

Thrive Testimony submittal, Nov 30, 2021

I am Kathleen Samiy, Silver Spring. I have written multiple letters requesting Tree Canopy goals and measures be integrated into Thrive framework. I am still waiting to hear if you will implement my request.

The General Plan is inequitable, environmentally. It sets the stage for the Attainable Housing Strategies and the SS and Downtown Adjacent Communities plans and more ZTA amendments which do include forms of 'by right' development (for housing), yet there is no 'by right' environmental equivalent in support of attainable tree canopy or environmental goals?

--The BBB Bill has a Tree Canopy Equity section. Thrive does not.

--Residential Communities are not complete nor healthy without maximizing Plans and zoning law to include tree canopy.

--Watersheds, urban forests, steep slopes, and their protections are missing in the General Plan. Did you know the term, "Urban Forests" or clusters of trees on land under one acre, have no legal definition, nor protections? Protecting them all is SMART.

-The Wedges between Corridors Plan is very Smart and Visionary environmentally. It distinctly separates 'healthy green natural tree canopy zones' from 'urban/impervious gray treeless polluted zones'. Keep them clear and distinctly separate, that is SMART.

--Planners are expanding the gray unhealthy zones up to one mile, or about 5 blocks into long established green residential zones, that is NOT SMART.

-- Multi-plex and Quad Plex housing is another form of McMansionization, expanding doubling, tripling, quadrupling 'by right' larger buildings onto lots- that are left with no earth space for tree canopy. That is not SMART.

--Did you know the bi-State Maryland sister agency, the MNCPPC – Prince Georges County General Plan 2035, developed in 2014, has a 17-page section of the 314-page document devoted specifically to the environment? Have you read it? The MoCo Plan is a slim 93-pages.

-- Environmental stewardship should be a vision attained on every lot and parcel, and not just in PARKS (as Thrive indicates). That is NOT SMART.

--Less than 15 years ago, in 2008, the Planning Department had a 'flat' structure, now it's a 'pyramid' structure. Now, the folks at the tippy top decide everything, including the General Plan not having an Environmental Section. Formerly, if the Environmental Section Chief reviewed a Plan that failed to meet environmental standards and guidelines, the plan failed, full stop. This is NOT SMART.

-- Have you read about Smart Growth?

This draft plan parrots the 1990's Smart Growth mindset, lock stock and barrel. Yet Smart Growth theory was a reaction to 1970's suburban sprawl. We are 30- 50 years past that point and residential suburban sprawl is everywhere, there are huge 3,000 sf houses empty all over suburban MoCo. Their mindset focused on the built environment. It's time to environmentally evolve, to infill environmentally, to customize communities based on unique characteristics of each established area, and not apply all or most density by location and proximity to transit. There are other creative solutions- but citizens and environmentalists were not given the opportunity to early on help craft Thrive. This is not SMART. This is not Visionary. This is not the time to apply an old framework.

--Densification and concentration in neighborhoods around 'transit' is inequitable, imbalanced. In a post pandemic, endemic future people want to be separated and spaced. Smart Growth in 1990. Was to be

applied in NEW Developments, on empty land, like King Farm. Now its being applied to infill and retrofit RE-Development. This is not SMART. SMART is including the established communities, and environmental expertise to grow organically not forcing the expansion of one size fits all to increase density and development around transit.

The local Smart Growth Coalition is a developer lobby group. They have not registered with the MNCPPC, yet State Law requires they must. These lobbyists and advocates have significantly more direct influence over planners and council members, than regular citizens and environmentalists, why? That is NOT SMART.

In closing, to me Planning and Thrive is lopsided. Be SMART. Balance it out, add tree canopy goals and measures to all the planning documents and stop the broad stroke application of density encroaching up to a mile into established tree-canopied communities.