



## OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

**Marc Elrich**  
*County Executive*

January 27, 2021

Dear Chair Anderson and Members of the Planning Board:

As you know, on August 14, 2020 I submitted extensive comments on the Working Draft of the Thrive Montgomery 2050 General Plan. These comments were sent on behalf of the eleven county agencies that comprise my Thrive Montgomery Working Group.<sup>1</sup> The Working Group is now seeking to comment on the Planning Board Draft but has run into some problems.

The numerous changes to the Public Hearing Draft, and the new process for the Planning Board Draft are creating difficulties for executive department review. The nature of the chapters has changed. The separate chapters on the three overarching outcomes—Economic Health, Equity, and Environmental Resilience—have been removed, and the discussion of the three topics is now interspersed throughout the draft. There are six new themes in six new chapters; there are deleted recommendations, new recommendations, and new facts to support the recommendations.

The biggest procedural hurdle is the absence of a complete draft. The new draft is still being written, and completed chapters are being released once a week, along with an outline for the chapter that will appear the following week.

It is very difficult to comment on one chapter without the benefit of the rest of the draft. In fact, the Working Group cannot comment at all on the three overarching outcomes of Economic Health, Equity, and Environmental Resilience, because the discussion of these outcomes is now spread throughout the draft. I am concerned that the public is having similar difficulties.

The many, substantive changes and confusing process raise a question about how to move forward. How does the Planning Board expect the executive agencies to deal with this

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<sup>1</sup> The group includes the following agencies: Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA), Montgomery County Department of Transportation, Montgomery County Public Libraries, Office of Animal Services (OAS), Department of General Services (DGS), Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service (MCFRS), Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD), Department of Technology Services (DTS), and Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

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unusual situation? How will we be able to review and comment on a complete draft with its full recommendations? Should there be a public hearing once the draft is complete? That seems like the simplest solution.

The General Plan is a foundational document that is being written to guide the County's land use policies for the next 30 years. It's important to get it right.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marc Elrich". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Marc" being more prominent than the last name "Elrich".

Marc Elrich  
County Executive

ME/mw/ci