update. However, we are now concerned that the Planning Board is taking us backwards by removing our recommendations and inserting them into an appendix thereby reducing the importance of the Agricultural Reserve including the policies and programs that are critical to the success of farming and agricultural operations in Montgomery County.

We ask that you ignore and/or reverse the Ag Reserve recommendations of the Planning Board and rely upon the recommendations of the Planning Staff on the Thrive 2050 Master Plan update.

We thank the County Council for this opportunity to present our views on the Thrive 2050 Public Hearing Draft and we will participate in the County Council Committee Work Sessions when this Thrive 2050 Master Plan update is scheduled.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Doug Lechliden". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name of the signatory.

Doug Lechliden, Chairman

Cc: Marc Elrich, County Executive

July, 9, 2021

The Honorable Tom Hucker, President
Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, Maryland 20856

Re: Thrive 2050 Public Hearing Draft

Dear Council President Hucker,

On behalf of the Montgomery County Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board -APAB, please accept this letter with our concerns surrounding the recommendations of the Planning Board for the Thrive 2050 Public Hearing Draft.

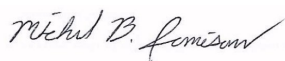
Several leaders of the agricultural community began meeting with the Planning Staff in 2019 to discuss the Thrive 2050 update to the County's Master Plan-1964 Wedges and Corridors Plan and the 1993 General Master Plan Refinement. Please see the attached report titled - **The Profitability and Viability of the Agricultural Sector** that was developed by the leaders of the agricultural community and remitted to the Planning Staff.

The agricultural community was encouraged that Planning Staff incorporated many of our recommendations into the Thrive 2050 Master Plan update. However, we are now concerned that the Planning Board is taking us backwards by removing our recommendations and inserting them into an appendix thereby reducing the importance of the Agricultural Reserve including the policies and programs that are critical to the success of farming and agricultural operations in Montgomery County. Specifically, the need to fund our farmland preservation program and to find new ways to utilize TDRs and BLTs in development.

We ask that you ignore and/or reverse the Ag Reserve recommendations of the Planning Board and rely upon the recommendations of the Planning Staff on the Thrive 2050 Master Plan update.

We thank the County Council for this opportunity to present our views on the Thrive 2050 Public Hearing Draft and we will participate in the County Council Committee Work Sessions when this Thrive 2050 Master Plan update is scheduled.

Sincerely,



Michael Jamison, Chairman

cc: Marc Elrich, County Executive



THRIVE

MONTGOMERY 2050

Let's Plan Our Future. Together

Actions & List of Resources

April 2021

Introduction

This publication contains two supporting documents for Thrive Montgomery 2050: A list of recommended actions to implement Thrive Montgomery's goals and policies; and a list of plans and studies conducted by Montgomery Planning as well as outside research material used during the Thrive Montgomery 2050 Plan development process.

Recommended Action

Thrive Montgomery 2050 is a long-term policy document that guides all public and private initiatives related to land use and development in the county. The goals and policies contained in Thrive Montgomery 2050 will be implemented through specific actions of both the public and private sectors. The actions listed here focus primarily on subjects under the authority of the Planning and Parks Departments. However, full implementation of its recommendations will require the cooperation of many other government bodies responsible for implementing and providing related services and amenities.

This is not an exhaustive list of all possible actions that will be undertaken for the plan implementation. These actions will need to be updated regularly as new tools and resources become available to respond to changing conditions over the life of this plan. The recommended actions cover:

- Reviews of existing policies, regulations, and programs;
- Studies and new master, functional, or facility plans to delve more deeply into the topics addressed in the policies, collect and analyze data, and identify detailed strategies for decision making and implementation;
- Development of tools and strategies to support master planning, regulatory review and other planning processes; and
- Changes to agency governance and practices that shape how decisions are made.

Thrive Montgomery 2050 is not a plan that can be implemented overnight. The actions listed on the following pages will need to be organized and prioritized based on level of importance and resources available to implement them. Some are short-term actions that need to be completed in the next five years to jump start plan implementation. Other actions will take place over the medium term, roughly 6 to 15 years. Finally, long-term actions will be completed over an extended time frame (16+ years), building on the work done in short and medium-term actions.

Thrive Montgomery 2050--Recommended Actions

The actions are organized by the six main chapters of Thrive Montgomery 2050. Each action is numbered with a unique prefix that indicates the relevant chapter as follows:

- G: Compact Growth: Corridor-Focused Development
- C: Complete Communities: Mix of Uses and Forms
- D: Design, Arts and Culture: Investing and Building Community
- T: Transportation and Communication Networks: Connecting People, Places and Ideas
- H: Affordable and Attainable Housing: More of Everything
- P: Parks and Recreation for an Increasingly Urban and Diverse Community: Active and Social

Compact Growth: Corridor-Focused Development

- G-1. Update master plans in existing centers of activity to maximize efficient use of land.
- G-2. Develop corridor-focused master plans to comprehensively evaluate and amend zoning of properties by Sectional Map Amendment to encourage corridor-focused compact development and potentially “missing middle” housing types.
- G-3. Update the Commercial / Residential and Employment Zones Incentive Density Implementation Guidelines, including the required public benefits, and public benefit categories and criteria to provide incentives for concentrating growth in centers of activity along corridors.
- G-4. Implement recommendations in the county’s [Climate Action Plan](#) (CAP) within the authority of the M-NCPPC in order to achieve the climate change goals and related objectives of both the CAP and Thrive Montgomery 2050.
- G-5. Develop urban environmental guidelines to incorporate green features in growth areas that will mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change; provide cleaner air and water; add shading and cooling features; and improve human health.
- G-6. Identify areas vulnerable to the negative effects of climate change and develop strategies to mitigate these effects. Prioritize areas with historically disadvantaged and vulnerable populations most likely to be affected by climate change.
- G-7. Assess likely changes in the location and size of floodplains in Montgomery County and develop appropriate recommendations to avoid or mitigate resulting impacts on property, infrastructure and natural resources.
- G-8. Create or choose tools to evaluate the effect of land use options on greenhouse gas reduction goals.
- G-9. Evaluate opportunities for siting alternative energy production and storage systems.

- G-10. Review county lighting standards to improve energy efficiency and minimize light pollution.
- G-11. Research and create guidance for innovative development, retrofit and construction designs, and techniques that minimize imperviousness.
- G-12. Develop corridor-focused master plans to identify and prioritize public investment through capital projects.
- G-13. Identify underutilized publicly owned land in centers of activity along corridors where infill development, redevelopment, recreation, environmental services, and adaptive reuse can stimulate compact, corridor-focused growth.
- G-14. Identify opportunities for adaptive reuse in suburban communities for stormwater management and flood control.
- G-15. Enhance the quality and connectivity of transportation and green corridors, including connections to centers of activity and Complete Communities, to expand opportunities for outdoor recreation, vigorous physical activity and social interaction.
- G-16. Link stream valleys, natural lands, parks, open spaces, and tree-lined boulevards throughout the county with a comprehensive network of natural and hard surface trails for physical activity as well as to connect habitats.
- G-17. Identify for protection forests and other natural areas with high value for climate mitigation, resilience, and biological diversity.
- G-18. Establish appropriate forest and non-forest canopy goals and strategies to protect plant and wildlife diversity and human health while accommodating and complementing land use policies such as redevelopment and infill in areas identified as appropriate for growth.
- G-19. Regularly reevaluate policies and practices adopted by the Parks and Planning Departments and other government entities regulating the development and use of public and private land to assess their costs, benefits, and continued effectiveness and relevance in achieving the objectives of Thrive Montgomery 2050. These reviews should consider the implications of changes in technology and scientific understanding; economic factors and market forces; racial and social equity; public health; climate change and other aspects of environmental sustainability; and how regulatory approaches help or hinder progress in implementing or achieving the specific strategies, recommendations, and goals of this plan and related planning guidance.
- G-20. Develop recommendations for native trees that are resilient to climate change and support native wildlife (including pollinators) to use in development and natural area enhancement projects.

- G-21. Develop a long-range forest quality management plan to address fragmentation, deer pressure, invasive threats, and the forest's capacity to withstand and mitigate climate impacts.
- G-22. Develop recommendations to improve the vitality and survivability of planted forests and trees.
- G-23. Develop incentives for developers to restore existing streams and daylight piped streams during the redevelopment process.
- G-24. Update policies and plans to acknowledge the evolution of the business of agriculture and develop recommendations to enhance the economic viability of farming, facilitate locally grown food, provide opportunities for outdoor recreation and tourism, and advance environmental quality.
- G-25. Develop policies, regulations, easements and incentives to maintain a critical mass of contiguous farmland to ensure the continued viability of farming and discourage sprawl.
- G-26. Analyze the barriers to accessing the Agricultural Reserve and develop a plan to improve physical access for locally grown food, outdoor recreation, education and tourism.
- G-27. Develop strategies and an action plan to increase the range of outdoor recreation opportunities that are permitted and encouraged in the Agricultural Reserve for the public to experience and benefit from this resource.
- G-28. Analyze the Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance, including industrially zoned land, to support an evolving agricultural industry. Identify recommendations for flexibility in accommodating industries and services that support agriculture including food processing, distribution, sale, consumption, and waste management.
- G-29. Analyze and assess the Transfer of Development Rights and Building Lot Termination programs to evaluate their achievements and limitations in farmland preservation. Develop recommendations for the future of these programs to preserve contiguous farmland and maintain the economic viability of farming.
- G-30. Develop incentives to transition existing commodity farms to the production of table food for local distribution and consumption.
- G-31. Develop a strategic plan that builds upon the Agricultural Reserve to engage culinary entrepreneurs, leading food research organizations and high-tech rural and urban farmers in food-based innovation and self-reliance in food production.

Complete Communities: Mix of Uses and Forms

- C-1. Initiate Complete Communities master plans to identify and integrate elements needed to complete centers of activity.
- C-2. Study the application of 15-minute living in the county to determine the neighborhoods and districts in which the concept applies, identify priorities for infill and redevelopment to achieve 15-minute living and develop cost-effective strategies to further 15-minute living for as many people as possible.
- C-3. Update the Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance to integrate elements of a form-based code and provide greater flexibility to accommodate a variety of uses and densities.
- C-4. Update the County Growth and Infrastructure Policy to encourage co-location and adjacency of public facilities, including schools, to achieve the policies of Thrive Montgomery 2050.
- C-5. Work with relevant county agencies to develop best practices manuals that maximize the public benefits of existing and new public facilities through co-location, redevelopment, consolidation, redistribution, partnerships, and a focus on design excellence.
- C-6. Develop guidance to conduct a racial equity and social justice impact analysis when planning, designing and budgeting for new community facilities such as libraries, recreation centers, schools, parks, and public infrastructure to determine whether the new amenity will be accessible to nearby residents of all backgrounds and will reduce any existing inequities in access.
- C-7. Identify opportunities for adaptive reuse of underutilized urban and suburban land for agriculture to ensure fresh, locally grown food is accessible throughout the county. Update the Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance to identify urban and suburban farming as permitted uses.
- C-8. Examine the Urban Agricultural Property Tax Credit to identify opportunities to enhance and expand the tax credit to support urban and suburban farming, providing access to locally grown food as well as opportunities for physical activity and social connections.
- C-9. Revise the Commercial/Residential and Employment Zones Incentive Density Implementation Guidelines to identify urban and suburban farming as a public benefit.
- C-10. Create Health Impact Assessment tools to apply at the community and individual site levels in our master plan and development review processes to incorporate human health considerations into our planning decisions.
- C-11. Identify barriers that can be eliminated and incentives that can be applied during planning processes to make culturally appropriate food more accessible to all county citizens, building on the work of the Montgomery County Food Council.

- C-12. Further the Missing Middle Housing Study by identifying options and implementation strategies to increase the variety and density of housing types in single-use developments.
- C-13. Evaluate existing centers of activity and single-use developments and identify recommendations to achieve more Complete Communities, as well as improve connections to surrounding areas.

Design, Arts and Culture: Investing and Building Community

- D-1. Update the zoning code to include basic form-based elements for all zones.
- D-2. Amend land use, design and zoning regulations, including the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations, to remove regulatory barriers and facilitate development of “Missing Middle” housing types such as tiny houses, cottages, courtyard clusters, duplexes, multiplexes, and small apartment buildings; shared housing; co-housing and accessory dwelling units (ADUs); and neighborhood-serving retail.
- D-3. Replace vague regulatory concepts such as “compatibility” with clear standards for form, site layout, setbacks, architecture and the location of parking for buildings.
- D-4. Collaborate with county agencies to develop a “Design Excellence Program” for public buildings such that their site layout and architecture demonstrate principles of sustainability and resilience, inclusive cultural representation and architecture as civic art.
- D-5. Create guidelines that promote cost-effective design strategies for projects with high levels of affordable housing.
- D-6. Update the county’s road code standards to align with the [Complete Streets Design Guidelines](#).
- D-7. Update the Historic Preservation Ordinance, the zoning code, and Historic Resources Preservation Tax Credit program to incentivize and facilitate adaptive reuse and/or repurposing of existing buildings.
- D-8. Develop a sprawl repair manual to promote cost-effective design strategies and establish regulatory approaches to accommodate retrofitting of single-use commercial sites such as retail strips, malls and office parks into mixed-use developments that are more energy efficient.
- D-9. Develop guidelines and standards for climate-sensitive design principles and materials for new public and private development projects. Ensure these standards include strategies to maximize greenhouse gas reductions in the built environment, including generating clean renewable energy and reducing heat island effect.
- D-10. Collaborate with Montgomery County Public Schools, Montgomery Parks and other public agencies to update standards for public facilities that align with infill and redevelopment strategies and acknowledge the county’s limited land supply and ambitious climate action goals, utilizing tools such as colocation, in coordination with Montgomery County [Growth and Infrastructure Policy](#).
- D-11. Update the Incentive Density Implementation Guidelines to include incentives for adaptable design.
- D-12. Conduct a study to identify planning policies and regulatory changes required to make aging in place a viable option.

- D-13. Support the Arts and Humanities Council in creating inclusive arts and culture plans that establish a refreshed vision, set goals, criteria, and priorities for the county's support of the arts and culture sector and addresses how the county's arts and culture resources are allocated.
- D-14. Update the zoning code to eliminate regulatory barriers to live-work spaces, home studios, galleries, and other small-scale art-making and creative businesses and incentivize the provision of affordable space for arts and cultural uses (rehearsal and workshop space; presentation and exhibition space, etc.).
- D-15. Update the Incentive Density Implementation Guidelines and Art Review Panel review processes to streamline, expand, and clarify options for the provision of public art benefits.
- D-16. Support Montgomery Parks, other county agencies and nonprofits to improve the reach of diverse programming by creating and maintaining an annual consolidated calendar of artistic and cultural programming, activation, and placemaking events varying in scale, time and location.
- D-17. Allocate more funding for public art within county construction projects such as buildings, parks, and transportation infrastructure.
- D-18. Create an "arts space bank" of underused spaces in commercial and institutional buildings and provide equitable access to arts and culture organizations.
- D-19. Partner with local, statewide, and federal cultural heritage organizations to seek grants that promote and preserve historical and cultural sites county wide.
- D-20. Partner with Montgomery County Public Schools to introduce students to Thrive Montgomery 2050 and local land use planning as a part of the standard educational curriculum.
- D-21. Establish a framework for continued data collection of key metrics as outlined in the chapter titled "Design, Arts & Culture: Investing and building community".

Transportation and Communication Networks: Connecting People, Places and Ideas

- T-1. Create and maintain a consolidated Transportation Master Plan that: 1) combines and reconciles the [Master Plan of Highways and Transitways](#), [Bicycle Master Plan](#) and [Pedestrian Master Plan](#); 2) adds elements for equity, safety, universal design, access management, curbside management, transportation demand management, and climate adaptation and resilience; and 3) establishes a comprehensive list of metrics and targets to monitor the performance of the transportation system and creates and maintains the accompanying data sources.
- T-2. Remove master-planned but unbuilt highways and road widenings that are not consistent with this plan, add dedicated transit lanes, upgrade transitways to median-running, and repurpose general-purpose lanes and on-street parking for sidewalks, bikeways, transit lanes, street buffers, street trees, and stormwater management.
- T-3. Develop an Access Management Plan to reduce access points and conflict points for all modes of transportation by developing guidelines for frequent safe crossings, driveway spacing and frequency, restricted intersection corner clearance and median treatments, and network solutions including completing the street grid network and developing an alley network.
- T-4. Develop an Aging Readiness Functional Master Plan to support safe transportation options for the county's aging population and address topics such as transit use, curbside management, and street infrastructure.
- T-5. Develop a Curbside Management Plan that includes strategies and regulations to provide reliable access to homes, jobs, retail opportunities, and public facilities and amenities, including a logistics plan to facilitate increasing volumes of e-commerce-related deliveries.
- T-6. Create guidelines for developing a safety component for master plans focused on eliminating transportation-related fatalities and severe injuries.
- T-7. Create guidelines to transition auto-centric corridors to multimodal complete streets for master plans, capital projects and regulatory reviews.
- T-8. Create guidelines for prioritizing transportation projects to improve walking, bicycling, and transit in [Equity Focus Areas](#).
- T-9. Update the Subdivision Regulations to require a safety finding in regulatory reviews.
- T-10. Develop block density targets for downtowns, town centers, transit corridors and suburban communities to guide master plan recommendations and regulatory conditions.
- T-11. Implement demonstration programs and projects to encourage innovation and test new ideas before implementing these ideas county-wide.

- T-12. Collaborate with the Montgomery County Department of Transportation and the State Highway Administration to develop a street tree planting program focused on mitigating heat island effect and improving stormwater management within public rights-of-ways.
- T-13. Create strategies to support the travel needs of vulnerable users of the transportation system by improving their access to jobs, food centers, age-restricted housing, health care, and other services.
- T-14. Incorporate universal design principles into the county code, regulations, policies, and guidelines to improve access for seniors and persons with disabilities.
- T-15. Discourage multiple turn lanes in downtowns and town centers.
- T-16. Form a subregional transportation or transit authority, such as the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority, that would include Montgomery County and Prince George's County, among others.
- T-17. Develop short-term and long-term bus transit plans to extend local and regional bus service to underserved communities in Montgomery County, improve reliability, frequency, and span of service and restructure local and regional bus service to integrate with existing and planned rail and [Bus Rapid Transit](#) (BRT).
- T-18. Strengthen the Washington Suburban Transit Commission to play a stronger role in coordinating transportation projects and policy in the region.
- T-19. Expand commuter rail capacity on the MARC Brunswick Line to provide additional station locations in Montgomery County and provide frequent bidirectional all-day service, seven days a week.
- T-20. Provide dedicated transit lanes that can accommodate heavy rail as part of the replacement of the American Legion Bridge.
- T-21. Eliminate motor vehicle parking minimums for new development projects in downtowns, town centers, rail and BRT corridors and adjacent communities to encourage travel by walking, bicycling, and transit.
- T-22. Update motor vehicle public parking rates to reflect the market.
- T-23. Apply pricing mechanisms in Montgomery County to foster equity and distribute revenue to promote walking, bicycling, and transit.
- T-24. Develop an implementation plan for transitioning to zero emission fueling in residential and commercial development and public facilities and spaces.
- T-25. Update all county fleets and contracted fleet providers to zero emission vehicles.
- T-26. Develop county incentives to accelerate conversion of privately-owned fleets to sustainable, zero emission vehicles.

- T-27. Prepare a plan to develop, prioritize, and implement flood mitigation measures for existing flood-prone county transportation facilities based on vulnerability assessments and consideration of extreme precipitation events and sea level rise.
- T-28. Implement new Transportation Demand Management policies, programs and strategies that adapt and evolve with prevailing technologies and best practices.
- T-29. Create new [Transportation Management Districts](#) (TMDs) in urban and suburban areas, prioritizing higher density activity centers and areas with rail and BRT access.
- T-30. Implement FiberNet, the county's high-speed fiber optic communications network, and support further modernization of information and communications technology infrastructure needed to support equitable access to information services and attract businesses.
- T-31. Develop and expand strategies to facilitate deployment of advanced wireless telecommunications services throughout the county.

Affordable and Attainable Housing: More of Everything

- H-1. Expand housing options in detached residential areas near high-capacity transit by modifying the zoning code to allow duplexes, triplexes, and quadruplexes, residential types by-right and with smaller lot areas.
- H-2. Look at market-oriented mechanisms to incentivize affordable housing production, including inclusionary zoning requirements, automatic Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOTs) or tax abatement requirements.
- H-3. Create and analyze an inventory of available surplus, vacant and underutilized private and public lands for public and private partners to acquire for housing, with special attention to assembling land.
- H-4. Establish incentives to encourage conversion of existing high-vacancy office and retail sites into residential uses through adaptive reuse or redevelopment of the site.
- H-5. Create flexible zoning incentives for conversion of planned and existing office and retail sites to residential uses, including allowing properties to reallocate their non-residential Floor Area Ratio to residential use.
- H-6. Establish a more streamlined process for affordable housing projects, including revisions to the Local Map Amendment, Floating Zone, Conditional Use, and Mandatory Referral processes.
- H-7. Consider using financial tools and zoning incentives to encourage alternative construction types.
- H-8. Provide appropriate financial incentives, such as tax abatements, Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOTs), and Tax Increment Financing (TIFs) to increase housing production in targeted locations near high-capacity transit.
- H-9. Consider implementing income averaging for the [Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit program](#) to reach broad levels of affordability.
- H-10. Allow for rent increases in Moderately Priced Dwelling Units to be indexed to increases in Area Median Income to help preserve affordability.
- H-11. Explore changes to the recordation tax to generate additional funding for the Housing Initiative Fund.
- H-12. Create an affordable housing ombudsman to manage projects with an emphasis on coordination across agencies.
- H-13. Review regulations and policies, including impact taxes and zoning, to remove barriers and encourage the production of creative housing options, including multi-generational housing, single room occupancy, shared housing, cooperative housing, and co-housing.
- H-14. Consider fee waivers, financial assistance, and other incentives to increase Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) production.

- H-15. Explore the possibility of county-offered low-cost financing or financial assistance to homeowners who are willing to enter their ADU into a deed restriction that restricts the rent.
- H-16. Develop incentives and tools to encourage the development of housing units that meet the needs of families, including larger size three-bedroom (or more) units.
- H-17. Consider exempting first-time homebuyers from county-imposed fees and taxes like the recordation tax.
- H-18. Explore establishing a community land trust to create permanent, affordable homeownership opportunities.
- H-19. Create a Housing Functional Master Plan to provide measurable housing goals and strategies for different market segments in Montgomery County as well as an analysis of affordability gaps and impediments to the housing supply.
- H-20. Explore the county's and the state's ability to make homeowners association (HOA) and condo fees more affordable for residents of affordable units.
- H-21. Work with Prince George's County and the State of Maryland to attain a 9 percent Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) set-aside for Montgomery and Prince George's Counties.
- H-22. Enhance implementation of the county's Housing First Initiative, which places people experiencing homelessness into housing as rapidly as possible and provides wraparound services to help them maintain their housing.
- H-23. Explore changes to the zoning code to support the creation of permanent supportive housing units like Single-Room Occupancy (SRO) or Personal Living Quarter (PLQ) units by-right in all residential and mixed-use zones.
- H-24. Develop zoning and financial incentives to designate and build housing for people with disabilities.
- H-25. Create, maintain, update, and analyze a comprehensive inventory of housing properties at-risk for affordability loss by type, location, and risk profile to enhance preservation pipeline management, prioritization, and resource allocation decisions.
- H-26. Consider implementing housing affordability strategy plans for small areas with expiring subsidies or existing market-rate affordable housing that allow for the enhancement and preservation of long-term housing affordability through the provision of additional density and zoning changes.
- H-27. In the case of redevelopment, create strategies to retain naturally occurring affordable housing and existing housing types that are typically not constructed in the marketplace including 3+ bedroom units for families.
- H-28. Create an interactive monitoring database that maps indicators of neighborhood change including gentrification and displacement, and concentration of poverty and segregation.

H-29. Create a “No Net Loss” of Affordable Housing Floating Zone in targeted areas like the Purple Line corridor.

Parks and Recreation for an Increasingly Urban and Diverse Community: Active and Social

- P-1. Incorporate and elaborate on specific actions identified here and other planning exercises into the 2022 [Parks, Recreation and Open Space \(PROS\) Plan](#) and all subsequent PROS plans.
- P-2. Implement the [Energized Public Spaces Functional Master Plan](#) (EPS Plan) to ensure that densely populated parts of the county enjoy walkable access to a full range of park experiences.
- P-3. Revise the [Recreation Guidelines](#) to ensure that they accurately reflect the availability and accessibility of recreational amenities throughout the county.
- P-4. Work with the Planning Department to utilize and reference the EPS Design Guidelines while creating master plans and during the development review process.
- P-5. Measure the progress of the Legacy Urban Space Program and other dedicated funding sources in increasing park acreage in the most densely populated areas of the county.
- P-6. Prioritize park activation programs – specifically in urban parks and equity focus areas – to expose residents to a variety of unique park experiences and make these spaces centers of activity.
- P-7. Strengthen the role of Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS) such that they can perform as public spaces while leveraging private investment.
- P-8. Ensure that the Parks Department is a leading voice in creating strong recommendations for both public and privately-owned parks in master/sector and/or functional plans.
- P-9. Update and implement the [Countywide Park Trails Plan](#) with an emphasis on connecting trails to neighborhoods through connector trails, trailheads, and extending existing trails. Emphasize trail connections to neighboring jurisdictions to support regional connectivity.
- P-10. Amend the CIP to allow more flexibility so the department can be more agile in its service delivery.
- P-11. Amend the EPS study area to incorporate the Equity Focus Areas and other innovative equity tools in its methodology.
- P-12. Work with transportation agencies to provide bus routes to increase transit access to parks.
- P-13. Apply innovative technologies to calibrate service delivery strategies to the needs of the county's changing demographic and cultural trends.
- P-14. Develop a Racial and Social Equity Plan incorporating data driven tools such as the Equity Focus Areas and EPS to ensure that race and demographics do not

predetermine the quantity and quality of parks or programming in different parts of the county.

- P-15. Create a trail connections plan to identify and prioritize missing linkages between park trail facilities and to neighborhoods to eliminate gaps in service.
- P-16. Apply design guidelines, such as the EPS Plan's "Designing Public Spaces," to encourage the delivery of public spaces that are inclusive, welcoming, accessible, comfortable, safe and promote a platform for community gathering and enjoyment.
- P-17. Expand the community gardens program to serve more residents, especially in underserved and high-density areas.
- P-18. Promote the creation of multi-use, accessible, and multi-generational facilities when designing parks.
- P-19. Enhance opportunities for food and beverage offerings in parks, particularly in the more urban parts of the county.
- P-20. Develop a blueprint for world class trails in Montgomery County that identifies opportunities to: 1. improve connectivity; 2. enhance the existing trail network; 3. develop signature projects; and 4. otherwise deliver a wide range of exceptional trail experiences to visitors and residents with varying interests and levels of fitness.
- P-21. Continue to refine park facility standards, land acquisition strategies, and other key policies during PROS updates to integrate parks more effectively into the fabric of intensively developed communities.
- P-22. Coordinate with county agencies to encourage the simultaneous accommodation of multiple needs, including recreation, education, community-building, and resource stewardship through co-location, adaptive reuse, co-programming and other forms of combined or shared uses of public land, buildings and related infrastructure.
- P-23. Cooperate with government and private sector property owners to identify opportunities for park and recreation facilities on underutilized land or in unconventional locations such as rooftops, parking garages, and unused public rights-of-way.
- P-24. Create a resiliency plan to improve parks' ability to withstand the effects of climate change. This plan should align with the county's Climate Action Plan and the Sustainability Plan.
- P-25. Prioritize ecological restoration practices (e.g. stream restoration, native stream buffer plantings, habitat enhancements, and wetland creation) in the stream valleys of the county's most developed watersheds.
- P-26. Develop and pursue a priority list of natural resource-based land acquisition targets that protect sensitive watersheds, preserve unique and rare habitats, complete critical wildlife corridor connections, and connect communities to natural areas.

- P-27. Ensure environmental and sustainability services improve public health, allow for opportunities for nature interpretation and education, and corrects environmental justices within equity and/or densely populated areas.
- P-28. Develop coordinated strategies with other agencies, neighboring jurisdictions, and relevant stakeholders to target meaningful stormwater treatment opportunities before stormwater reaches parkland. Identify and eliminate point source (piped) stormwater discharge into stream channels on parkland through state-of-the-art stormwater management, outfall enhancements and mitigation techniques.
- P-29. Assess the department's analytical tools and standards for resource management to ensure that they reflect state-of-the-practice understanding of the most effective and efficient means of achieving stewardship goals.
- P-30. Explore the creation of alternative funding tools such as the Bethesda Overlay Zone and resulting Park Impact Payment to support the acquisition and development of parks in urban areas.
- P-31. Use strategic marketing plans that promote programs, trails, and parks targeting multiple demographics, increasing community engagement, and advocacy for the park system.

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Actions & List of Resources

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