

I oppose Thrive and the SSDAC's tactics based on "visioning" as poor planning.

Tactics

1. Name It to Claim It: Silver Spring is not a city. Stop calling it one. If Silver Spring were a city, like Takoma Park, MD, it would be incorporated with a mayor and city council, i.e. actual representation. A city would not be impacted by Thrive or a Downtown Adjacent Community Plan. The idea of Silver Spring being a "city" is promoted by developers and the Planning Board to help developers increase their profits through increased density.
2. Now We are None. Take Woodside Park out of the Adjacent Communities section of the downtown proposal. Woodside Park is not part of downtown. This claim permitted the up-zoning of 11 properties including a historic church on Colesville Avenue without the owners' consent. Clearly we don't matter.
3. Proximity to Public Transportation a Prerequisite for Up-zoning. If this were the case, many down county areas could be up-zoned including homes on Wayne Avenue and adjacent areas, Georgia Avenue, Colesville Road, East-West Highway, parts of Bethesda, Chevy Chase, Aspen Hill and others.
4. Implementing the SSDAC before Thrive is Approved. This implements Thrive's zoning goals regardless of the public objections. At the December 2nd, public hearing Thrive and the SSDAC's main supporters were realtors, lobbyists and Silver Spring residents who want to live closer to downtown.
5. Visioning Keeps Vacant Commercial Property Out of Sight. There is enough vacant commercial property in Montgomery County in DTSS and other areas near public transportation to remodel into condos and sell to current County residents at low interest loans using county, state and federal funds.

6. Developer First Planning/Planning For Non-residents. Montgomery County creates ways to subsidize developers but not the residents who want to remain here and purchase condos but can't afford to.

8. Planning for the Future Creates a Current Housing Crisis. The Thrive and SSDAC posture is suspect. During the when period Thrive and related plans were being developed, the current housing crisis could have been lessened by planning to remodel the County's vacant commercial property.

9. Senior Citizen Exclusion. The proportion of seniors in the County is growing. You wouldn't know it from Thrive where this group's presence isn't acknowledged.

10. The 15-minute Hypothesis. All destinations aren't accessible to everybody in a 15 minute walk to public transportation. Public transportation isn't always the optimum way to travel. Public parking is a necessity.

11. Return to Workism. Many workers won't return to the office full time, if at all, when the pandemic ends. Thrive doesn't considered the impact of tele-work although Thrive and the SSDAC documents were prepared during a pandemic by people working from home.

12. Fake communities versus neighborhoods. It is a failure of imagination to claim a desire to build 15 minute communities after having upended neighborhoods which are the building blocks of communities. The SSDAC could possibly work for building new communities. But not existing ones.

13. Plan for Failure by Ignoring Evidence of Past Failure. Minneapolis shows the mistakes inherent in uncontrolled planning similar to what the Planning Board want to do county-wide. Good planning proceeds through phased implementation, benchmarks and reviews to determine if a plan is achieving its goals. Thrive does none of this.

The idea that people should live crowded together in template designed communities hemmed in by skyscrapers because someone thinks it will be a good idea and to do this all at once is flawed. It is the arrogance of planning where nothing anyone says will cause any reflection about what this means.

The proponents of SSDAC and Thrive the is the lobbyists and developers who the County Council has embraced won't have to live with the outcomes of destroying Silver Spring.

Assist current small businesses in DTSS to remain rather than replacing them with the corporations that aren't there.

Finally, the SSDAC planning for parks is awful. I am especially concerned about park planning being based on a template which would create a uniformity of the same features in every park. Parks are important and their uniqueness should be maintained. We need more parks with trees, benches, drinking fountains and space. Diversity even among parks is important. I am especially concerned about SSDAC's plans for Jessup Blair Park. The park should be made greener with more trees and continue to be a natural space rather than an extension of downtown.

Will you join me in a letter that tells the Planning Board you want the Woodside Park homes (and church) removed from the expanded boundary ? **And advise me about what you want to see in this letter about the process.** This letter will be submitted tomorrow December 2 to the Planning Board, (I will read it) as testimony.

Time's up. We cannot avoid this issue any longer.

All: AHC, Inc. (Affordable Housing Corporation) has a number of rental communities in and around the City of Baltimore. We also offer properties in Montgomery County, primarily in Silver Spring and Germantown. AHC has also developed a number of moderately priced, renovated row houses in Baltimore

AHC Inc. is committed to fulfilling our mission of developing sustainable affordable housing while also providing a competitive return on our investors' funds.

Thrive Montgomery Testimony Rev. 4, November 30th
Major Points of Concerns:

The County Council's PHED needs another **listening session**. The Thrive proposal is too important to be limited to a single session where the Planning Board picks who will testify.

Thrive should be stopped in its tracks now. The problem with Thrive is a top down central planning document that paves the way for up-zoning without an opportunity for public involvement and review.

The Planning Board has too much power, almost dictatorial power given its structure in which the same people are on the Planning Board, County Council and the PHED. They change hats and then deliberate, vote again to approve something they approved in another body with a different name and try to convince me that this is fair.

There is no control or limits on the Planning Board power to do what it wants and to distort arguments that don't concur with its determinations.

Then there is control of the use of Montgomery County's public media for Thrive's purposes.

And most of all there is the obvious favoritism for the developer/real estate industry whose voices appear to be central to Thrive's development and outcome.

The emphasis is on proposed for profit multiplex structures which are intended to upend single family homes.

Again there is another reward for developers with MPDU multi-profit development units. Instead find means to fund the sale of subsidized housing.

The estimated cost of Thrive from the County's Office of Management and Budget is very troubling. It will impose a state wide hardship. The cost so far is an estimated **\$8 billion over 29 years plus annual budget expense of over \$200 million a year. Stop holding county taxpayers hostage to Thrive's developer's enrichment schemes. We can't afford it.**

Thrive speaks aspirationally of a "world class" transit system and "irresistible" network for walking and biking, "15 minute living." This assertion is ridiculous. – these simply won't work for thousands of County workers whose daily livelihood depends on driving, not mass transit within a half-mile of home, and the use of service vehicles. We need everyone to make the county work !

Climate change won't wait for another "blue ribbon" panel. All future development in the county must address strategies for mitigation, storm water management, (find etc etc)

We can do better. I am asking you to return the Thrive plan to Montgomery Planning and engage all of us in a 30-year plan that will be "Montgomery for All!"

- 1.
2. Do not implement Thrive as written. The Planning Board is creating a false sense of urgency to rush the implementation of a plan
3. Coalition of Smarter Growth, Montgomery for All, and Greater Greater Washington have paid lobbyists and are largely funded by developers. The plan reflects this.
4. Shifting Goal posts. Initially was presented as "affordable housing. It is now being presented as "attainable housing." They aren't the same.
5. There is a myth of deep public engagement as we emerge from a pandemic. There was virtually no written information or public announcements on Thrive Montgomery sent to County residents. "The Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan builds upon that success while incorporating the feedback of over 500 stakeholders. This plan truly represents the comments of residents, community members, and business owners and we continue to welcome everyone's feedback during the plan's next steps."

This statement covers up the fact that Silver Spring has upward of 40,000 residents a number that far exceeds the 500 stakeholders.

6. Planning Board agreed to introduce up- zoning by a non-democratic process that favors developers.
7. Divide and Conquer Tactics by calling residential zoning "entitlement" zoning when it is actually the County's zoning.
8. Claiming that seniors are "over-housed." How do you know who is over-housed?
9. Dishonest representation of moderately priced housing. Using photos of a townhouse in DC's Historic Cleveland Park as an example of moderately priced housing
10. Thrive's emphasis on rentals will tilt the balance of residents in Montgomery County towards rentals rather than home ownership to the benefit of the real estate industry.
11. Who Pays? Nowhere are the costs to taxpayers who subsidize the infrastructure for developers mentioned. The public needs to know the cost

12. No plans for Economic Growth but plans for Low Wage Renters. What are the plans to increase income in Montgomery County?

<https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/housing/attainable-housing-strategies-initiative/#:~:text=The%20Attainable%20Housing%20Strategies%20Initiative,for%20the%20county's%20diverse%20populations.>

Hello. My name is Brenda Freeman.

I support certain aspects of the TM2050 proposal to improve housing opportunities and its goal of addressing the impact of climate change. However because the way the process is being conducted, I cannot support Thrive Montgomery 2050 as presented.

My concerns are:

Insufficient Public Awareness about TM2050 and Inadequate Time To Respond. The County's planning hearings were open to the public and continued during the 2020 COVID outbreak. This means many residents weren't looped in. I can think of no reason to approve a plan in mid-2021 that won't go fully into effect until 2050. More time is essential to craft a quality plan for the County's future and to allow County residents more involvement.

Divisive Language in TM2050. Page 36 of TM2050 describes single-family homes having "entitlement" zoning. The zoning is not an entitlement and was created by the Montgomery County. Later, senior citizens have been described as "overhoused."

Stakeholders Need a Range of Development Options. More timing would allow planners, residents and others to develop competing plans and to choose from the best of them. TM2050 as currently drafted caters to the needs of big developers and their investors.

Role of Developer Lobbyists in Planning. The Coalition for Smarter Growth, Montgomery for All, and Greater Greater Washington are lobbying organizations largely funded by developers. Therefore what may appear to be public support is instead the interlocking work of paid lobbyists representing special interests. They are not Montgomery County residents.

Rezoning to Eliminate Single Family Homes is part of TM2050's development objectives. The Planning Board extended the Boundaries of Downtown Silver Spring (DTSS) to include a

number of homes in Woodside Park, including the SDA Church on Colesville Avenue *without the consent of their owners.*

Putting these homes into the Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities (SSDAC) Plan allows for duplexes, triplexes, quads and up to 20 unit apartment buildings on single family zoned lots in the proposed plan's area. *TM2050 would do the same thing in all single family zoned areas throughout the County.* The SSDAC plan would set the precedent. And, of course, it is being rammed through during the pandemic, too.

Transit Corridors, Rezoning and Density. A transit corridor is described as a major road close to Metro or other public transport. We need more clarification of what this means as it could further empower the County to up-zone residential areas.

Who Pays? *Nowhere are the costs to taxpayers who subsidize the infrastructure for developers mentioned.* High density permits developers to create more housing stock and also tear down existing housing. It is unclear how the burden of infrastructure costs will be shared between developers, commercial interests, and taxpayers. The public needs to know.

Planning for Low Wage Renters Without Planning to Increase Their Income. TM2050's emphasis on rentals mentions people earning \$50,000 a year in 2050. A salary of \$50,000 in 2050 will be below the poverty line. The equivalent of \$50,000 a year in 2000 was estimated at around \$77,000 in 2020.

Rental Units. Developers emphasize rental units because they are profitable for their investors. Meanwhile the renovation of empty commercial buildings in DTSS could be used to house people *now* rather than waiting for 2050. Condos are less profitable for developers but create wealth for their owners.

Dear Montgomery County Council Members:

The Council should reject the proposed Thrive plan and send it back to the Planning Board for revisions which protect existing neighborhood for heavy-handed redevelopment schemes.

Some members of the County Council, Planning Board and Planning staff repeatedly state that Thrive Montgomery does not change zoning, that it is a "vision" for the future of the County, and that many are confused about what Thrive will do to our neighborhoods.

We are the many, and we are not confused.

Thrive Montgomery 2050 is the foundational document that (1) pending and future zoning texts amendments will rely on to obliterate single family zoning throughout the County, (2) that the Attainable Housing Strategies will cite to encourage multifamily development by right on lots in established neighborhoods previously zoned for a single family homes, and (3) that Master Plans will invoke it to recommend even higher density development, including apartment buildings, along major transportation corridors.

Woodside Park is bordered on two sides by major highways, Colesville Road and Georgia Avenue, prime candidates for so-called Corridor Focused Growth. It is bounded on the third by the Silver Spring business district. Additionally, thanks to the sudden incorporation of portions of Silver Spring neighborhoods into the ongoing Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan, including a section of Woodside Park, we are already feeling the squeeze of developmental pressures.

As a resident of Woodside Park — a neighborhood planned out almost 100 years ago to take advantage of the natural topography and which remains a bucolic oasis in Silver Spring, I can state that Thrive's vision for my neighborhood is not my vision.

In the 2011 update to the Housing Element portion of the General Plan, the first of three goals

Revised letter to the County Council

Wednesday, October 27, 2021

I do not support Thrive Montgomery 2050. It is not ready to go to the full Council for review and final passage, in spite of Councilmember Riemer's strange urgency to beat the clock when there is in reality no urgency to adopt a plan for the next 30 years before we understand the long term impact of the pandemic. Here's why:

The plan falls short on two of the three "overarching objectives" stated in the draft: economic health and environmental resilience. Both of those chapters were dropped – for no reason --from the draft plan when it was sent to the Council's PHED Committee.

Why are we rushing to complete a plan that aims to be the foundation and authority for all County development in the next 30 years, *without true equity in public engagement?* Residents should be driving this agenda – not developers and special interest groups from outside Montgomery County and Maryland.

I don't concur with the Planning Board chair, who claims the process was "both broad and deep" in its public engagement. In fact, the process has not reached tens of thousands of people who live, work and pay taxes here. Residents understandably have focused on health, family and faith during this pandemic, not on philosophy and aspirational thinking.

There are fundamental issues that must be addressed in Montgomery County—and they won't be resolved in the Thrive plan.

Montgomery County economy is weaker today because of lost jobs, empty office space and static wages for many. Many women have left the workforce because they can't get reliable childcare. Lower wage workers lack job security and are not getting the training to achieve equity and wealth-building through housing.

The County lacks an operative economic development plan; but mysteriously, the economic resilience chapter disappeared from the Thrive draft plan before it arrived at the Council's PHED Committee. Highlighting this omission in light of the "Thrive" plans call for more housing and density in ~~our~~ single family neighborhoods as necessary for economic development, is the fact that the new goals report issued by the MCEDC (spell out MCEDC) does not list housing as one of the goals or a requirement for revitalizing our economy. Apparently if the planners couldn't make an economic development case for densifying existing neighborhoods, they simply removed the chapter that failed to make the justification.

The estimated cost of Thrive from the County's Office of Management and Budget is also very troubling -- despite Council members' dismissive attitude. It will be a fiscal hardship that impacts every taxpayer in the State:

- Net additional County capital cost attributable to Thrive \$8.187 billion net and total net added capital cost (including state and private) to be \$8.915 billion

- Net additional annual operating cost to the County is \$426.5 million; including state and private costs increase in annual operating expenses would be \$596.4 million [X 29 years]
- Net annual amount of housing added is important because, with few exceptions (high rise, Senior housing, McMansion) housing increases the cost of services more than county revenue generated from them to pay for these services.

Montgomery County can live up to its reputation for being a “good government” county. We can achieve a thriving economy and equity for all -- but NOT with this plan.

I am asking you to return Thrive to the Planning Department and engage us all in creating a reasonable 30-year general plan that will achieve “Montgomery for All!”

Thank you !

v

was “Conserve and care for existing neighborhoods.” That goal has gone by the wayside with the Thrive Montgomery Plan. It is not a plan I can support.

Sincerely,

Brenda Freeman