

Highlights of the PHED Committee Draft of Thrive Montgomery 2050

Since early July, the Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee has held 10 worksessions on the Planning Board Draft of Thrive Montgomery 2050 (including a review of the Fiscal Impact Statement). The Committee affirmed many of the policies and practices put forth in the Planning Board's Draft. These recommendations support and encourage a vision of growth for the County which includes:

- Maintaining a constrained growth area that focuses growth in centers of activity and along growth corridors;
- Reintroducing East County growth corridors as a key to racial equity and economic competitiveness;
- Emphasizing walking, biking, and transit;
- Introducing the importance of social connectedness and health in land use planning;
- Incorporating arts and culture into public and private infrastructure and recognizing quality of place as integral to economic health; and
- Encouraging environmental sustainability and resilience by focusing growth in targeted areas and protecting areas outside targeted areas such as the Agricultural Reserve and parkland.

The following Committee Draft of Thrive Montgomery 2050 starts from a revised version of each chapter prepared by Council staff, Planning staff, and the Planning Board Chair (following direction from the Committee's July worksessions). Most revisions reorder information in the Planning Board Draft, add information from the Public Hearing Draft, or provide additional text for clarity. Some deletions were made to address redundancy for sections of text that moved, or for readability. All of these edits made a "tracked change" version of the draft extremely difficult to read; therefore, the PHED Committee Draft does not indicate specific changes to the text of the Planning Board Draft. Below are highlights of the PHED Committee's Draft. It

- Provides a more thorough introduction, including expanded sections on the three overarching objectives of economic health, racial equity and social justice, and environmental resilience. Adds a symbol for each objective to each recommended practice where applicable to illustrate support for the overarching objectives throughout the draft. Strengthens the sections in each chapter that explain how the proposed policies support each objective.
- 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.
- Reorganizes and adds text to highlight the importance of context sensitive development of Complete Communities and centers, as well as to clarify that the concept of "15-minute living" will mean different things for different types of communities.

- Emphasizes improvements in the transit, bicycling, and pedestrian infrastructure as alternatives to the auto and promotes expanding the street grid within growth centers with more connecting streets, bikeways, and sidewalks, and smaller blocks.
- Supports the conversion of existing travel and parking lanes to dedicated transit lanes, walkways, bikeways, and street buffers, where consistent with other County policies.
- Promotes the construction of high-speed fiber optic and wireless infrastructure, focusing on connecting those in parts of the county that lack convenient access to jobs and educational opportunities.
- 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.
- Ensures there is consideration of increased opportunities for housing low and very low-income households in the analysis of how best to leverage county assets or dispose of real property.
- 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.
- Supports 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.
- Clarifies that metrics used to evaluate progress will include data that is dis-aggregated by race to facilitate measuring progress on the County's equity goals.