

Thrive Montgomery 2050 Comments

Tim Shaw

Good evening County Council members and thank you for having me to provide my perspective this evening. I'm Tim Shaw, a new resident of the county. I recently bought a single-family home in Hillandale and moved in with my wife, 9-month old daughter, and mother. As you can imagine, we have plenty on our plates right now between the move and the baby, but I think that Thrive 2050 is a critical issue worth the extra time this evening to discuss.

In short, I support Thrive 2050 because it is a reasonable step to building the inclusive, environmentally sustainable, and economically prosperous county I want my daughter to grow up in.

In particular, I'm excited about the plan's goals for affordable housing. We moved here in part because of the diversity of Montgomery County. I'm excited that my daughter has the opportunity that I didn't have – to grow up in a racially diverse community with people that are different from her. In addition, my mother is Vietnamese, and being close to a thriving Vietnamese-American community is important to us.

Growing housing unaffordability threatens those goals. Prior to the pandemic, 25% of renters in Montgomery County spent more than 50% of their income on housing costs. Without additional housing of all kinds, but especially affordable housing designed to address unaffordability and racial inequity in our housing systems, that problem will only grow. If additional townhouses or other denser housing are built in my neighborhood, I won't be sad that the character of the community is changing – I'll be excited that more neighbors have the same opportunity I have for safe, affordable housing and the chance to appreciate the community I am growing to love.

I also support the range of other priorities in Thrive 2050, including new green spaces for my daughter to play in, mixed use neighborhoods for us to explore, and increased walkability to get around safely without needing a car. Thrive 2050 mandates none of these things, but does set them as a goal for us to build an equitable, sustainable, and growing county. I urge you to pass Thrive 2050 as soon as possible to begin making those goals a reality.