

My name is Jessica Landman. I live 2 blocks from Maple Avenue.

As one of the first big planning actions under *Thrive Montgomery*, this MMPA will be an important signal of how you plan to implement Thrive's principles. It will be closely watched.

Thrive was promoted as a means of **addressing past inequities**, while also **creating more options** for housing that is **affordable** for **current and future residents of all income levels**. Thrive notably targeted neighborhoods with exclusively single-family zoning - to make sure that such zoning is not a barrier to future affordable housing.

In stark contrast, this post-Thrive re-zoning proposal targets, not single-family housing, but an area already relatively densely zoned for multifamily residential apartment buildings. It proposes to up-zone the corridor for 150-foot-high full-on commercial development.

This would put residents of a big chunk of the County's *most deeply affordable rental housing* at risk of significant displacement and rent increases.

This is the opposite of the "prioritizing racial equity" that Thrive calls for. Indeed, incredibly, the Planning Board urged our City Council to WEAKEN our rent stabilization rules and open the door wider to more rapid gentrification.

Thrive says to concentrate development within a half mile of a Metro or a Purple Line station, or on a major transportation corridor, or where there is a "robust transit service in place," and "close to existing concentrations of jobs, services, and infrastructure."¹ The Maple Avenue Corridor meets none of those criteria – in fact, *the County just announced reduced bus service along Maple Avenue!*

Thrive met resistance because it was seen by some as 'threatening' the sanctity of single-family residential zoning. But in this case, areas zoned single-family are virtually untouched. The loss of affordable housing and displacement will largely impact renters and condo owners in the Maple Ave corridor. *Single family homeowners will have reduced pressure to allow multi-family units, or ADUs, on their blocks. Ironic, indeed.*

In sum, I ask you to adhere to Thrive's stated principles:

*Zone for high commercial density near transit hubs and transportation corridors with transit services, jobs and infrastructure, not in residential neighborhoods. And **protect** existing affordable housing. This MMPA does neither.

***Recognize a unicorn when you see it:** Takoma Park has a unique pocket of dense, deeply affordable rent-stabilized housing, which is already consistent with the principles of Thrive and needs to be preserved, not undermined. Don't spoil it.

*And last, **don't repeat the age-old injustice** of placing unwanted development in a poor neighborhood! Renters may not vote in large numbers, but they still deserve your protection.

Jessica Landman

¹ <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/THRIVE-Approved-Adopted-Final.pdf> at p. 70