

From:
To: [Council Public Hearing](#)
Subject: FW: SSDAC Comments and Thrive Remarks
Date: Monday, February 14, 2022 4:40:59 PM

From: brenda freeman
Sent: Monday, February 14, 2022 4:34 PM
Subject: SSDAC Comments and Thrive Remarks

Last week residents of the Woodside Park Civic Association (WPCA) wrote County Council Chair Alborno and the County Council opposing Woodside Park being included in the Silver Spring Downtown Adjacent Communities. That letter is below this message.

Probably before our letter was received or possibly reviewed, the meeting which had been planned for March 1 was changed to February 15. The date change was posted on February 11, a four day advance notice including the weekend.

The abrupt change of the County Council's meeting date leaves the impression that it was intentionally changed on short notice to limit public participation.

The timing is interesting because in the same period the County Office of Legislative Affairs report was made public. Among others, OLO report recommendation to return to the original Thrive report and make it better. This refers to the version of Thrive before it was rewritten by the Planning Board Chair.

While the February 15 meeting is a briefing, it is unlikely that any Council member has read the Woodside Park letter or that it will be considered during the process.

At the same time the Office of Legislative Oversight report found what Thrive opponents have been saying all along. Thrive's implementation does not address racial equity nor fix the housing shortage. Montgomery County's own policies created the housing shortage.

Thrive is intentionally not addressing ways development could contribute to residential stability and grow wealth through property ownership for low income and moderate income people. In fact, Thrive could hurt minority, low income and fixed income home owners through up-zoning.

Unfortunately, as written the current version of Thrive will further enrich developers at the expense of most county residents, homeowners and others and will harm rather than help minority groups and seniors on fixed incomes, the latter being an increasing part of the County's population.

The OLO's recommendation to stop Thrive now is a must.

The County Council should return to the initial Thrive report and reach out to all county residents. The County has wasted hundreds of thousands of dollars of taxpayers' money in pursuit of a "vision" that benefits the few instead of the many. It's time to get real and come up with a plan for Montgomery County not for the residents not out of state developers and a real estate industry who won't have to live with the consequences of failure.

The County's Planning Board has ignored any public input that could improve Thrive

2050. Thrive will not let and moderate income residents to build wealth by purchasing condos and home. The Thrive will increase a class of permanent renters to enrich developers. Further the County through ZTA and pattern books will cede all control over residential development to developers and entrepreneurs. This means that unelected development interests would have more control than elected officials in determining housing and building policies. For development and real estate interests it doesn't get better than that.

The County Council should not ignore the Office of Legislative Oversight's report on equity and its disregard minorities, seniors and other County residents to developers, real estate industry and paid lobbyists. Thousands of hours of time and taxpayer dollars have been wasted trying to force through a flawed Thrive Plan.

County Council Chair Albornoz and Members of the County Council,

We, the undersigned residents of Woodside Park, are writing to urge that the Woodside Park properties — our homes and the Seventh-day Adventist Church — identified as an "Adjacent Community" be removed from the Silver Spring Downtown Sector Plan.

In the District Visions portion of the SSDAC Plan, the "vision" for Adjacent Communities reads:

"Consistent with the recommendations of the Attainable Housing Strategies Initiative, the Adjacent Communities can include a greater variety of housing types, fully integrated into the existing fabric, to allow a wider range of residents to enjoy the valued proximity to the downtown."

At this point, neither Thrive Montgomery 2050 nor the Attainable Housing Strategies Initiative has gone through the County Council approval process. One does not know what changes will be made to the "recommendations" contained in those drafted documents. It is unacceptable that a blank check be written for whatever those documents recommend in the final versions for Woodside Park and the other neighborhoods annexed into the Downtown Sector Plan.

All recommendations in the final and adopted Plans pertinent to Woodside, Woodside Park, Seven Oaks-Evanswood and East Silver Spring should be addressed and executed through the Master Plan process for each area, rather than as blocks and individual lots within blocks arbitrarily separated from the rest of their neighborhood.