



**Committee:** PHED

**Committee Review:** Completed

**Staff:** Pamela Dunn, Senior Legislative Analyst, and  
Elaine Bonner-Tompkins, Ph. D., Senior Legislative Analyst

**Purpose:** Worksession – no vote expected

**Keywords:** #Thrive, Montgomery 2050, M-NCPPC

AGENDA ITEM #8

February 15, 2022

**Worksession**

## SUBJECT

The Council will hold its first worksession on the Thrive Montgomery 2050 Plan. Thrive Montgomery 2050 contains the text and supporting maps for a comprehensive amendment to current the General Plan (On Wedges and Corridors) for the County. It sets a vision for the county and encompasses broad, county-wide policy recommendations for land use, zoning, housing, the economy, equity, transportation, parks and open space, the environment, and historic resources.

## EXPECTED ATTENDEES

Casey Anderson, Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board  
Gwen Wright, Director, Montgomery Planning Department  
Tanya Stern, Deputy Director, Planning Department  
Khalid Afzal, Special Projects Manager, Planning Department  
Caroline McCarthy, Chief, Research and Strategic Projects, Planning Department

## COUNCIL DECISION POINTS & COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

None

## DESCRIPTION/ISSUE

On April 8, 2021, the Montgomery County Planning Board approved the Thrive Montgomery 2050 Planning Board Draft. The Plan was transmitted to the Council on April 13, 2021. Following two public hearings, one on June 17 and another on June 29, the Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee held nine worksessions on the Plan. The Committee completed its review on October 25 incorporating its recommended changes into a PHED Committee Draft. The PHED Committee Draft of Thrive Montgomery 2050 will be the basis for this worksession. Before beginning its work, the Council held 2 listening sessions with close to 150 speakers and asked the 5 Regional Service Center Advisory Boards to host discussions about Thrive at their January meetings.

## SUMMARY OF KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

- Prior to beginning its review of the PHED Committee Draft of Thrive Montgomery 2050, the Council President requested the Office of Legislative Oversight provide an equity analysis of the Plan. This is the attached memorandum from Dr. Elaine Bonner-Tompkins.
- Also attached is a staff report intended to lay the groundwork for the Council's review of the General Plan update. Since it has been more than a decade since the Council reviewed an amendment to the General Plan and almost thirty years since a wholesale revision has been considered, the attached report explains what a General Plan is, what elements it should include, and how it differs from an

area master plan or functional master plan. It also includes background information on the County's current and prior general plans and provides an overall summary of Thrive Montgomery 2050 including highlights of some of the changes recommended by the PHED Committee. Finally, it provides a brief summary of outreach efforts undertaken since delivery of Thrive Montgomery 2050 to the Council.

Attachments:

Memorandum from Office of Legislative Oversight

Staff Report – Overview of General Plans and Thrive Montgomery 2050

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## Memorandum

Date: February 9, 2022

To: County Council

From: Elaine Bonner-Tompkins, Ph.D., Senior Legislative Analyst  
Office of Legislative Oversight

c: Pamela Dunn, Senior Legislative Analyst, County Council  
Chris Cihlar, Ph.D., Director, Office of Legislative Oversight  
Marlene Michaelson, Executive Director, County Council

**Re: Initial RESJ Review of Thrive 2050**

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This memorandum responds to the County Council's request for the Office of Legislative Oversight to conduct a racial equity and social justice analysis of the Planning, Housing and Economic Development (PHED) Committee's Draft of Thrive Montgomery 2050. The County Council assigned OLO this task on January 13, 2021.

OLO finds that the request to develop a RESJ impact statement for Thrive 2050 was premature as the PHED Committee draft is not yet ready for a comprehensive RESJ review. Instead, this memo offers six sets of observations and recommendations for updating Thrive, so it better aligns with best practices for advancing RESJ. Among these, OLO recommends prioritizing the following to update Thrive:<sup>1</sup>

- Elicit the meaningful input of residents of color from communities of color and low-income residents to co-create and update Thrive so that it reflects a consensus of land use policies and practices aimed at advancing RESJ; and
- Describe the historic and current drivers of racial inequities in land use, housing, transportation and other policy areas that Thrive seeks to address.

This memo teases out OLO's observations and offers recommendations for developing the next iteration of Thrive that reflects best practices for developing racially and socially equitable policies. It includes an overview of what is meant by RESJ, OLO's approach to completing RESJ impact statements, a summary of Thrive's key components, and recommendations for revising Thrive to advance RESJ.

*OLO stands ready to complete a more thorough RESJ review of Thrive that assesses the RESJ impact of each recommended policy and practice when the plan has been updated to reflect best practices to advance racial equity and social justice.*

**What does Racial Equity and Social Justice mean?** As noted in OLO's RESJ Impact Statements, racial equity and social justice refers to a process that focuses on centering the needs, power and leadership of communities of color and low-income communities with the goal of eliminating racial and social inequities.<sup>2</sup> Achieving racial equity and social justice usually requires seeing, thinking and working differently to address the racial and social harms that have caused racial and social inequities.

**What are Racial Equity and Social Justice Impact Statements?** The County's RESJ Act (Bill 27-19) and its amendments (Bill 44-20) require OLO to prepare RESJ statements that evaluate the anticipated impacts of legislation and zoning text amendments on RESJ in the County. Toward that end, we generally perform four tasks for each bill that we evaluate:

- We review the proposed legislation to understand what policies or programs are being proposed and how they differ from current practice;
- We describe the racial and social inequities, past and present, that characterize the policy area most impacted by the bill;
- With available data, we describe racial and social disparities that result from the racial and social inequities in the policy area most impacted by the bill; and
- We discern the potential RESJ impact of proposed legislation based on a review of who is mostly likely to benefit from the bill, who is most likely to be harmed, and what are the demographics (race, ethnicity, income) of the bill's "winners and losers."

If our analysis finds that a bill is likely to widen racial and social disparities, the RESJ Act requires that OLO offer recommendations for potential amendments to mitigate the potential harm of the bill on communities of color and low-income residents. OLO strives to offer recommendations for amendments that align with research-based best practices for advancing RESJ in the policy area most impacted by the bill.

To improve the RESJ impact of proposed legislation, OLO also advises that bill sponsors undertake two steps prior to introducing legislation:

- Partner with stakeholders from communities of color and low-income communities to develop their bills, particularly if either is likely to be significantly impacted by the bill; and
- Convene a RESJ review team to use OLO's RESJ Legislative Review Tool to consider and improve the RESJ impact of the bill in development if warranted.

**What is Thrive 2050?** Thrive 2050 is the County's recommended general plan for long-term development. Every jurisdiction must adopt a general plan, also known as a comprehensive plan, to exercise its authority in land use and zoning. Thrive 2050 updates the County's general plan first enacted in 1964. It will be used to guide future area master plans, sector plans, and countywide functional plans.

Thrive is organized to achieve five broad objectives:

- Economic performance and competitiveness
- Racial equity and social inclusion
- Environmental resilience
- Improved public health by promoting active lifestyles
- Quality of design highlighting the roles of arts and culture

Together, these objectives establish a vision of what land use decisions, in concert with other public and private investments, can achieve across the County. To achieve its five broad objectives, Thrive describes six land use goals for development in the County:

- Compact communities
- Complete communities
- Improve communities through design, arts and culture
- Improve transportation and communications
- Increase housing supply
- Improve parks and recreation

Further, for each goal chapter, the PHED Committee Draft flags the policies and practices it deems as advancing the economy, racial equity and social justice, and the environment. However, the methodology for assessing the economic, equity, and environmental impact of each policy and practices included in the PHED draft is not explained.

**Observations and Recommendations for Thrive 2050 (PHED Committee Draft).** The Council tasked OLO to develop a RESJ impact statement for the latest iteration of Thrive – the PHED Committee Draft dated October 25, 2021. OLO staff originally envisioned a RESJ review process that would mirror the template used for our RESJ reviews of legislation. In particular, we envisioned comparing the land use, housing, and transportation policies recommended in Thrive to best practices for advancing RESJ in each of these policy areas to offer OLO recommendations for improving the RESJ impact of Thrive.

As we began to read Thrive’s chapters and other resources for background, we realized that our original expectation for this RESJ Review of Thrive was not feasible for several reasons. In the absence of being able to offer a comprehensive RESJ Review of Thrive, this memo offers the following observations and recommendations for updating Thrive so that OLO can offer a more complete RESJ review.

- *Assemble a group of stakeholders representing communities of color and low-income residents across the County to update Thrive to reflect their experiences, perspectives, and recommendations.* Advancing RESJ requires sharing power with BIPOC and low-income communities to ensure their needs are being met. The scope of Thrive requires an inclusive policy development approach that is informed by lived experiences of people of color and low-income residents to ensure Thrive’s recommendations do not displace current residents.

OLO recommends a review of three resources to support inclusive outreach and engagement with residents from communities of color and low-income communities:

- Seattle's Inclusive Outreach and Public Engagement Guide<sup>3</sup>
  - University of Orange's and DS4SI's Horizontal Development: Equitable Development for City-Makers<sup>4</sup>
  - Portland's Equitable Involvement and Engagement Resource List<sup>5</sup>
- *Improve the readability and specificity of Thrive.* The PHED Committee Draft of Thrive is difficult to follow. It offers an amalgam of aspirations, goals, policies and practices that do not follow a consistent format for each chapter. Perhaps the changes that Thrive recommends are difficult to follow because the PHED draft deleted much of the detail included in the Public Hearing draft. In seeking to create a shorter, user-friendly draft, the PHED Committee Draft often lacks clear recommendations that can be evaluated using a RESJ lens.

OLO recommends a re-write of the PHED draft that is more analogous to the Public Hearing draft in terms of readability and specificity. Using the SMART template to draft policy recommendations that are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely could be useful in revising Thrive as well as adopting the organization and structure of Portland's 2035 Comprehensive Plan<sup>6</sup> or other general plans.

- *Add a chapter that describes the historical and current drivers of racial and social inequities in land use, housing, and transportation.* The PHED Draft needs to explicitly describe how racial inequities, both past and present, drive disparities, and the specific roles the public and private sectors play in promoting racial inequities. Theft, exploitation, and exclusion are the common drivers past and present. Thrive recognizes that the accumulation of biases in historical policies have advantaged White residents compared to residents of color and Black residents in particular. Yet it does not acknowledge the current land use policies and practices that exacerbate the County's wealth and income gaps by race and ethnicity. These include government policies that disproportionately award higher mortgage deductions, enhanced amenities and public services to predominantly White residents and communities.

OLO recommends this chapter describe the continuing profitability of valuing White people and spaces over BIPOC people in development and real estate and the consequences of this market failure on RESJ. OLO recommends reviewing Portland's Historical Context of Racist Planning: A History of How Planning Segregated Portland<sup>7</sup> as an example of the research and information to include in the RESJ chapter proposed.

- *Add data and metrics describing the racial and social inequities that Thrive seeks to impact.* Thrive strives to advance RESJ and four other objectives: improved economic performance, environmental resilience, improved public health and quality of design. However what progress will look like for advancing RESJ remains unclear.

OLO recommends that the next iteration of Thrive make explicit the racial and social inequities the general plan seeks to narrow with its recommendations. This includes providing data disaggregated by race and ethnicity to evaluate the economic impact of Thrive's compact and complete communities goals. Thrive should also include measures that monitor racial and social inequities in transportation, housing, parks and recreation to track its performance advancing RESJ.

- *Prioritize equitable economic development.* Thrive leads with a vision for economic development that focuses on attracting new businesses and workers to the County who can afford to reside and/or work in mixed-use, transit-oriented town centers. Yet, this economic development approach could widen racial and social inequities as it primarily offers benefits to affluent and disproportionately White people. For example, research from the Brookings Institution and PolicyLink finds equitable economic development that focuses on building green sector industries, targets talent development, and improves opportunities for BIPOC entrepreneurs spurs greater economic growth than traditional economic development programs that can be ineffective.<sup>8</sup> Brookings also finds regions with racially and socially inclusive economies experienced greater economic growth than the Washington Metropolitan Area that is characterized by wider racial and social inequities.<sup>9</sup>

OLO recommends that Thrive consider prioritizing equitable economic development as an overarching objective for the County's general plan to simultaneously advance economic development and RESJ.

- *Use OLO's RESJ Legislative Review Tool to discern the anticipated RESJ impact of each policy and practice recommended in Thrive.* OLO's RESJ Legislative Review Tool is designed to apply a racial equity and social justice lens to the development and review of proposed legislation.<sup>10</sup> It offers several prompts to help stakeholders unpack how a bill could impact the County, which groups will benefit from the bill, which groups could be burdened by the bill, and whether a bill should be amended to advance RESJ.

OLO encourages the use of its RESJ Legislative Review Tool to develop and assess the anticipated RESJ impact of recommended policies and practices in Thrive. Use of this tool could also help establish the methodology used to assess the equity impact of proposals included in the PHED draft.

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<sup>1</sup> These two recommendations align with the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice's comments offered to the PHED Committee in the August 16, 2021 memorandum included in the October 21, 2021 PHED Committee packet [https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/agenda/cm/2021/20211025/20211025\\_PHED1.pdf](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/agenda/cm/2021/20211025/20211025_PHED1.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> OLO RESJ Impact Statements available online at <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OLO/resjis.html>

<sup>3</sup> Seattle's Inclusive Outreach and Public Engagement Guide <https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/RSJI/GRE/IOPEguide01-11-12.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> University of Orange's and DS4SI's Horizontal Development: Equitable Development for City-Makers [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/53c7166ee4b0e7db2be69480/t/5e5d3f059d88357d4154ab9a/1583169320057/HorizontalDevelopment\\_Digital\\_Final.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/53c7166ee4b0e7db2be69480/t/5e5d3f059d88357d4154ab9a/1583169320057/HorizontalDevelopment_Digital_Final.pdf)

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<sup>5</sup> Portland's Equitable Involvement and Engagement Resource List

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/oehr/article/767244>

<sup>6</sup> Portland's 2035 Comprehensive Plan <https://www.portland.gov/bps/comp-plan/2035-comprehensive-plan-and-supporting-documents#toc-2035-comprehensive-plan-as-amended-through-march-2020->

<sup>7</sup> Historical Context of Racist Planning: A History of How Planning Segregated Portland

<https://www.portland.gov/sites/default/files/2019-12/portlandracistplanninghistoryreport.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> See from Policy Link <https://www.policylink.org/resources-tools/build-equitable-economy> and from Brookings

[https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/2019.04\\_metro\\_Clean-Energy-Jobs\\_Report\\_Muro-Tomer-Shivaran-Kane.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/2019.04_metro_Clean-Energy-Jobs_Report_Muro-Tomer-Shivaran-Kane.pdf) ; <https://www.brookings.edu/essay/to-expand-the-economy-invest-in-black-businesses/>;

and Brookings Metro Monitor 2021 Dashboard, February 2021

<https://www.brookings.edu/interactives/metro-monitor-2021/>;

<sup>9</sup> Brookings Metro Monitor 2021 Dashboard, February 2021

<sup>10</sup> OLO's RESJ Legislative Review Tool

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OLO/Resources/Files/2020%20Reports/RESJLegislativeTool.pdf>

**MEMORANDUM**

February 10, 2022

TO: County Council

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

SUBJECT: Thrive Montgomery 2050

PURPOSE: Worksession to begin review of the Thrive Montgomery 2050 Plan

This is the Council's first worksession on the Thrive Montgomery 2050 draft plan. It is intended to lay the groundwork for the Council's review of the General Plan update. It has been more than a decade since the Council reviewed an amendment to the General Plan<sup>1</sup> and almost thirty years since a wholesale revision has been considered<sup>2</sup>. This worksession will explain what a General Plan is, what elements it should include, and how it differs from an area master plan or functional master plan. For context, this report includes background information on the County's current and prior general plans. It also provides an overall summary of Thrive Montgomery 2050 including highlights of some of the changes recommended by the Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee; however, a more detailed evaluation of the Planning Board draft plan and PHED Committee recommendations will be the focus of future worksessions. Finally, this report includes a brief summary of outreach efforts undertaken since delivery of Thrive Montgomery 2050 to the Council.

**BACKGROUND**

**What is a General Plan?**

In short, the general plan is a guide for land use and development in Montgomery County. According to the 1993 General Plan Refinement: "The General Plan is a comprehensive framework for guiding physical development and managing limited resources. It is a policy

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<sup>1</sup> An update to the Housing Element of the General Plan was adopted in 2011.

<sup>2</sup> The 1993 General Plan Refinement of the Goal and Objectives for Montgomery County

document whose concepts are general in nature. As the County's longest-range and most visionary document, it provides a broad image of how the County will evolve in the future and establishes a frame of reference for decisions to make that vision become a reality."

The State of Maryland, Land Use Article defines all plans (comprehensive, general, master, and functional) as a guide<sup>3</sup> for an area's future development. The Land Use Article requires each planning commission to review, and if necessary, to amend their comprehensive plan at least once every 10 years; however, the Land Use Article also allows the commission to prepare "comprehensive plans for one or more geographic sections or divisions of the local jurisdiction if the plan for each geographic section or division is reviewed and, if necessary, revised or amended at least once every 10 years", treating area master plans and functional plans as updates to the comprehensive plan. Section 1-417 of the Land Use Article requires the County ensure its adopted plans and implementation mechanisms, such as zoning laws and other local land use regulations and provisions, are consistent with the comprehensive plan.

Both the Land Use Article and the County's current general plan are in agreement, the general plan provides a basis for the more focused and implementable area master plans and functional plans. In turn, the recommendations in each master plan, sector plan and functional master plan (such as zoning changes and changes in roadway classifications) are required to be consistent with the policies in the general plan. And, after approval by the County Council and adoption by the Maryland-National Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC), every master plan, sector plan, and functional master plan constitutes an amendment to the General Plan.

### **What should it contain?**

As a broad policy framework designed to guide future land use and development, what should a comprehensive or general plan contain?

#### [The 1964 Plan](#)

The first general plan for Montgomery County, *On Wedges and Corridors, a General Plan for the Maryland-Washington Regional District*, adopted in 1964, is arranged in three parts: The Plan, Carrying Out the Plan, and Trends and Alternatives. Part I includes goals of the Plan and introduces the concept of radial development, identifying areas of the County suitable for urban growth (identifying corridor cities) and identifying other areas more suitable for a rural pattern of development. Part I also includes several sections addressing the infrastructure necessary to support future development.

Part II of the Plan focuses on policies needed to implement to the Plan. It includes sections on zoning, parks and open space, natural resources, urban renewal, and planning – among others. And Part III of Plan provides the context for the Plan's recommendations. It includes numerous tables and graphs showing trends in population growth and land use. It also includes an explanation of alternative patterns of development possible for the region: a sprawl pattern, an average density pattern, a satellite pattern, and a corridor pattern – with the corridor pattern chosen as the basis for the 1964 Plan.

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<sup>3</sup> Containing the policies, statements, goals, and interrelated plans for private and public land use, transportation, and community facilities, documented in texts and maps.

### The 1969 Plan

Only five years later, the Plan was updated. According to the 1969 General Plan Update, part of the revision process included organizing the policy statements in 1964 Plan (as well as those in subsequent area master plans) in a more systematic and logical manner. All policy statements found in the “Wedges and Corridor” Plan and in any of the adopted area master plans up to that time were extracted and grouped under the following headings referred to as "elements" of the General Plan:

- I. Land Use Element
  - (a) General
  - (b) Living Areas
  - (c) Employment Areas
  - (d) Community Facilities
  - (e) Agricultural, Open Space, Parks and Recreational
- II. Circulation (Transportation) Element
- III. Conservation Element
- IV. Environmental Element
- V. Housing Element

Each element contained policy statements classified as general goals to be accomplished, objectives designed to lead to their accomplishment, and guidelines noting specific courses of action to satisfy each objective.

### The 1993 Plan

*The General Plan Refinement of the Goals and Objectives for Montgomery County*, adopted in 1993, amends the 1964 Plan and the 1969 Plan, providing a total replacement of the goals and objectives contained in the earlier plans. It is organized into two chapters. The first chapter provides a vision for the future. It defines the General Plan, provides a legislative history, and lays out the guiding principles of the Refinement<sup>4</sup> as well as the Plan’s geographic components<sup>5</sup>. The second chapter includes the elements of the General Plan (these included: Land Use, Housing, Employment/Economic Activity, Transportation, Environment, Community Identity and Design, and Regionalism.) For each element, the Plan provides a scope, key concepts, changes from the 1969 Plan, relationship with other goals, and ultimately the updated goals, objectives, and strategies for future land use in the County related to that element.

### 2011 Update to the Housing Element of the General Plan

In 2011, only the “Housing Element” of the 1993 Plan was updated. The reasons for this update will sound familiar: newer census data, changing demographics, and a shrinking supply of land. Likewise, the four objectives of the 2011 Housing Element have familiar themes:

1. Housing and Neighborhood Connectivity: Concentrate most new housing near public transportation and provide easy, multi-modal connections to jobs, schools, shopping, recreation, and other leisure activities.

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<sup>4</sup> Including: Wedges and Corridors Concept; Master and Sector Plans; Physically Concentrated Centers; Community Identity; Transit Serviceability; Compatibility; Variety and Choice in Housing, Jobs, and Transportation; Resource Management; Environmental Protection; and Public Investment.

<sup>5</sup> Including: the Urban Ring, the Corridor; the Suburban Communities; and the Wedge- the Residential Wedge and the Agricultural Wedge.

2. **Diverse Housing and Neighborhoods:** Create diversity in the type and size of units, neighborhoods, facilities, and programs to accommodate current and future residents.
3. **Housing and Environment:** Provide economically and environmentally sustainable housing and neighborhoods.
4. **Housing and Neighborhood Design:** Create more balanced, attractive, and walkable neighborhoods through regulatory reform of private developments and leadership in design of public places.

#### The Maryland State Land Use Article

According to the Land Use Article, a comprehensive or general plan should include the following elements: a development regulations element; a housing element; a sensitive areas element; a transportation element; and a water resources element<sup>6</sup>.

In addition, Maryland's 2009 Planning Visions Act created 12 "visions" which local jurisdictions are required to include in their comprehensive plan and implement through zoning ordinances and regulations. These include:

1. **Quality of Life and Sustainability:** a high quality of life is achieved through universal stewardship of the land, water, and air resulting in sustainable communities and protection of the environment.
2. **Public Participation:** citizens are active partners in the planning and implementation of community initiatives and are sensitive to their responsibilities in achieving community goals.
3. **Growth Areas:** growth is concentrated in existing population and business centers, growth areas adjacent to these centers, or strategically selected new centers.
4. **Community Design:** compact, mixed-use, walkable design consistent with existing community character and located near available or planned transit options is encouraged to ensure efficient use of land and transportation resources and preservation and enhancement of natural systems, open spaces, recreational areas, and historical, cultural, and archaeological resources.
5. **Infrastructure:** growth areas have the water resources and infrastructure to accommodate population and business expansion in an orderly, efficient, and environmentally sustainable manner.
6. **Transportation:** a well-maintained, multimodal transportation system facilitates the safe, convenient, affordable, and efficient movement of people, goods, and services within and between population and business centers.
7. **Housing:** a range of housing densities, types, and sizes provides residential options for citizens of all ages and incomes.
8. **Economic Development:** economic development and natural resource-based businesses that promote employment opportunities for all income levels within the capacity of the State's natural resources, public services, and public facilities are encouraged.
9. **Environmental Protection:** land and water resources, including the Chesapeake and coastal bays, are carefully managed to restore and maintain healthy air and water, natural systems, and living resources.

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<sup>6</sup> If current geological information is available, the plan should also include a mineral resources element. The plan may include a priority preservation area element developed in accordance with Section 2-518 of the Agriculture Article.

10. **Resource Conservation:** waterways, forests, agricultural areas, open space, natural systems, and scenic areas are conserved.
11. **Stewardship:** government, business entities, and residents are responsible for the creation of sustainable communities by collaborating to balance efficient growth with resource protection; and
12. **Implementation:** strategies, policies, programs, and funding for growth and development, resource conservation, infrastructure, and transportation are integrated across the local, regional, State, and interstate levels to achieve these visions.

Attached on ©1 is a chart showing the components of the 1964 Plan, 1969 Plan, 1993 Refinement, and the Planning Board Thrive Montgomery 2050 Draft Plan.

## **THRIVE MONTGOMERY 2050**

### **The Planning Board Draft Plan**

After more than 2 years of work, the Planning Board transmitted its Thrive Montgomery 2050 Draft Plan on April 13, 2021.

The Planning Board's Draft Plan is organized into six distinct chapters in addition to an introduction and conclusion. The first three chapters of the Plan build upon each other by laying out a foundation for the County's growth at three different scales. The first chapter, "Compact Growth" defines growth from a regional & countywide perspective. The second chapter, "Complete Communities" lays out a vision for growth at the neighborhood and community-level. While the third chapter, "Design, Arts and Culture", offers policies and practices applicable to the development of individual sites and buildings. The concepts developed in Chapters 1-3 are reinforced and supported by the remaining three chapters, which address specific topics related to development and public infrastructure, including housing, transportation, and parks and open space.

The Planning Board's Draft is centered around three overarching objectives: economic performance and competitiveness, racial equity and social inclusion, and environmental resilience. The Draft weaves these objectives through each chapter in the Plan. This is a change from the Public Hearing Draft and some of the earlier general plans which included chapters or sections dedicated to the economy and the environment; however, every chapter includes text related to the three overarching objectives and puts forth policies, practices and metrics focused on the chapter topic and designed to support one or more overarching objectives.

Actions designed to implement the Plan are in a separate document. This allows the Board and Council to review and revise their approach to implementing the Plan over time without requiring an amendment to the Plan. The choice to separate the action items from the Plan, while perfectly understandable in terms of flexibility over a thirty-year time frame, has also been the cause of much community concern.

### The PHED Committee Draft Plan

Over the course of the summer and fall of 2021, the PHED Committee held nine worksessions on the Planning Board's Thrive Montgomery 2050 Draft Plan. The Committee completed its review on October 25 incorporating its recommended changes into a PHED Committee Draft.

The Committee's Draft retains the format proposed by the Planning Board. Its draft includes the same 6 chapters as well as an introduction and conclusion. The Committee started its review based on a revised version of each chapter. Council and Planning staff worked together at the direction of the Committee to incorporate suggestions made during the July worksessions. The bulk of these revisions focused on adding definitions or other information/explanations, and deleting or rearranging text for clarity and readability.

Retaining the format proposed by the Planning Board, the PHED Committee focused its review on the content of each chapter, affirming many of the policies and practices put forth in the Planning Board's Draft while recommending other changes. However, in deciding to retain the format proposed by the Planning Board, the Committee requested that each chapter provide a clearer connection between the three overarching objectives<sup>7</sup> and the content of each chapter. In addition, the PHED Committee's Draft:

- Provides a more thorough introduction, including expanded sections on the three overarching objectives of economic health, racial equity and social justice, and environmental resilience.
- Includes definitions and descriptions of the terms used to illustrate the 2050 Growth Map, such as Corridor-Focused Growth Area, Limited Growth Area, and the various sized centers. Removes the River Road corridor from the Beltway to Potomac Village.
- Clarifies that the General Plan's housing chapter guides policies for housing for all residents and will require an increase in the supply and diversity of housing types for households at all income levels and for people in all stages of life.
- States that Montgomery County must view access to safe, affordable, and accessible housing as a basic human right – where every resident of Montgomery County should have a place to call home and no resident should be homeless.
- Clarifies that incentives to boost housing production for market rate and affordable housing, especially near transit and in Complete Communities, not be limited to financial incentives.
- Enhances policies to increase energy efficiency, stormwater management, and other factors that increase environmental sustainability, such as improved construction and renovation practices, greater emphasis on clean energy generation, and enhanced resource conservation and stewardship – including natural green infrastructure.
- And clarifies that metrics used to evaluate progress will include data that is disaggregated by race to facilitate measuring progress on the County's equity goals.

On ©2 is a table highlighting the changes in format from Planning Board Draft to the PHED Committee Draft.

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<sup>7</sup> 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.

## **OUTREACH**

Outreach for Thrive began in June 2019, just as the Planning Department started to consider its approach to drafting a new general plan. The Department held in-person meetings pre-pandemic, virtual meetings, provided booths at community events, and solicited input through surveys. All told, Planning has participated in nearly 200 community meetings on Thrive 2050. On November 19, the Planning Board held a well-attended public hearing and kept the record for written testimony open for three additional weeks.

For a typical master or sector plan, the Council will hold a public hearing prior to the PHED Committee's review of the Plan. For plans that encompass a large area or contain recommendations for a large number of properties, the Council will hold two public hearings. For Thrive Montgomery 2050, the Council held two public hearings, one on June 17, the other on June 29.

Recognizing the interest in Thrive and hoping to receive input from as diverse a group of County residents and business-owners as possible, the Council created additional opportunities for community members to weigh in on the Plan. On September 27<sup>th</sup> the Council held a virtual Townhall where Thrive was one of the two focus topics. Participants, asked to provide questions prior to the Townhall, submitted 70 questions related to the Thrive Montgomery 2050 Plan. Approximately 84 percent of the questions came from residents in Districts 1 and 5. And 53 percent of the questions were related to housing and zoning.

Following completion of the PHED Committee Draft, the Council held two Community Listening Sessions on Thrive Montgomery 2050. The goal was to encourage participation focused on the overarching goals of the Plan and the updates made by the Committee. In response to outreach efforts, more than 150 speakers signed up for the first Listening Session, held on November 30. To accommodate the sizable number of speakers who pre-registered, a second session was held on December 14 with 75 speakers invited to each session. Speakers were provided 2 minutes each. Many of the comments were similar to those heard at the public hearings in June, ranging from praise for policies to improve the walking, biking and transit to continued concern with possible changes to single-family neighborhoods and infrastructure necessary to support future growth.

And most recently, the Council President asked the Citizen Advisory Boards (CABs) of the five Regional Service Centers to host a discussion of Thrive Montgomery 2050 at their regularly scheduled meetings in January. This provided another opportunity to gather diverse thoughts on the Plan. The discussions were run by the Chairs of CAB with Council and Planning staff present for questions. Several Councilmembers and/or their staff attended every meeting.

Following a very brief update on where the Plan stood in the Council review process and an overview of its vision, a handful of discussion questions were posed to Board and community members. Speakers were not timed nor were they limited in the number of times they offered feedback. This provided a unique outreach experience for the Council. Attached on ©3-4 is a table listing the most-often heard comments by Regional Service Center. A few comments were

common across the entire County such as support for more sidewalks, bike lanes and transit options whereas other comments were specific to one or two regions.

1964 General Plan	1969 General Plan	1993 General Plan Refinement	Planning Board Draft: Thrive Montgomery 2050
<p>Part I: The Plan</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Goals</li> <li>2. The Urban Pattern (corridor cities)</li> <li>3. The Rural Pattern</li> <li>4. Public Services</li> </ol> <p>Part II: Carrying Out the Plan</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Zoning</li> <li>6. Tax Policies</li> <li>7. Subdivision Controls</li> <li>8. Park and Open Space</li> </ol> <p>Acquisition</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Natural Resources Advisory Comm</li> <li>10. Urban Renewal</li> <li>11. Community Appearance Advisory</li> <li>12. Unifying Government Affairs</li> <li>13. A Vigorous Planning Program</li> </ol> <p>Part III: Trends and Alternatives</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14. The Trends</li> <li>15. The Alternatives</li> </ol>	<p>I. Introduction</p> <p>II. Updating General Plan Policy</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Land Use <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) General</li> <li>(b) Living Areas</li> <li>(c) Employment Areas</li> <li>(d) Community Facilities</li> <li>(e) Agriculture, Open Space, Parks and Recreation</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Circulation</li> <li>3. Conservation</li> <li>4. Environmental</li> <li>5. Housing</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Vision for the Future <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definition</li> <li>• Impetus for Plan</li> <li>• Legislative History</li> <li>• Adoption Process</li> <li>• Guiding Principles</li> <li>• Consistency w/ MD Plan Act</li> <li>• Geographic Components</li> <li>• Challenges of Implementing</li> <li>• Conclusion</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Goals, Objectives, and Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction</li> <li>• Land Use</li> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Employment/Economic Activity</li> <li>• Transportation</li> <li>• Environment</li> <li>• Community Identity and Design</li> <li>• Regionalism</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is a General Plan?</li> <li>• Overarching Objectives</li> <li>• Urbanism as a Guiding Principle</li> <li>• Blueprint for the Future</li> </ul> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Compact Growth</li> <li>2. Complete Communities</li> <li>3. Design, Arts, and Culture</li> <li>4. Transportation and Communication Networks</li> <li>5. Affordable and Attainable Housing</li> <li>6. Parks and Recreation for an Increasingly Urban and Diverse Community</li> </ol> <p>Conclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What can Thrive 2050 Achieve?</li> <li>• Cooperation Public and Private Agencies</li> <li>• Modifications to Plans, Policies, and Rules</li> <li>• Relationship to Climate Action Plan</li> </ul> <p>Appendices</p>

<b>Planning Board Draft: Thrive Montgomery 2050</b>	<b>PHED Committee Draft: Thrive Montgomery 2050</b>
<p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is a General Plan?</li> <li>• Overarching Objectives</li> <li>• Urbanism as a Guiding Principle</li> <li>• Blueprint for the Future</li> </ul> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Compact Growth (sections below appear in all chapters) Policies and Practices Metrics</li> <li>2. Complete Communities</li> <li>3. Design, Arts, and Culture</li> <li>4. Transportation and Communication Networks</li> <li>5. Affordable and Attainable Housing</li> <li>6. Parks and Recreation for an Increasingly Urban and Diverse Community</li> </ol> <p>Conclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What can Thrive 2050 Achieve?</li> <li>• Cooperation Public and Private Agencies</li> <li>• Moving from Plans to Action</li> <li>• Modifications to Plans, Policies, and Rules</li> <li>• Relationship to Climate Action Plan</li> <li>• MoCo has a lot going for it</li> </ul> <p>Appendices</p>	<p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is a General Plan?</li> <li>• Blueprint for the Future</li> <li>• Plan Framework and Overarching Objectives</li> <li>• Urbanism as a Guiding Principle</li> <li>• How Thrive 2050 was Developed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Organization of the Plan</li> <li>– Community Input</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Compact Growth (sections below appear in all chapters) Introduction Problem Policies to Solve the Problem How these Policies further the Key Objectives Metrics</li> <li>2. Complete Communities</li> <li>3. Design, Arts, and Culture</li> <li>4. Transportation and Communication Networks</li> <li>5. Affordable and Attainable Housing</li> <li>6. Parks and Recreation for an Increasingly Urban and Diverse Community</li> </ol> <p>Conclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MoCo has a lot going for it yet there's room for improvement</li> <li>• How will Thrive be Implemented? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Cooperation Public and Private Agencies</li> <li>– Modifications to Plans, Policies, and Rules</li> <li>– Relationship to Climate Action Plan</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Measuring Progress</li> </ul> <p>Appendices</p>

<b>Summary of Most-Often Heard Comments at Citizen Advisory Board Meetings</b>					
<b>Comments</b>	<b>East County</b>	<b>Down County</b>	<b>Mid-County</b>	<b>Up-County</b>	<b>Western County</b>
Support East County corridor business development and revitalization of strip shopping centers	x		x	x	
Concerned with impact of development on existing market rate affordable housing and gentrification- the conflict between redevelopment and gentrification	x	x	x	x	
Important to bring a variety of jobs to the area to help residents afford new and existing housing	x	x	x		x
Lack of investment in East County needs to be addressed	x				
Supports potential for additional housing types added to single family neighborhoods to open these areas up to others who want/need/can only afford an attached single family house	x	x			x
In East County interest in diversifying in the other direction due to large inventory of multifamily developments	x				
Support more bike lanes (safe/protected) and sidewalks	x	x	x	x	x
County needs to focus on increased transit options to address climate change	x	x	x	x	x
Broader range of recreational options and parks	x				
Concerned with environmental recommendations – more attention to tree canopy , storm water, and connection to Climate Plan		x	x	x	x
Support the attention to arts and culture in building community		x			
Preservation of market rate affordable housing important	x	x			x
Plan needs to acknowledge infrastructure needs of growth and provide protections for existing neighborhood in the face of growth (traffic, school crowding etc..)	x	x	x	x	x
Concern that the Plan pays insufficient attention to potential impact of Covid on land use		x	x		
Prefers Planning Board Draft language with respect to highways			x	x	

Concerned with impact of Thrive on future master plans and language in PH Draft missing from PB Draft				x	x
Thrive needs to better support transportation needs of Up-County which could require construction of highways				x	
Prefers format that includes a chapter on environment and economic development					x

(4)