

Bethesda MD 20816
December 14, 2021

Montgomery County Council
Council Office Building
100 Maryland Ave., 6th Floor
Rockville MD 20850

Members of the County Council:

I oppose the Thrive Montgomery plan.

1. The impact on County resources of Thrive Montgomery has not been analyzed or researched.

There is no research and analysis on the impact of the zoning change on schools, fire departments and other resources. This is unlike any zoning proposal that I have seen in this County.

2. Thrive Montgomery assumes that increasing the number of housing units will result in affordable housing which will then be available to lower income households. There is no analysis to support this assumption.

In the United States, one of every five low-priced homes has been purchased by an investor. Thrive Montgomery will be like buying three houses for the price of one. It is likely that this will increase investor interest, drive prices up further and disadvantage lower income purchasers.

3. Start Thrive Montgomery by initially applying it to vacant lots.

The result would be an influx of housing that will not result in the wholesale demolition of housing or subdividing of housing that would otherwise ensue. By introducing Thrive Montgomery gradually, the plan could be evaluated and any needed tweaks could be made as it evolves.

4. Thrive Montgomery disadvantages citizen home purchasers by forcing them to compete with investors/developers that view housing as a triplex income stream.

As difficult as it currently is to purchase a home, it will be significantly more difficult when citizen homebuyers are competing with investors/developers that are flush with cash. Citizen homebuyers will be outbid every time, and further denied the opportunity of homeownership.

5. Emphasize Business Development

I do not see any plans in the Thrive Montgomery plan for economic development. I encourage you to make this a priority. Economic development will truly make Montgomery County thrive. And it will give Montgomery County more tax dollars so that the County can buy/build affordable housing itself.

Conclusion

In the name of affordable housing, Thrive Montgomery offers low income purchasers/tenants smaller, less maintained properties for more money and at the same time makes it harder to buy a house because of increased competition from investors/developers. Before Thrive Montgomery is implemented, the issues discussed above need to be fixed.

Thank you for considering my comments on Thrive Montgomery.

Sincerely,

Katherine Davies