Planning Our Future. Together.

THRIVE
MONTGOMERY 2050
Let's Plan Our Future. Together.

Thrive Montgomery 2050
Public Hearing Draft Plan

October 2020
Montgomery Planning

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

Abstract

Thrive Montgomery 2050 contains the text and supporting maps for a comprehensive amendment to the approved and adopted The General Plan (On Wedges and Corridors) for the Physical Development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties, as amended; the 2013 County-wide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan, as amended; the Master Plan of Highways and Transitways, as amended; The Purple Line Functional Plan, as amended; the Master Plan of Historic Preservation as amended; and the 2018 Bicycle Master Plan, as amended.

Thrive Montgomery 2050 is a general plan for the county with a 30-year horizon. It sets a vision for the county and encompasses broad, county-wide policy recommendations for land use, zoning, housing, the economy, equity, transportation, parks and open space, the environment, and historic resources. These recommendations provide guidance for future master plans, county and state capital improvement processes, and other public and private initiatives that influence land use and planning in the county. None of the plan's zoning-related recommendations can be implemented without a sectional map amendment, district map amendment, or a zoning text amendment approved by the County Council.

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PREFACE

When the [1964 General Plan](#) was written, much of Montgomery County was undeveloped. The 1964 General Plan on Wedges and Corridors Plan guided Montgomery County's growth over the ensuing 50 years and made the county one of the most desirable places to live and work in the United States. Our success was built on an award-winning park system; high quality schools; forward-thinking leadership in preserving farmland, fostering the emergence of urban centers and mass transit; and shaping the design of many attractive suburban subdivisions.

The county is entering the next phase of its evolution from a bedroom community to a complex jurisdiction with major employment centers, urban hubs, stable residential neighborhoods, rural landscapes, and a diverse population of more than a million people.

Rapid social, environmental, technological, demographic, and economic shifts that are already underway require us to rethink our assumptions and take a clear-eyed look at both our strengths and weaknesses. With most of Montgomery County's available land built out, we need to accommodate the projected new population growth of 200,000 people over the next 30 years. The way we think about growth needs to change. We need to reconsider sites where growth was previously not deemed possible. We need to use new growth and redevelopment to create places with greater social capital and connectedness among residents from different backgrounds. For Montgomery County to continue to thrive in the 21ˢᵗ century, we must be prepared to make difficult and sometimes controversial decisions and take bold steps to prepare for the future.

Growing over the next 30 years while maintaining our focus on the three major Thrive Montgomery 2050 outcomes—economic health, equity, and environmental resilience—requires us to refine our current planning framework, not abandon it. We must build upon our strengths and experience of creating mixed-use neighborhoods around our Metro stations. We must learn from what has proven to work over time, and incorporate the principles of smart urbanism—a compact form, a mix and diversity of uses, walkability, active and healthy lifestyles, and a focus on good design—into our planning framework. Thrive Montgomery 2050 proposes to embrace these principles to create Complete Communities connected by dynamic corridors that are safe, functional, and beautiful with a mix of uses and housing types.

Thrive Montgomery 2050 is about adapting to new realities, addressing historic inequities, and shifting the way we think about how the county should grow. It builds upon the foundation set by the 1964 General Plan and all subsequent plans and policies. The Plan recognizes that our quality of life depends on the ability to attract and retain employers and the employees they need. This means building on the advantages of our proximity to the federal government, supporting small business and innovation, and creating an environment where people of different backgrounds and income levels feel welcome. Diversity and inclusion are our strength and are essential to our future success. We must ensure that all residents have access to high quality housing, jobs, transportation, and educational opportunities. Environmental degradation in general and climate change in particular illustrate the need to adapt land use and transportation planning to make Montgomery County more sustainable and resilient while protecting what we cherish and avoiding the consequences of sprawl.

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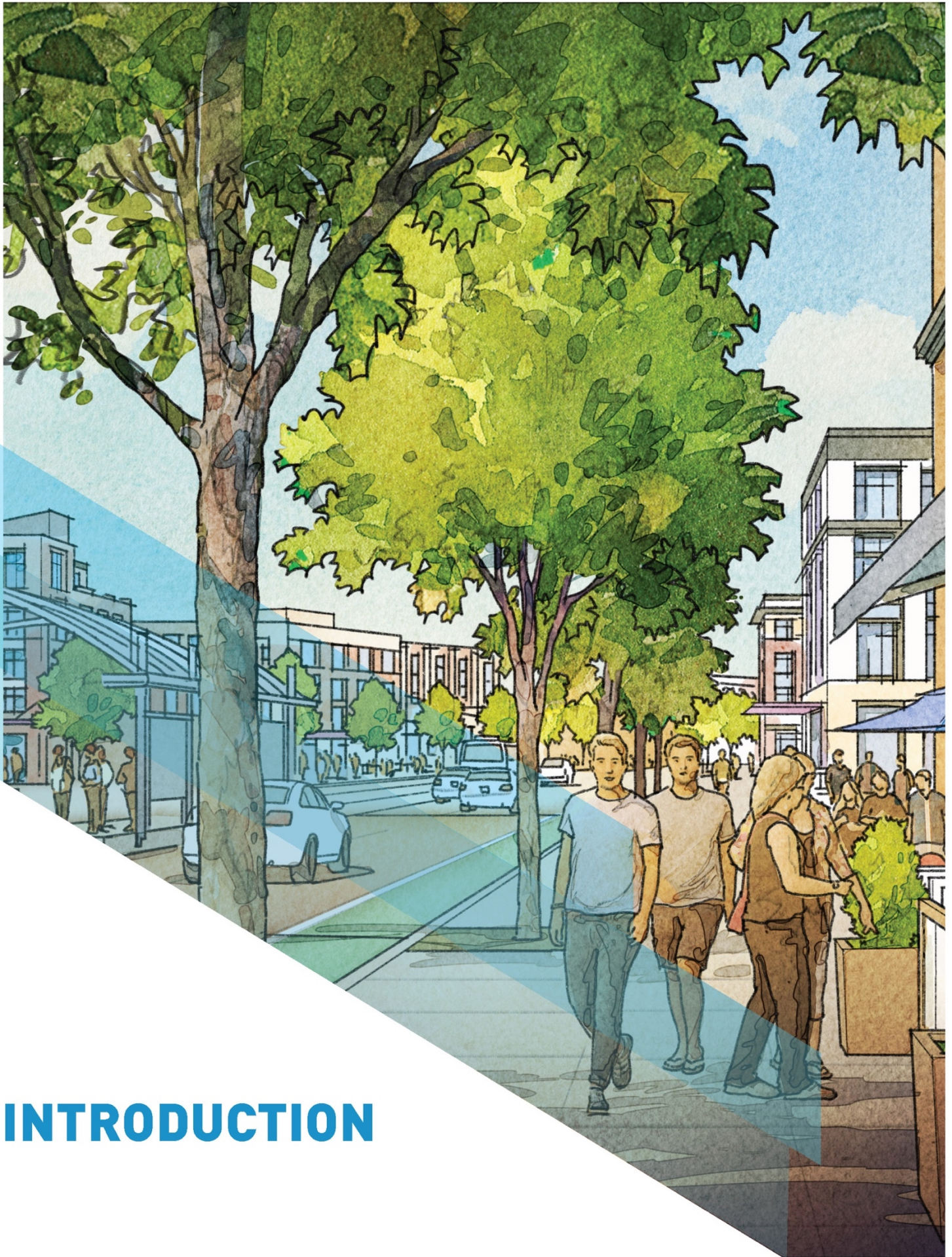
INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS THRIVE MONTGOMERY 2050?

Thrive Montgomery 2050 (the Plan) is the update to Montgomery County's General Plan. It is a long-range policy framework to help guide, over multiple decades, how Montgomery County should respond to future opportunities and challenges while maintaining its important assets.

Thrive Montgomery 2050 defines the basic land use setting and context for all public and private actions in the county and directly addresses the traditional land use and planning issues. Its recommendations also influence the actions and outcomes of other public and private entities that are responsible for implementing and providing related services and amenities. For example, while M-NCPPC does not directly get involved in planning and meeting the educational needs of the county, the physical form (types of housing, retail, transportation) and setting of a community (location, proximity to amenities and services, quality of the built environment) have a great deal to do with the educational achievements of its children and young adults.

The purpose of a 30-year plan is not to predict and plan for a single future but to be prepared to face multiple, unpredictable futures while keeping an eye on where we want to be in 30 years. We must consider how climate change, pandemics, or terrorist attacks as well as the implications of autonomous vehicles, artificial intelligence, and economic change will influence our ability to grow and thrive in the future.

Unlike an area master plan or a county-wide functional plan, Thrive Montgomery 2050:

- does not address short-term issues through specific land use guidance in targeted geographic areas;
- does not change zoning;
- does address multiple topic areas; and
- does frame issues for further study and action for implementation.

The first General Plan for Montgomery County, *On Wedges and Corridors, A General Plan for the Physical Development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District in Montgomery and Prince* George's Counties[1] (the 1964 General Plan or the Wedges and Corridors Plan), was adopted in 1964, updated in 1969, and last refined in 1993. It established the foundation of land use planning for Montgomery County and has guided all subsequent land use planning and development policies. The 1964 Plan has been amended through numerous master plans, sector plans and county-wide functional plans, but has not been subject to a fundamental reconsideration since it was adopted more than five decades ago.

Thrive Montgomery 2050 modernizes the 1964 General Plan's Wedges and Corridors concept and refines it for the next 30 years to ensure its relevance for tomorrow's challenges. Its broad policy recommendations will require amendments to other plans, policies, and development controls before they can be implemented. Therefore, the underlying area master plans and county-wide functional

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[1] https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/master-plan-list/general-plans/wedges-corridors-general-plan-1964/

plans will continue to be valid and applicable until subsequently modified pursuant to the guidance provided by this plan.
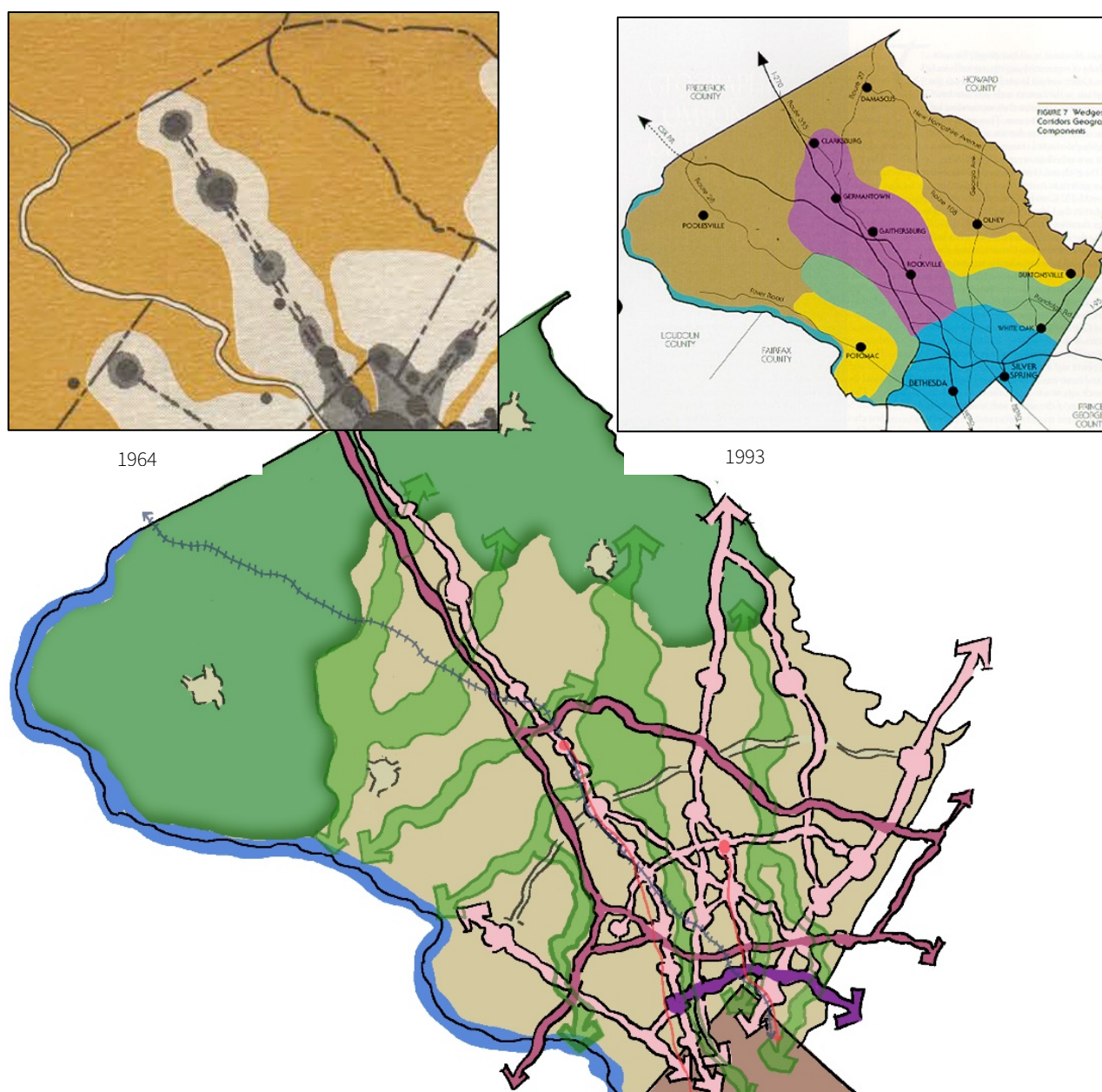
1964

1993

Figure 1: Today, Montgomery County is a web of corridors, both manmade and natural.

From a single "corridor" (I-270) in the 1964 General Plan (see image above, left), to urban, suburban, and rural communities in 1993 (see image above, right), Montgomery County has evolved into a web of corridors with a variety of places ranging from the Agricultural Reserve, to suburban neighborhoods, mixed-use centers, and major employment hubs. Thrive Montgomery 2050 proposes to reinforce this web of centers and corridors by focusing growth around transit stations and along the major corridors. In addition to vibrant transportation corridors lined with housing and neighborhood-serving uses, the centers will be connected by nature through parks and trails that will promote active lifestyles.

WHY UPDATE THE GENERAL PLAN

The 1964 Wedges and Corridors framework guided Montgomery County's evolution from a largely rural area to a bedroom community to an economically and culturally diverse jurisdiction of well over a million people. The goals of the 1964 General Plan and the 1969 Update (efficient land use, preservation of open spaces, opportunities for recreation, protection of environmental resources, connective transportation systems and a variety of living environments) continue to be relevant and essential. We must, however, adapt to changing circumstances and face a variety of challenges. While Montgomery County has tremendous assets, including a highly educated workforce, proximity to the nation's capital, and a culture of openness to newcomers, we also are struggling to attract businesses, grappling with a legacy of racial and economic inequities, and fighting to protect the natural environment.

We must meet these challenges at a time when rapid technological, demographic, and social change has stressed our political and economic systems. Events like the coronavirus pandemic and racial injustice protests are taking place in 2020 against a backdrop of rising frustration with both public and private institutions, the lingering economic effects of the Great Recession of 2008-9, and widening economic inequality. These events and experiences are not unique to Montgomery County, but their consequences have played out in the lives of our residents and have shaped our hopes and fears about the future.

These issues and challenges are complex and have multiple causes, many of them outside the scope of land use planning and therefore the direct influence of Thrive Montgomery 2050. However, they play a significant role in perpetuating, and even reinforcing, many associated undesirable outcomes such as lack of connectedness and the social isolation of the young and the elderly. Therefore, our approach to growth and planning communities needs to be comprehensive.

We need to step back from our day-to-day and short-term issues to take a comprehensive look at where we are in the broader context of changing circumstances. Continuing on the current path will make it ever harder to recover if we don't make the necessary adjustments, small and large, in how we address these critical issues, adapt to new realities, address historic inequities, and shift the way we think about how the county should grow. Thrive Montgomery 2050 is the tool to help the county chart a course so we can withstand the threats and challenges known to us and seize opportunities and achieve our goals in a future that is hard to imagine today.
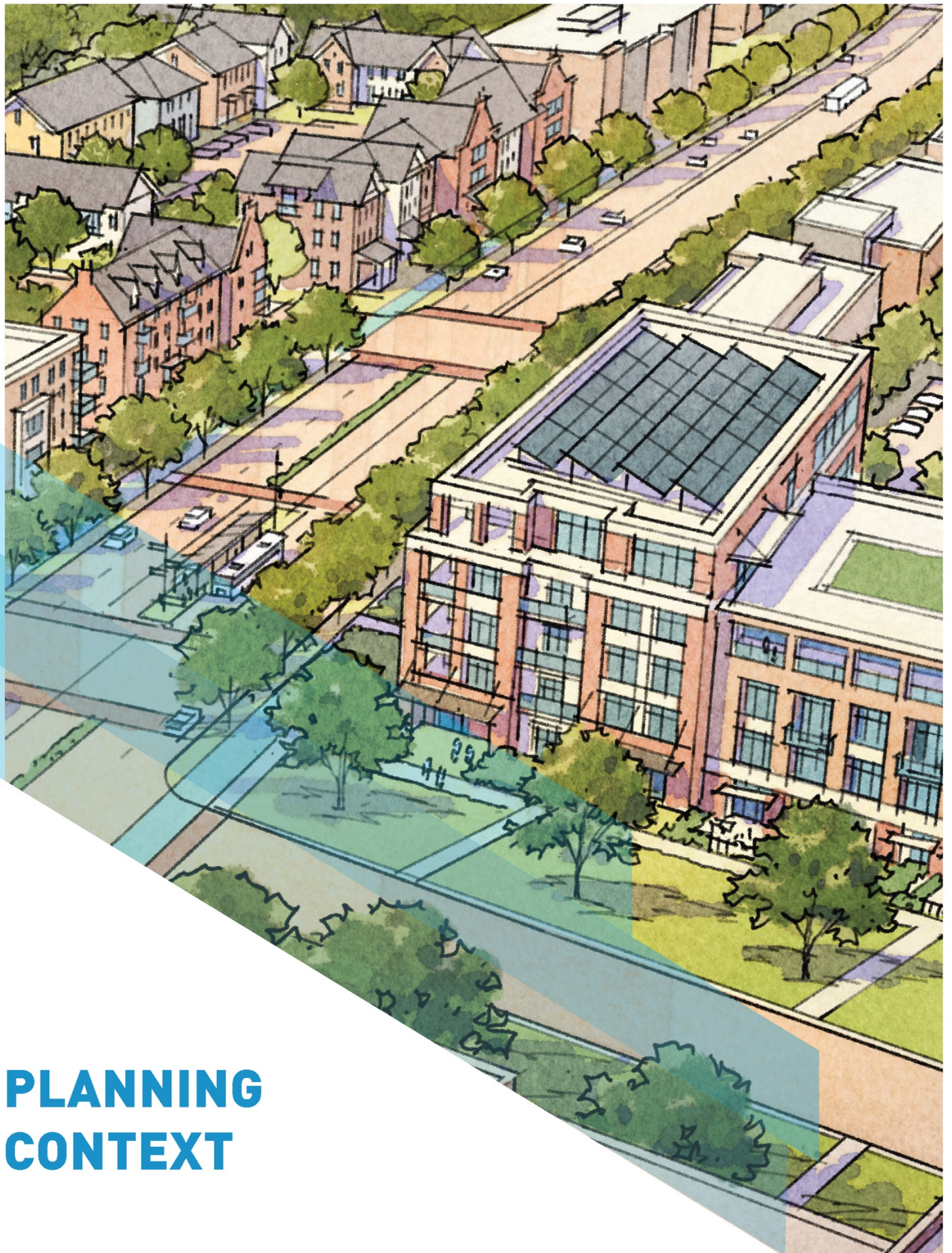
PLANNING CONTEXT

TRENDS AND CHALLENGES

Montgomery County is changing because of past actions and larger forces like economic disruptions, social and demographic shifts, technological innovations, and climate change. Some of these have always existed but what has changed is their pace or the degree of their impacts on how we will live, work, travel, and spend our leisure time in the future. Some of them may intensify in the future while others will fade or change by other, yet unknown developments. Thrive Montgomery 2050 calls them trends and challenges. The county should consider this list of major trends and challenges as it takes a comprehensive look at how it should grow. For a full discussion of these trends and challenges, see the Trends Report and the Issues Report.

1. The county is growing at a slower rate than in the past, but it will still add more than 200,000 residents in the next 25-30 years.

The county's annual growth rate of 0.74% since 2010 is projected to slow even further over the next 30 years, dropping to an annual gain of 0.48% between 2035 and 2045. The county's population of 1,050,688 residents in 2019, is projected to more than 1.2 million people by 2045.
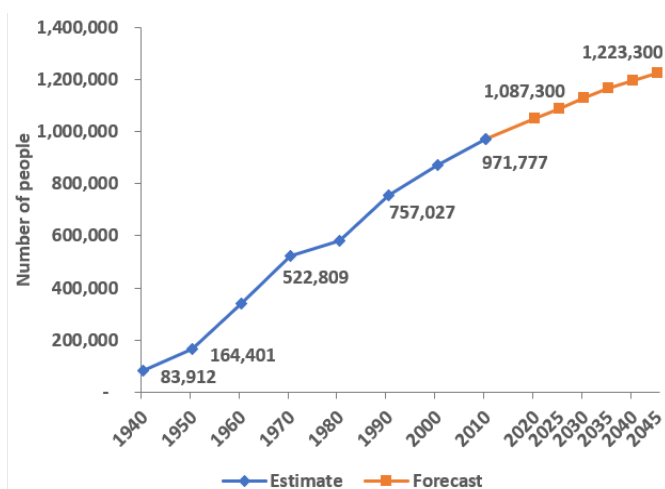
Figure 2: Population estimates and forecast, 1940-2045

2. The amount of unconstrained land available for growth is very limited.

Today, approximately 85% of the county's land area is constrained by environmental and human-made factors leaving only about 15% of land available to accommodate growth. The 85% figure includes a little more than 36% of the land area being used by single-single-family detached, townhouses, and the roads serving these homes (see the land use map and the associated pie chart for all uses in Figure 4). The county must shift its focus to redevelopment and reuse of

underdeveloped land, which requires a different set of public policies and approaches to growth than those that have guided the county over the past decades.

Constrained area (all non-white areas) = 276,515 Acres (85%)
Unconstrained area (white areas) = 47,804 Acres (15%)
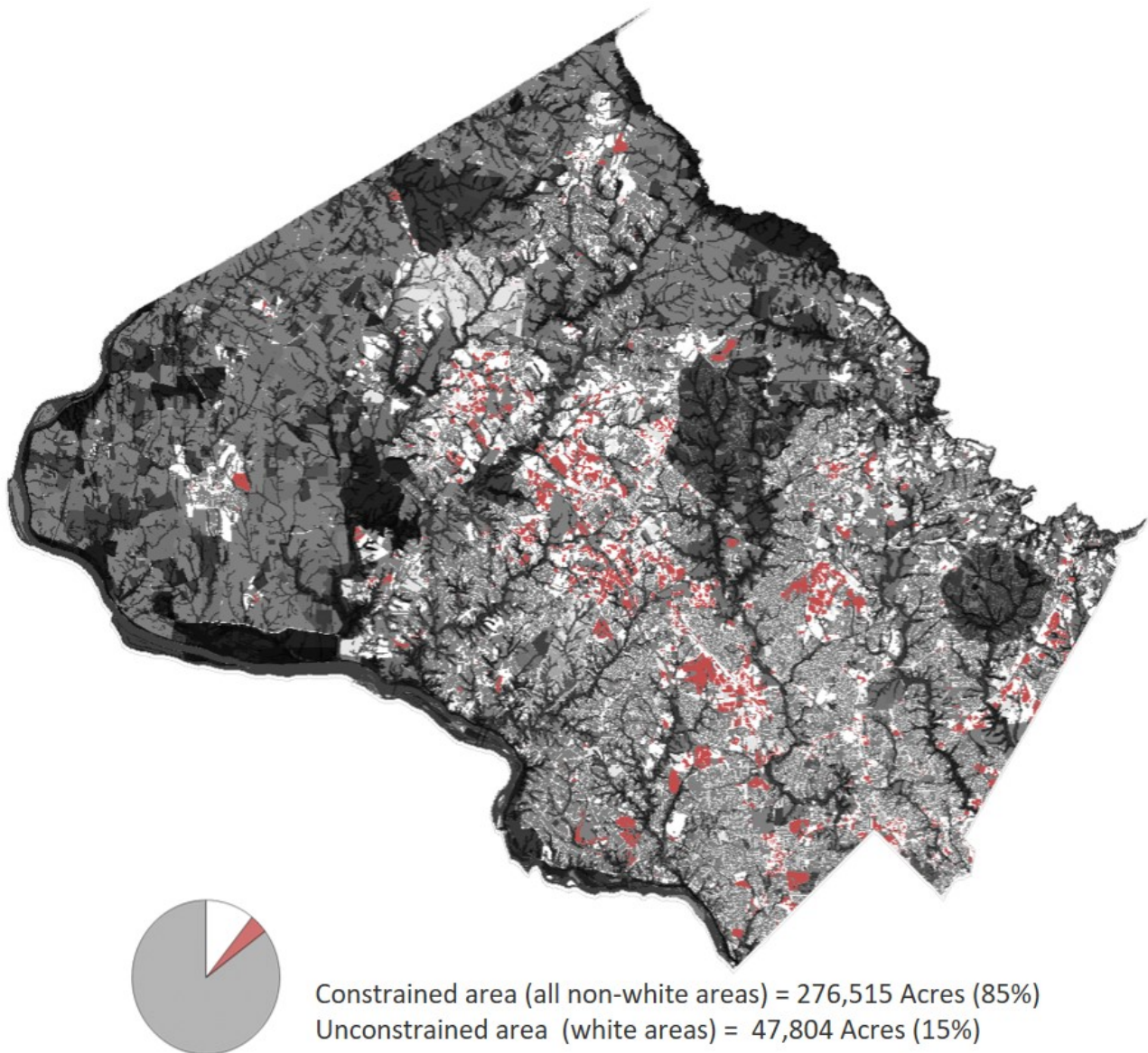
Figure 3: Land available to accommodate growth

Environmental constraints (medium and dark grey): Streams, Wetland Buffers, Erodible soils, Parks & Biodiversity areas, Special Protection Areas, Agricultural Reserve, Forest Conservation Easements.

Man-made constraints (light grey): Utility Sites (WSSC, Transmission Lines), Transportation Infrastructure (Metro, Rail, State Roads, Federal Highways), Government Owned sites, Rustic Roads, Public Education Facilities, Historic Resources, Transferrable Development Rights (TDR) Exhausted, Rockville Quarry, Regulated Affordable Housing, Private Institutions, Homeowners Associations Common Ownership, Single Family Homes.

Redevelopment qualifiers (red): Multiple Owners, Improvement Value > Land Value, Office Buildings less than 50 years old, Retail Buildings less than 15 years old.

3. Over one-third of the county is used for single-family homes (detached and townhouses).
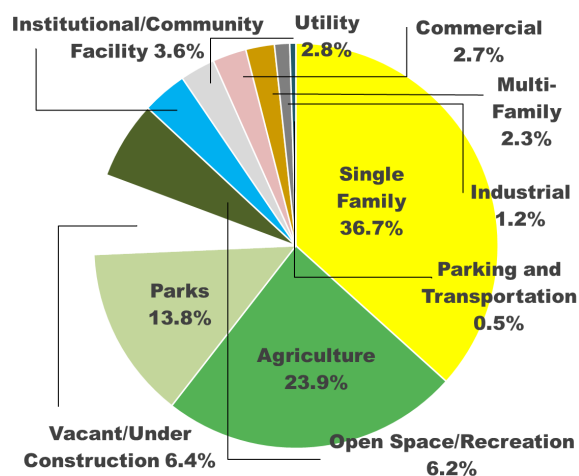
Single-family homes (36.7%) agriculture (23.9%), parks (13.8%), and open space and recreation (6.2%) use more than 80% of the county's land area. Other uses encompass the rest as shown in this pie chart including 6.4% vacant or under construction. Public policy choices have left limited land available to accommodate new growth. A recommendation of Thrive Montgomery is to build on the concept of focusing growth along corridors, even if this may require changes to land use and densities along these corridors.
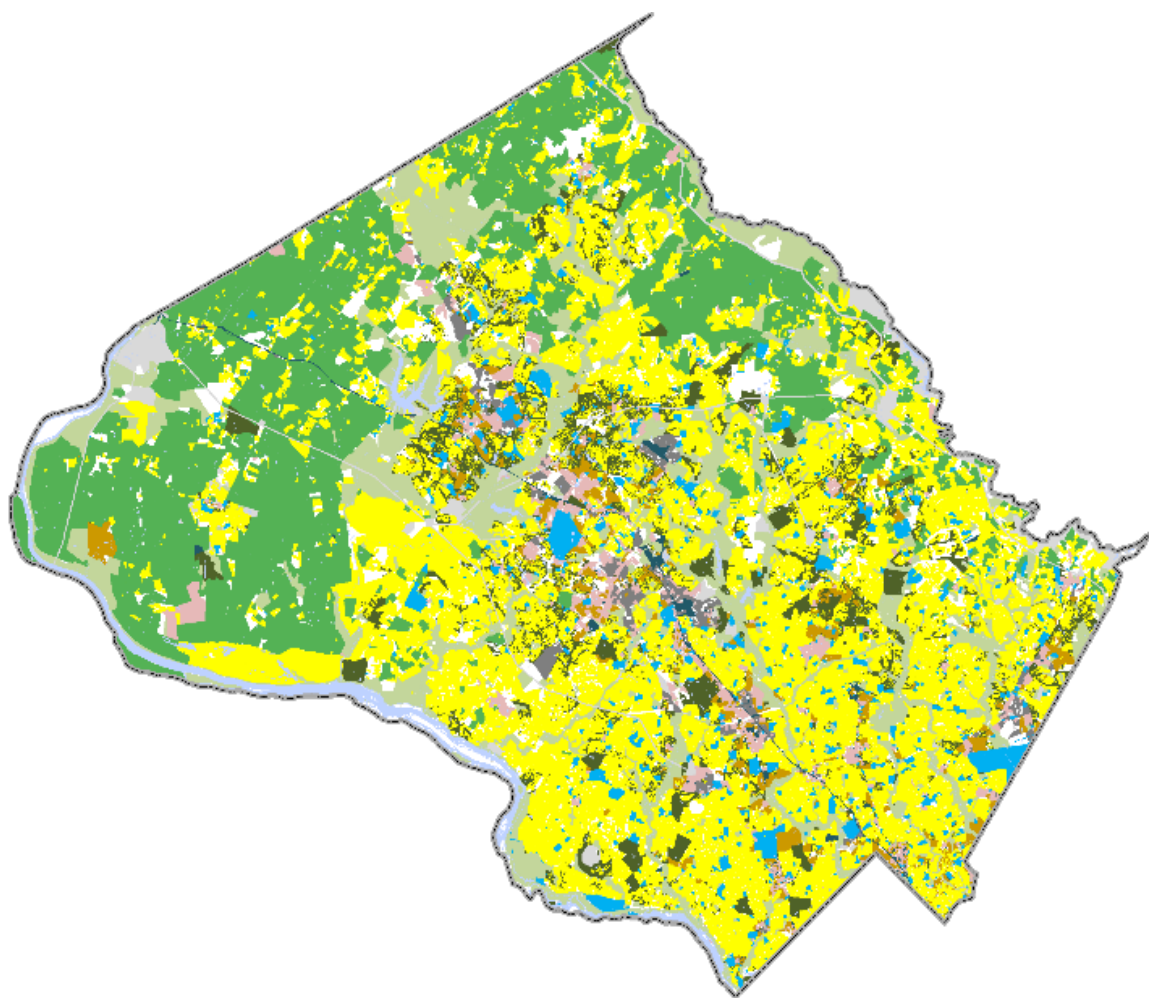
Figure 4: General land use map, 2020 (see the pie chart for the share of each land use by color)

4. The composition of household types has changed dramatically since the 1960s.

The share of householders living alone has increased from 7% in 1960 to 25% in 2018. And the traditional family type—married couple with children under the age of 18—decreased from 60% to 26%. This trend has huge implications for our housing needs in the future and the services and amenities needed to support this segment of the population as it grows older.

Household Family Types 1960-2018

Year	Other Non-Family	Non-Family, householder living alone	Other Family	Single Parent, children <18	Married Couple, no children <18	Married Couple, children < 18
1960	1%	7%	6%		27%	60%
1970	2%	14%	4%	4%	29%	47%
1980	6%	21%	5%	6%	30%	32%
1990	8%	22%	7%	6%	30%	28%
2000	7%	24%	7%	7%	27%	28%
2010	6%	25%	8%	8%	28%	26%
2018	6%	25%	8%	7%	30%	26%
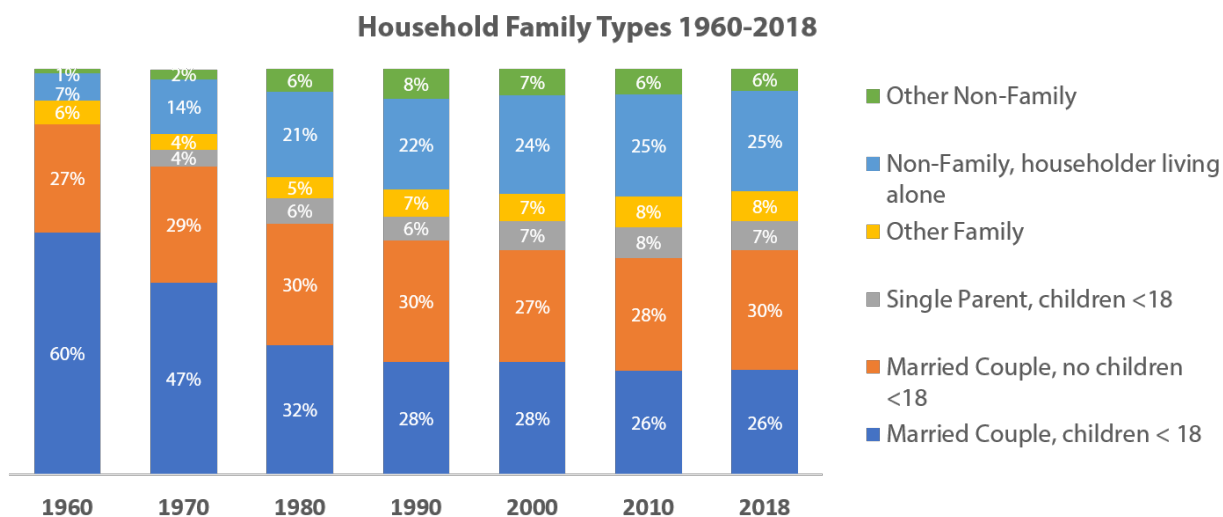
Figure 5: Household types, 1960-2018

5. The county is becoming older.

The county's 65-plus population, including a large generation of baby boomers, is expected to increase from 10% of the total population in 1990 to 21% in 2045. The aging population may put downward pressure on household incomes. With the movement of the baby boomers out of the workforce, the number of adults age 65 and older as a share of those of working age is expected to increase from 24.2% in 2020 to 31.2% in 2030. An aging population, without a commensurate increase in younger workers, means lower average household incomes and changing needs for social services.

The overall aging of the county's population has led to a higher "dependency ratio," which measures the relative number of dependent or nonworking-age persons compared to working-age persons. As the senior dependency ratio rises, additional financial pressure is placed on employed residents to support the dependent older population. According to the International Monetary Fund, "An

Figure 6: The county's share of senior population has outpaced its overall population growth.

aging population and slower labor force growth affect economies in many ways—the growth of GDP slows, working-age people pay more to support the elderly, and public budgets strain under the burden of the higher total cost of health and retirement programs for old people."

Percent of Population by Age Group, 1990-2045

Figure 7: Percentage of population by age group, 1990-2045

6. The county is becoming more racially and ethnically diverse.

Increasing racial and ethnic diversity outpaced the county's overall population growth since the 1990s, steadily increasing the percentage of people of color in the total population. In 2018, people of color comprised 57% of the total population making Montgomery County more diverse than the nation (39.8%), Maryland (49.8%), and the Washington, DC, region (55.1%). The proportion of people of color is projected to steadily increase to 73% in 2045. Montgomery County has the highest percentage (32%) of foreign-born population compared to any other jurisdiction in the Washington, DC, region.
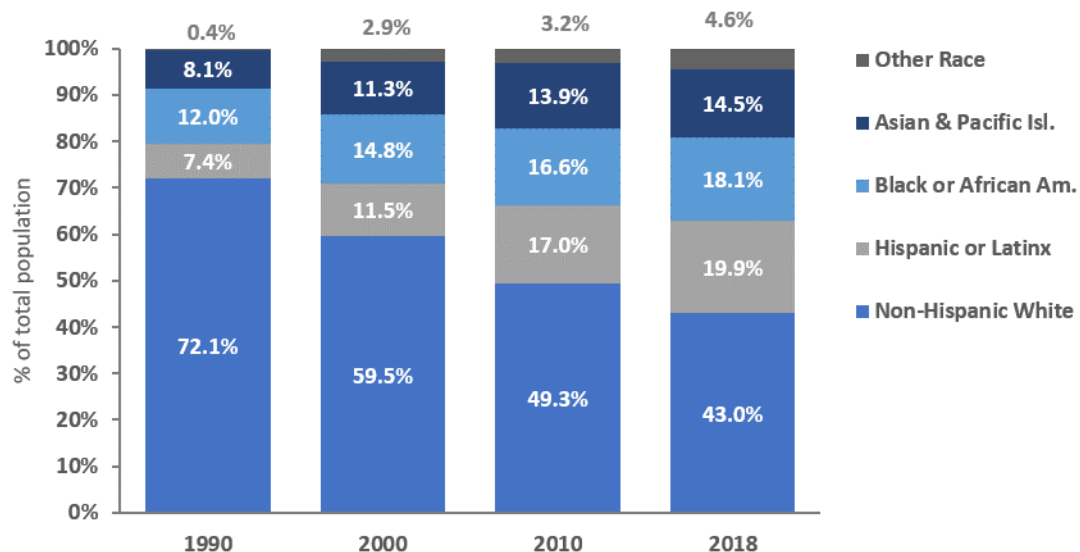
Source: 1990-2010 U.S. Census, 2018 American Community Survey, 1-year estimates, U.S. Census Bureau.

Figure 8: Population by race and Hispanic origin, 1990-2018

Neighborhood demographics do not reflect the county's overall diversity. Our neighborhoods are largely separated along income and racial lines, which has far-reaching implications for people of color at lower-income levels and the county as a whole. This geographic separation is evident in many quality-of-life indicators such as income, access to jobs, food, recreation, and school achievements. For example, in 2018, 59% of the county's adults age 25 and older held at least a bachelor's degree, compared to 52% regionally. However, educational attainment, like median household income, varies by race and ethnicity. It closely follows the geographic distribution of racial and ethnic composition of neighborhoods as shown in Figure 9 (for more detail of median incomes and educational achievements by race, see the full Issues Report).

Map 6. Predominant Racial or Ethnic Group, 1990 by Census Tract
Montgomery County, Maryland

Predominant Racial or Ethnic Group
- White Predominant (>70% of tract population)
- White Majority (50% - 70%)
- Black Majority (50% - 70%)
- No predominant group (no group with more than 50%)

Roads and Transitways
- Major Highways
- MARC Line
- Metro Line
- M Metro Stations

Source: 1990 Census, U.S. Census Bureau. Created by: M-NCPPC, Research and Special Projects Division

Map 7. Predominant Racial or Ethnic Group, 2016 by Census Tract
Montgomery County, Maryland

Predominant Racial or Ethnic Group
- White Predominant (>70% of tract population)
- White Majority (50% - 70%)
- Black Predominant (>70%)
- Black Majority (50% - 70%)
- Hispanic Majority (50% - 70%)
- No predominant group (no group with more than 50%)

Roads and Transitways
- Major Highways
- MARC Line
- Metro Line
- M Metro Stations

Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-year estimate, U.S. Census Bureau. Created by: M-NCPPC, Research and Special Projects Division

Figure 9: Neighborhood demographics do not reflect the county's overall diversity.

7. We are not producing enough housing in accessible locations to meet our needs.

While the number of housing units in Montgomery County increased 32% from 295,723 in 1990 to 390,673 in 2018, this increase was lower than the 53% increase in the region. The largest increase was in multiple-family units, 56%, while single-family increased by 22%. Annual building permits issued since 2015 continue to drop below 4,200 permitted units (the average needed to maintain an adequate housing supply), approaching the 2009 recession levels.
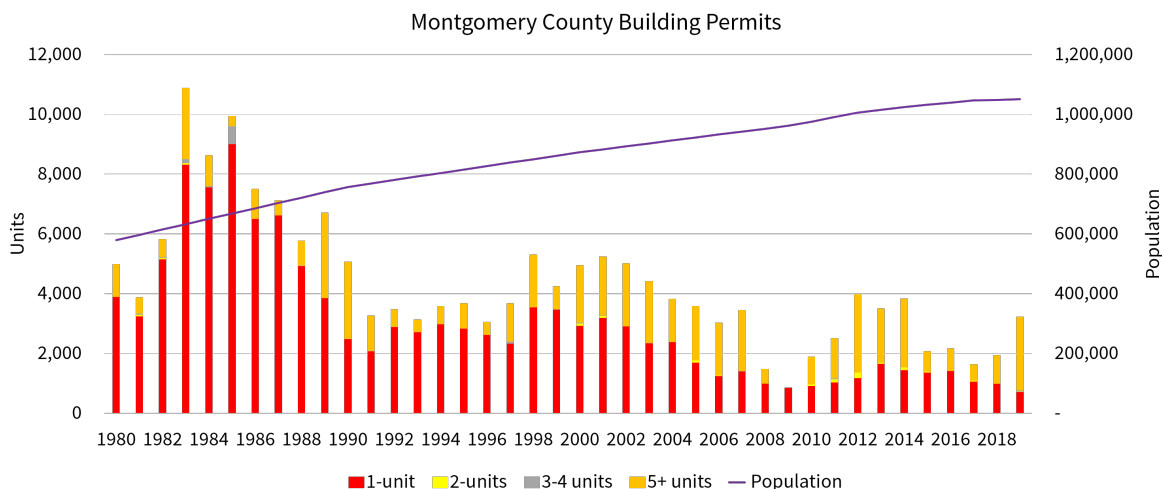
Figure 10: Increasing gap between housing demand and supply

Homeownership is important to wealth building and combating housing instability, but many of our residents simply cannot afford access to these benefits. The median home value in Montgomery County is nearly $20,000 more than the actual median household income. The biggest decline in homeownership rate between 1990 and 2018 occurred for people younger than 35. The overall homeownership rate declined from 67.9% to 65.1% in 2018. Only people older than 75 saw an increase in the homeownership rate from 65% in 1990 to 73% in 2018.

Housing affordability challenges must be addressed through multiple strategies. Preservation of current market rate affordable housing will help, but it alone will not address the high cost of housing. We must produce more market rate attainable housing than we have in the past decade. But we cannot continue to rely on a few, high-density Metro station areas to provide enough housing to bring down costs. We need other locations where lower land prices will support low- to medium-density residential building types. The county's plan to create a new bus rapid transit network should be complemented by land use and zoning changes to create more attainable and affordable housing along these corridors. Creating more affordable housing in amenity-rich locations will require more direct public investment in preserving existing housing stock and building new affordable units. We also need to provide reliable and efficient transit, better schools, and other amenities to isolated single-family neighborhoods to support 15-minute living and attract a more diverse population to these places.

8. Recent sluggish economic growth requires that the county strengthen its competitive advantages in the global economy.

While assets like the federal government and a strong life sciences industry have helped the county build a solid economic foundation, those dynamics are changing. The total number of jobs (including federal, state, and local government; and the private sector) in the county grew by 5% between 2004 to 2019. However, 20 similarly sized counties across the country (defined as those ranking closest to Montgomery County in total number of jobs in 2004) grew their employment base by an average of 21% during the same period.
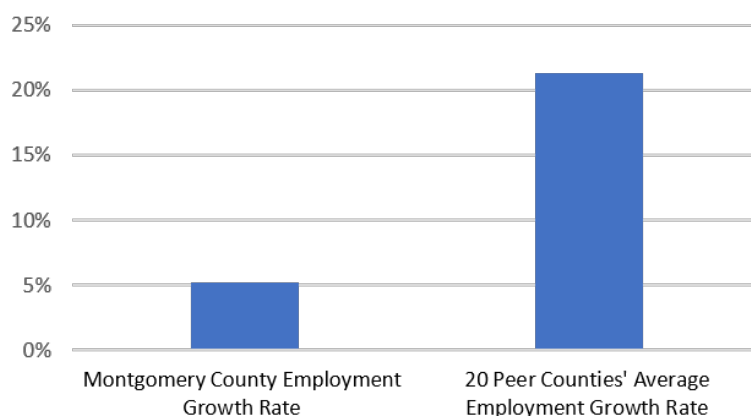
Figure 11: Montgomery County's job growth rate compared to similarly sized counties

Another related trend affecting the local and the national economy is wage stagnation. Locally, only two industry groups—education, health, and social services; and professional, scientific and management services—experienced growth in wages (2% annually between 1990 and 2016). As a result, the county's median household income has not kept pace with the rising living expenses. In 2018, the county's median household income was $108,188, far less than its peak of $111,492 (inflation-adjusted 2018 dollars) in 2007.

9. We need to stop planning for cars and emphasize transit, walking and biking.

Washington metro area drivers spend 102 hours each year in traffic delays, the third-highest amount in the nation. In Montgomery County, peak period congestion is increasing as majority of county residents (65% in 2016) commute by driving alone since most of the jobs in the county and the region are not transit accessible. The average commute time has been steadily increasing and currently stands at 35 minutes in 2016 (Issues Report).

Social and lifestyle preferences are also demanding a different kind of living environment, one that requires spending less time in congested traffic. For example, demand for owner-occupied units continues to strongly favor detached homes; homes that are closer to the urban ring and walkable to community amenities; and homes with strong transportation connectivity. Demand for rental units also strongly favors urban locations with strong public transit connectivity. Research by Montgomery Planning indicates that demand for smaller and more flexible mixed-use office space located within walking distance of public transit, retail, and other amenities is on the rise. (Trends Report)

> Only 40% of federal government jobs and 30% of private sector jobs are within a half mile of a MARC or Metro station.
>
> Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Q2 2018.

As the county is running out of vacant land to support a low-density sprawl, our car-oriented transportation network is not designed to support a competitive economy in compact and Complete Communities with 15-minute living nor address the needs of households who cannot afford or do not want to own a car. The current pattern will continue to increase our transportation related greenhouse gas emissions and other impacts to sustainability.

10. We need to look for regional solutions.

Montgomery County is part of the Washington metropolitan region, home to the capital of the United States and one of the largest regional economies in the nation. The region ranks fifth among metropolitan statistical areas (MSA) in gross domestic product (GDP), accounting for 3% of the total U.S. metropolitan GDP. Although the county is not officially considered part of the Baltimore MSA, we have strong ties to the Baltimore region. We must consider how to take advantage of our proximity to the economic opportunities available in neighboring jurisdictions, including major job centers, colleges and universities, and cultural and recreational attractions. We also should consider regional solutions to the challenges we face and think of Montgomery County as part of a larger ecosystem.

11. Declining trends in public health and well-being indicate a growing need for a healthier more active lifestyle.

Economic factors and the physical environment greatly influence the length and quality of life. In 2018, 61.3% of adults in Montgomery County were overweight or obese. Analysis of data by zip code in Montgomery County shows that five of seven zip codes with incomes in the lowest quartile also have the lowest average life spans. Although low-income residents are more likely to suffer from negative health outcomes for several reasons, all residents can benefit from a more active lifestyle supported by a renewed emphasis on transit, walking, and biking in compact Complete Communities with easier access to parks and open spaces.

Figure 12: People living in walkable communities are more likely to have an active lifestyle.

12. Climate change threatens all aspects of life.

Climate change caused by greenhouse gas emissions has emerged as a major issue in the last few decades. It threatens human and environmental health. Impacts of climate change will imperil food systems, property, and infrastructure, access to public health and emergency services, with ripple effects hampering commerce, and imposing extra costs on businesses and residents. Disadvantaged communities and vulnerable populations are disproportionately harmed by these impacts. We will need significant investments in upgrading our infrastructure to withstand the threats of extreme weather and other disruptions. These improvements will put extra burden on the county's financial resources.

Figure 13: Storm damage in a residential neighborhood

COVID-19 and the context for change

The global coronavirus pandemic has caused a radical shift in the life and work of communities nationwide. While the full impact of this crisis is not yet known, it is certain that it will be a factor in how Montgomery County evolves in the future. COVID-19 could have lasting impacts on how we interact with one another, how we do business and much more. This crisis underscores the importance of an updated General Plan as it highlights how unpredictable the future is. It has forced

us to adapt, even if temporarily, to new realities unthinkable a short time ago. For example, before the coronavirus crisis, only about 6% to 7% of the workforce worked remotely full-time. What if in the post-COVID-19 era the share of people working remotely goes up 20% or 30% or more? What kind of impact will it have on traffic congestion? How much will greenhouse gas emissions decline? It may be unthinkable today, but COVID-19 has demonstrated that this kind of change is not only possible but quite feasible. Since it is futile to predict the future, we need to be flexible and nimble and try to influence the outcomes in our favor.

The COVID-19 crisis, still unfolding, places new emphasis on two concepts that Thrive Montgomery 2050 has included from the beginning: equity and resilience. Related to equity, the pandemic exacerbates social and economic disparities that existed prior to the crisis. The concept of resilience, while frequently used in the environmental context as a response to climate change, is also about developing policies that help communities withstand economic and social challenges.

Planning for an Equitable and Just Future

Montgomery County is highly diverse. However, the county's neighborhoods do not reflect its overall racial and ethnic diversity. Access to resources varies dramatically by geography, socioeconomic status, race, and ethnicity. The causes of socioeconomic disparities between predominantly white communities and communities of color are varied and complex. They include the legacy of slavery, the failings of the criminal justice system, inequities of access to educational resources and economic opportunities, barriers to full participation in the government decision-making process, federal immigration policies, xenophobia, and many other factors deeply embedded in our society and governance system. Inequities also stem from past and present discriminatory land use and planning-related practices, such as racial segregation through redlining[2] and racial covenants, destruction of African American communities through urban renewal and suburban development, and exclusionary zoning.

History of racial equity and social justice in Montgomery County

After the Civil War, African Americans suffered from all forms of discrimination (social, housing, education, employment, commerce, health, etc.). The resulting alienation led to the creation of self-reliant kinship communities in many parts of Montgomery County in the late 19th century. A significant part of the history of racial injustice and discrimination suffered by African Americans includes the formation and subsequent decline (in some cases, destruction) of kinship communities in the early 20th century. Historical records suggest that there were close to 40 communities settled in the 19th century by freed enslaved persons

Figure 14: Scotland School building in 1942. It was demolished in 1968 to make way for a townhouse development.

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[2] Redlining refers to discriminatory real estate practices to prevent African American and other racial groups from obtaining mortgage loans in certain neighborhoods. In 1935, the Federal Home Loan Bank Board (FHLBB) asked the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) to look at 239 cities and create "residential security maps" to indicate the level of security for real estate investments in each surveyed city. On the maps, the newest areas—those considered desirable for lending purposes—were outlined in green and known as "Type A." These were typically affluent suburbs on the outskirts of cities. "Type B" neighborhoods, outlined in blue, were considered "Still Desirable," whereas older "Type C" were labeled "Declining" and outlined in yellow. "Type D" neighborhoods were outlined in red and were considered the riskiest for mortgage support. These neighborhoods tended to be the older districts in the center of cities; often they were also African American neighborhoods. Urban planning historians theorize that the maps were used by private and public entities for years afterward to deny loans to people in African American communities.

in Montgomery County. The largest was in Sandy Spring after the Sandy Spring Quakers freed their enslaved persons and gave them land for a church in 1822.

Over time, these communities suffered from lack of public investment in infrastructure such as new roads, sewer and water, schools, health clinics, and other public amenities and services needed to be viable places to live. Some communities suffered the devastating impacts of urban renewal[3] policies of the 1960s. Others faced pressure to sell their houses or farms to developers for housing subdivisions. These communities declined because of an accumulation of racially-motivated actions paired with social, political, and economic circumstances. The very few of these communities that survived in some way include Ken-Gar in Kensington, Lyttonsville in Silver Spring, River Road in Bethesda, Scotland in Potomac, Stewartown in Gaithersburg, and Tobytown in Travilah.
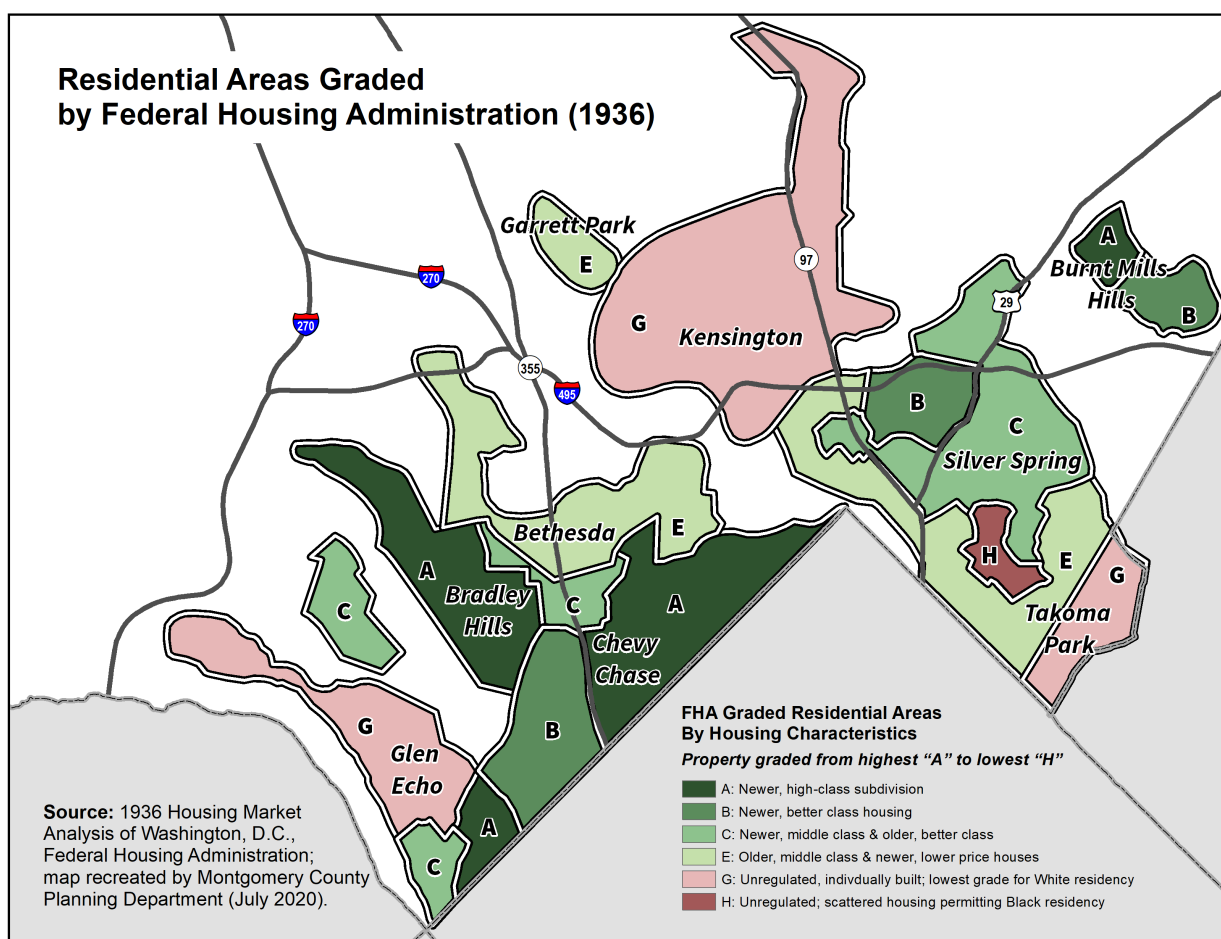
Figure 15: A recreated 1936 map showing "Approximate Location of Outstanding Commitments of the Federal Housing Administration" in Montgomery County.

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[3] Title I of the 1949 Housing Act: the Urban Renewal Program, was a Federal funding initiative intended to produce affordable housing through "slum clearance" and revitalization of inner city neighborhoods. It ended up negatively impacting and displacing low-income African American communities in the 1950s and 1960s.

Racial and social injustice in the 20th century

From the 1890s to the 1920s, the first suburban subdivisions in Silver Spring and Chevy Chase used racial covenants prohibiting African Americans and other racial and religious groups from purchasing land or homes. Well into the mid-20th century, these types of covenants were placed in the land records. Even after the passage of the Fair Housing Act of 1968 and the Community Reinvestment Act of 1977 to end these practices, a development pattern of segregation continued. Injustices were evident in unfair banking and lending practices; federal immigration policies; unequal public investment in schools, parks and other public facilities; and siting a disproportionately high number of undesirable uses, such as landfills, near communities of color.

> "…despite high school completion rates of 70-98% and 73-78% employment rate among all groups, Blacks and Latinos were more than twice as likely as Whites to be unemployed and have household incomes below poverty level. Blacks and Latinos were also 33-41% less likely to own their homes and Black and Latino children were 6-7 times more likely to live in poverty."
>
> Montgomery County Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) report 2018-18, *Racial Equity in Government Decision-Making: Lessons from the Field*

In Montgomery County, the legacy of such discriminatory policies and the exclusionary zoning and other land use controls led to neighborhoods defined by income, race, and housing types. As a result of these practices and other societal factors, a significant quality of life gaps exist for various racial and ethnic groups in the county. A Montgomery County Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) Report 2019-14, *MCPS Performance and Opportunity Gaps[4]*, states that "among MCPS' elementary schools in FY19, three-quarters of Black, Latinx, and English learning students, and more than 80% of all low
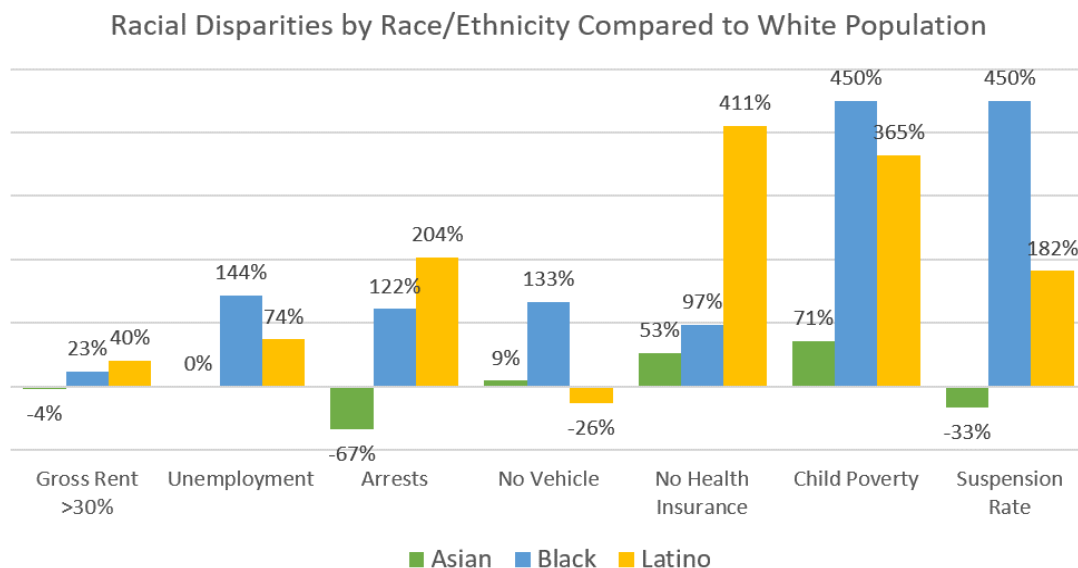
Figure 16: Racial disparities by race/ethnicity compared to white population
Source: OLO Report 2019-07: Racial equity Profile Montgomery County

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[4] https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OLO/Resources/Files/2019%20Reports/OLOReport2019-14.pdf

income students were enrolled in high-poverty focus schools.[5] In contrast, more than two-thirds of all white, Asian, and multi-racial students were enrolled in low-poverty non-focus schools. The consensus among researchers is that higher-poverty schools tend to yield lower levels of academic performance, especially among students of color and low-income students."

These quality-of-life indicators are closely related to the location of different communities around the counties. Many predominantly white census tracts on the west side of the county are more accessible to jobs, transit, and other amenities. In contrast, many census tracts that predominantly include people of color are concentrated on the east side of the county, which has inadequate transit and fewer jobs. This pattern of separation continues to constrain the county's racial and ethnic minority populations from opportunities to achieve the same economic, educational, health, and other benefits as the county's white population. Communities of color continue to face barriers to full participation in government decision-making processes that favor mostly white and more affluent communities. Barriers include a lack of resources and access to political power, design, and methods of public engagement, language and cultural differences, and mistrust of the government, among others. The geographic separation also keeps people of different ethnic, racial, and economic backgrounds from interacting with each other as neighbors on a daily basis outside of work.

Figure 17: Income below 50,000 and above $100,000 by race/ethnicity

Source: 2016 American Community Survey, 1-year estimate, U.S. Census Bureau.

Equity in Thrive Montgomery 2050

The legacy of fighting for civil rights for African American residents teaches us the importance of equity in planning for marginalized communities. As the residents of Montgomery County become increasingly more diverse, providing equity-related recommendations improves planning, decision making, and resource allocation for everyone, but especially those that have been historically disenfranchised. Thrive Montgomery 2050 intentionally strives to create racially integrated and just communities. As one of Thrive Montgomery 2050's three main outcomes (the other two are Economic Health and Environmental Resilience), Equity is interwoven throughout this Plan. Policies that specifically support racial equity and social justice include:

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[5] A school is considered a focus school when its student population does not meet the level of poverty that would qualify for Title I designation, but does have a higher level of poverty than a majority of the schools in MCPS.
https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/budget/FY2009/questionPDFs/question34.pdf

- creating more affordable housing in amenity-rich areas;
- ensuring existing and new communities of color receive an equitable share of services and investments;
- promoting the equitable distribution of prosperity throughout the county;
- addressing health disparities and narrowing the gap in health outcomes; and
- implementing a shared-power approach to ensure previously marginalized residents have a voice and influence in planning and decision-making processes.

Based on the historical and statistical data mentioned in the preceding pages, these planning policies seek to close disparity gaps related to quality of life and access to better opportunities. While equity is the desired outcome, the way to get there is to prioritize marginalized populations until equity is achieved.
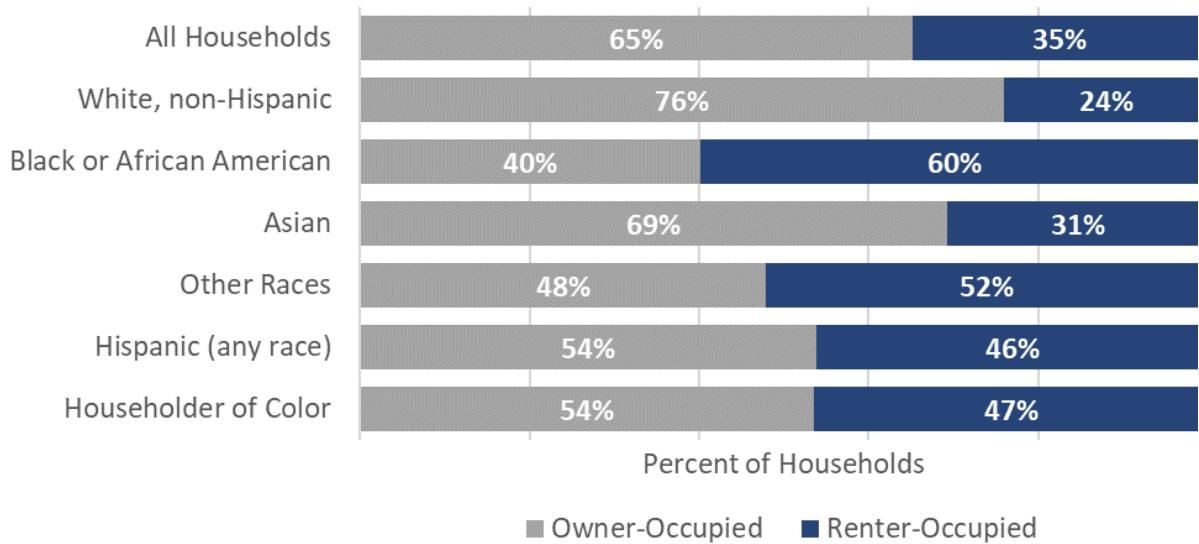
Source: 2018 American Community Survey, 1-year estimates, U.S. Census Bureau.

Figure 18: Homeownership rate by householder's race and ethnicity (2018)

A PLAN
TO THRIVE

RATIONALE AND CONTEXT

Montgomery County's planning framework, based on the 1964 Wedges and Corridors concept, and refined through subsequent forward-thinking plans and initiatives, has served the county well. We cannot continue to follow an outmoded auto-oriented model of growth if we want to be resilient, sustainable and equitable in the future. Like many other places in the country, we are facing new and different issues and trends affecting our future:

- Weak wage and job growth due to economic disruptions, regional competition and higher living costs;
- Persistent racial and economic inequities;
- Significant demographic shifts resulting in increasing diversity, smaller family size and an aging population;
- Social changes related to an increase in social isolation, and lifestyle changes; and
- Dramatic shifts from technological innovation and climate change.

As the Issues Report and the "Trends and Challenges" section in this Plan demonstrate, these issues are interconnected and overlap in many ways. Continued weak economic growth will severely constrain our ability to address all the other issues identified in this Plan as most of them require new and increased investments in our infrastructure and public services. A weak economic growth or an economic recovery that will not equally benefit all segments of our population will further divide and segregate our society, further concentrating poverty in certain parts of the county.

These may not be new issues, but what is new or different is their context and setting—physical, demographic, social, technological, economic and environmental. Some of these issues have been reinforced, or even created, by our past public and private plans and actions. Therefore, we need to update our approach and tools to deal with them.

For example, we must produce different kinds of housing because our household sizes are smaller and our cultural and lifestyle preferences have evolved. We need to reexamine how we plan for retail and other services, as digital commerce is making it difficult for many local and independent retailers to survive. We do not have the land available for more suburban subdivisions, so we need to change how we design our communities and transportation network to accommodate new growth. Even if we had more land to expand, the current pattern of development is undesirable as it affects our quality of life and degrade the natural environment. Continuing to rely on motor vehicles as the predominant mode of travel will increase our vehicle miles traveled, which means more greenhouse gas emissions, greater cost of public services, decreased access to services and social interaction for seniors and the poor, and more time spent sitting in traffic. On the housing side, the current pace of slow housing production and rising costs will make the housing affordability crisis worse, and make it harder to attract talented workers, entrepreneurs, and employers.

The major planning and land use challenge today is not the amount of available development capacity based on the technical details of zoning and other controls—there is enough theoretical capacity to accommodate the projected growth—but whether it is the right kind of growth in the right place and whether we have the appropriate mechanisms and tools to make it happen in ways that will

help our communities thrive while minimizing the negative externalities associated with the development of land.

Thrive Montgomery 2050 is proposing certain foundational elements that make places resilient and sustainable and have proven remarkably consistent over time. They are urbanism and Complete Communities, compact development, and transit and walkability. The Plan relies on these elements to establish a framework for the next generation of our county's development. The goal is to create Complete Communities that are diverse and can provide most essential services within a 15-minute walk, bike ride, or drive. The Plan calls it 15-minute living.

The idea of Complete Communities with 15-minute living is the land use answer to many of the issues we are facing today including the racial and economic segregation of our communities, housing affordability, and increased greenhouse gas emissions from vehicle miles traveled. Most critically, our neighborhoods must reflect our diversity in demographics and ethnic makeup; range of incomes; and adequate public and private services and amenities.

Urbanism and Complete Communities

This plan uses the term "urbanism" as shorthand for a set of ideas that shape places where people gather to conduct commerce, have social interaction, and engage in intellectual and cultural pursuits while minimizing or mitigating negative externalities (such as environmental impacts). It focuses on the idea of what brings people together regardless the size of the settlement—urban, suburban, or rural. It encompasses the three fundamental aspects that are essential for creating great places and thriving communities:

- a compact form of development;
- diverse uses and building types; and
- transportation networks that leverage and complement places that have these two attributes.

A compact form of development is the opposite of sprawl—it uses the idea of a village or a town center with places of commerce and gathering as the center of a community. The compact form of development places buildings close together. It encourages diverse uses such as retail, housing, office, open space, and other amenities located near each other as well as having diversity within each type of use. It also means emphasizing the design of buildings and streets to encourage walking, biking, and transit instead of car. Whether in urban, suburban or rural settings, the density and scale of compact development can vary to reflect the desired community character.

Figure 19: Elements of Complete Communities: compact form, diverse uses and building types and transportation.

When designed appropriately, compact development provides several advantages over suburban sprawl including efficient land use, more natural areas for recreation and preservation, reduced automobile travel, increased walking and biking, and reduced expense for building and maintaining infrastructure. For example, reduced auto travel combined with a compact form of development and a mix of uses and housing types will help cut greenhouse gas emissions and reduce stormwater runoff. Housing of varying sizes and types affordable to a range of incomes within the same area will ensure that people of diverse income levels can live and work in the same community. In turn, this balance produces more racially and socioeconomically integrated neighborhoods and schools.
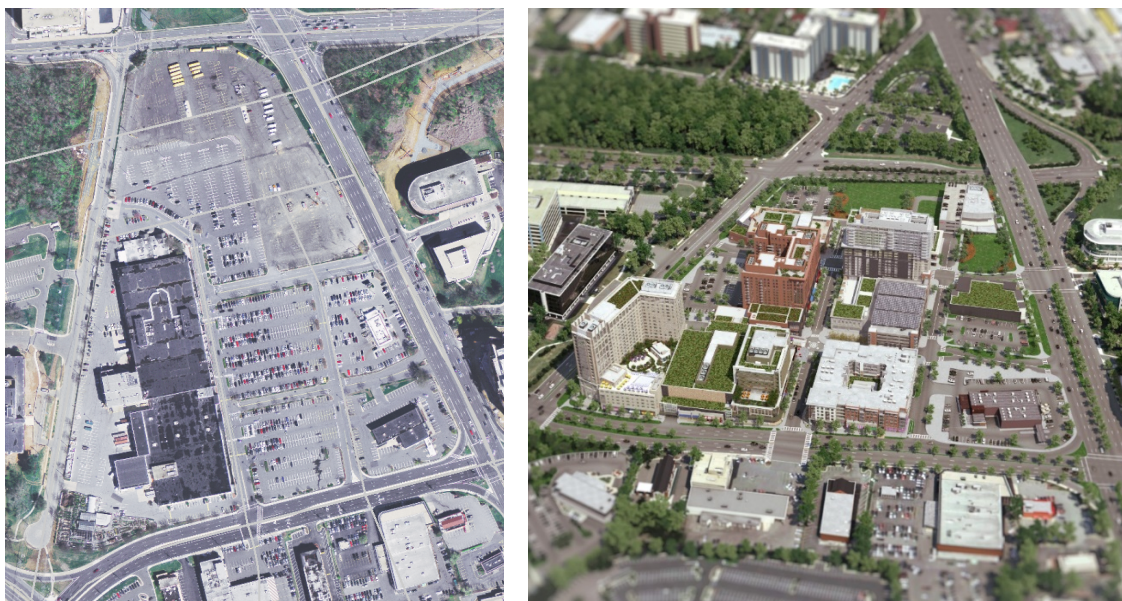
Figure 20: Pike & Rose in White Flint, before and after redevelopment

The redevelopment of the 8.78-acre shopping center site with housing, shops, offices and open spaces reduced its stormwater runoff by 77%.

Applying the idea of urbanism to growth in Montgomery County means focusing growth in fewer locations rather than dispersing it, i.e., avoiding sprawl. This approach maintains what has made Montgomery County attractive while building on these qualities and correcting past errors of auto-centric planning and its damaging effects on the environment, racial equity, and social cohesion.

Transportation network to complement Complete Communities

Transit and land use are two sides of the same coin. We cannot solve our traffic problems without first addressing land use; and an adequate transportation network must support land use. While Complete Communities are the Plan's proposal to refine the county's land use, moving away from an automobile dominated transportation network to transit and walkability, as the preferred mode of travel is the transportation side of that equation. By focusing on moving more people in a safe and efficient manner, we can meet our future travel needs, provide equitable access to jobs and other

destinations for low-income communities, and reduce our vehicle miles traveled to achieve our greenhouse gas emission reduction goals.

The concept of non-auto travel must be achieved at all scales—local, county-wide, and regional. Regional planning entities such as Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) and the Regional Transportation Board are working on improving the regional transit network. Great regional transit must be linked to equally efficient local transit with high ridership. If most people have to drive to the metro station or a bus stop to access transit, transit benefits are diminished (see first mile/last mile problem discussion in "Focus on Transit and Walkability" in the Safe and Efficient Travel chapter). Therefore, priority should be given to placing jobs, schools, and retail within walking distance of homes. Since it is not practical for everyone to live near their job, the next priority is making jobs and homes accessible by convenient and reliable transit. Complete Communities with 15-minute living depend on integration of the various pieces of this puzzle.
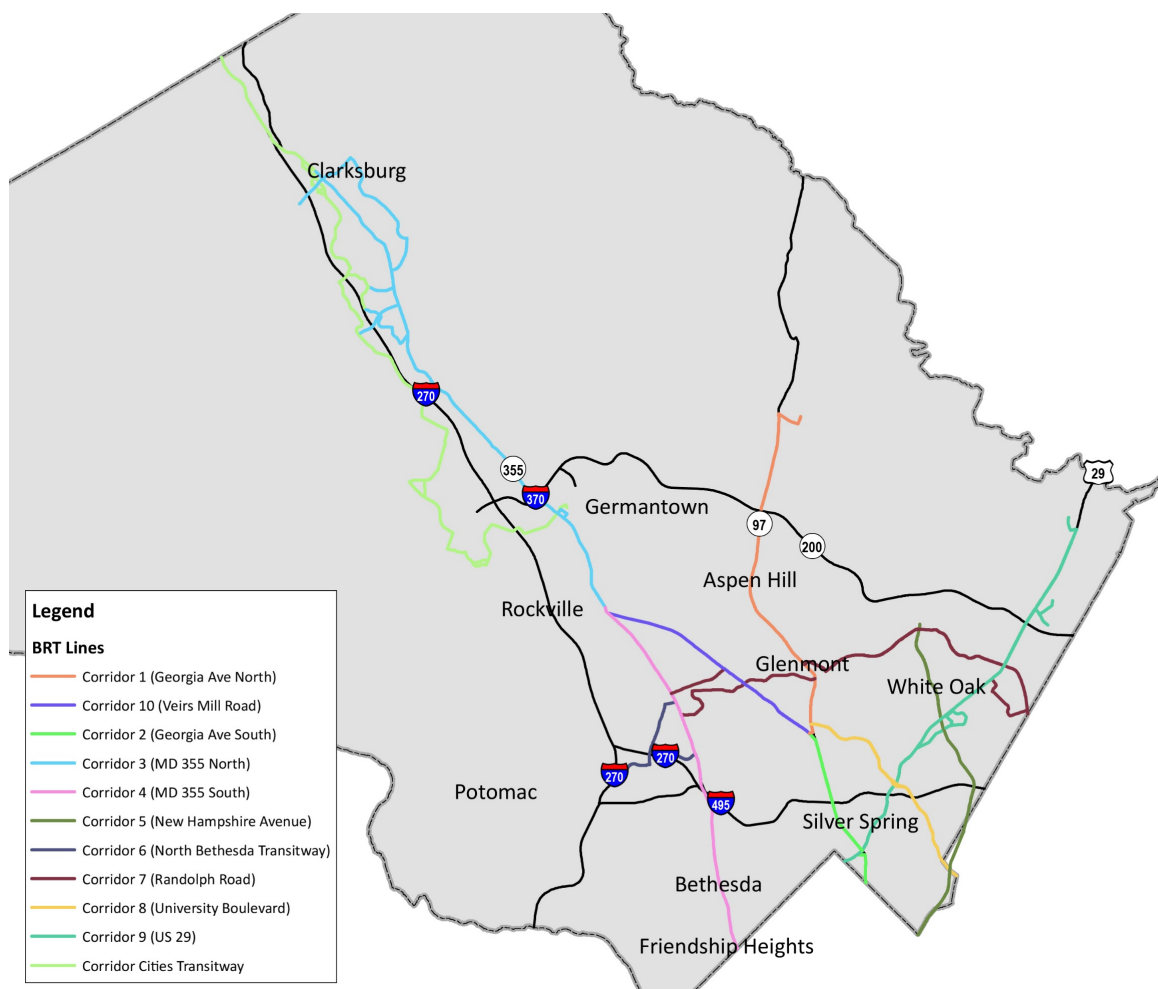
Figure 21: Map of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system

THREE OVERARCHING OUTCOMES

Thrive Montgomery 2050 will guide policy and investment decisions for decades. Three broad outcomes form a strategic framework for this Plan and represent the county that Thrive Montgomery 2050 will help to achieve. Trends, such as demographic shifts, economic forces, technological innovations, and climate change will impact these outcomes.

Economic Health: Our quality of life depends on the ability to attract and retain employers and the employees they need. We want a diverse, resilient and competitive economy supported by attracting major employers, enhancing our federal campuses, encouraging small businesses and innovation, and attracting and retaining a high quality, diverse workforce. A strong economy is essential to providing financial support for rebuilding our infrastructure, delivering services needed for an aging and diverse population, and addressing the issues of inequality and the threats of climate change.

Equity: We want Montgomery County to be a place where all residents have equal access to attainable housing, healthy foods, employment, transportation, education, and more. Racial and ethnic diversity has outpaced the county's overall population growth since the 1990s with the share of people of color projected to reach 73% in 2045. We must embrace our increasing racial and ethnic diversity as a social and economic strength and ensure that we do not become separated into our safe ethnic enclaves and avoid contact with "others".

Environmental Resilience: We will use the best strategies to fight climate change, and other unexpected events, and continue to preserve our natural resources. Climate change threatens both humans and environmental resources. Impacts of climate change imperil food systems, property and infrastructure with ripple effects hampering commerce and imposing extra costs on businesses and residents, as well as loss of species and disruption of natural ecosystems. Disadvantaged communities are disproportionately harmed by these impacts.

MAJOR THEMES

A number of critical themes emerged from our community conversations, research and analysis about the change needed for Montgomery County to thrive into the future. These themes form the basis for Thrive Montgomery 2050 recommendations.

Complete Communities through compact form of development and urbanism

A compact form of development and urbanism is essential for creating Complete Communities. A mix of lot sizes and building types will create more housing choices for varied income levels and household compositions, creating more socioeconomic and racial diversity at the neighborhood level. More compact development will encourage transit, walking and biking as the predominant modes of travel and will enhance efforts for active lifestyles and social connectedness. Compact form of development—coupled with reduced auto travel, green roofs and other stormwater management techniques and continued conservation of the Agricultural Reserve —will help achieve environmental sustainability and resilience.

Present

Future

Figure 22: Complete Communities along major transit corridors can provide a variety of housing options and provide multiple travel choices to connect with local and regional destinations.

Corridors are the place for new growth

Concentrating all new growth along existing and planned rail and bus rapid transit (BRT) corridors will facilitate the transformation of these unsafe traffic arteries into safe and attractive connectors of neighborhoods with a mix of uses and a variety of residential and commercial building types. This additional density will require change in existing single-family neighborhoods through the introduction of "missing middle" housing, such as duplexes, triplexes, townhouses, live-work units and small multi-family structures in areas where a moderate degree of intensification is appropriate. It will also supply more neighborhood services to those single-family neighborhoods and will provide the density needed to allow for the expansion of transit options. Equally useful as opportunities for connection, we must enhance and connect the growth corridors with trails in the stream valley corridors at their intersections to expand active transportation options via walking and cycling.
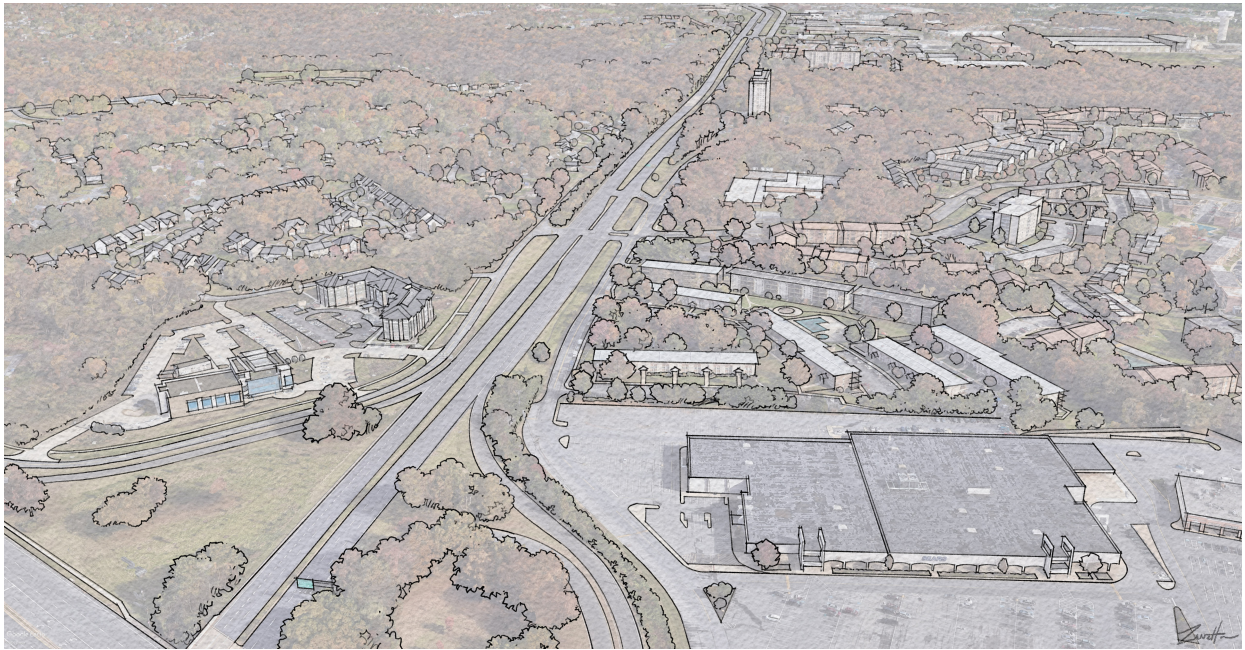
Colesville Road (Route 29) looking east from its intersection with New Hampshire Avenue—today

Colesville Road (Route 29) looking east from its intersection with New Hampshire Avenue —possible future
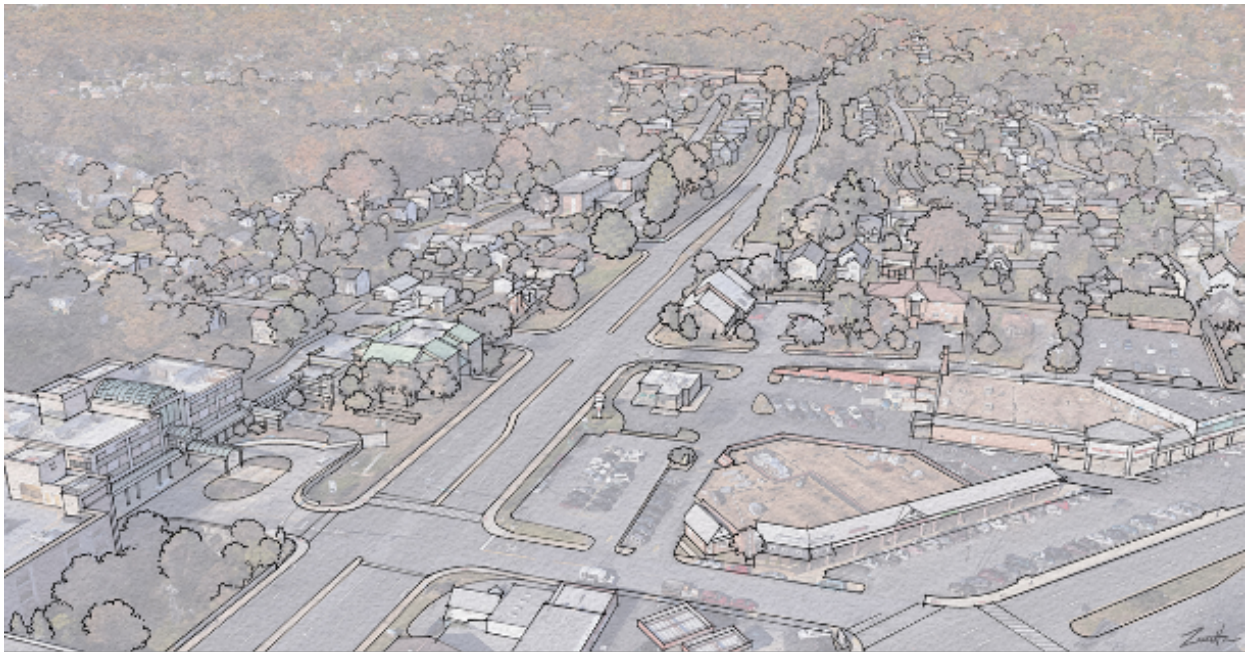
Connecticut Avenue looking east from Perry Avenue and University Boulevard—today

Connecticut Avenue looking east from Perry Avenue and University Boulevard—possible future
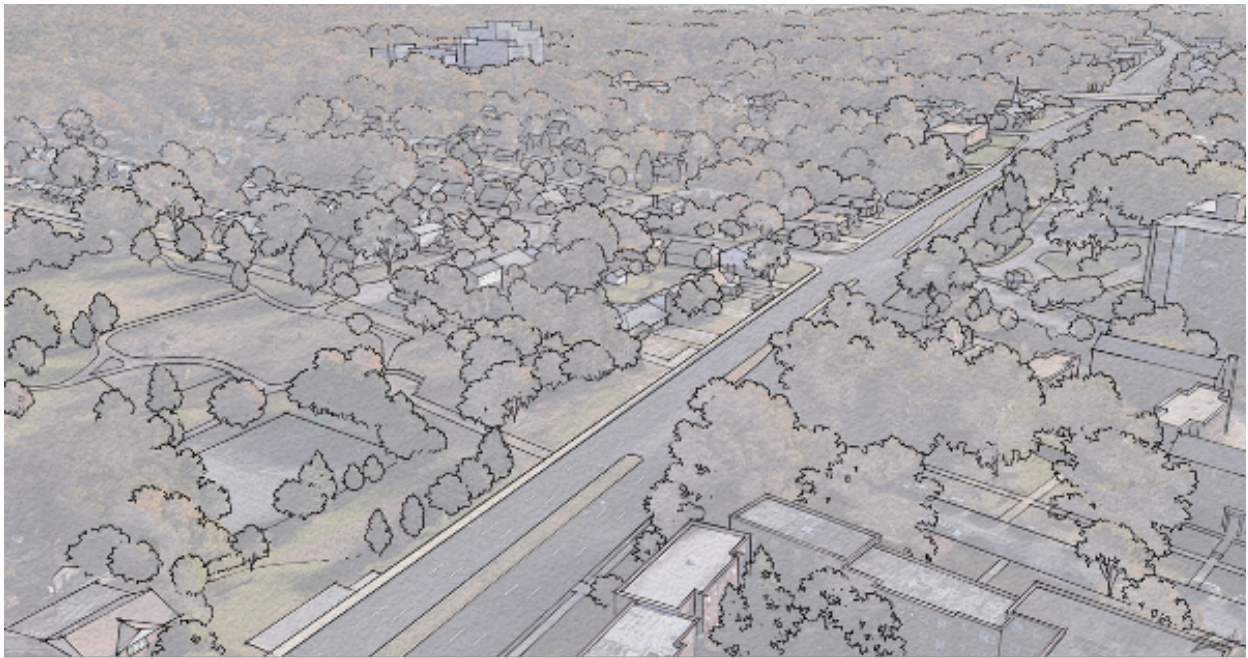
Georgia Avenue looking south from Evans Parkway Neighborhood Park—today
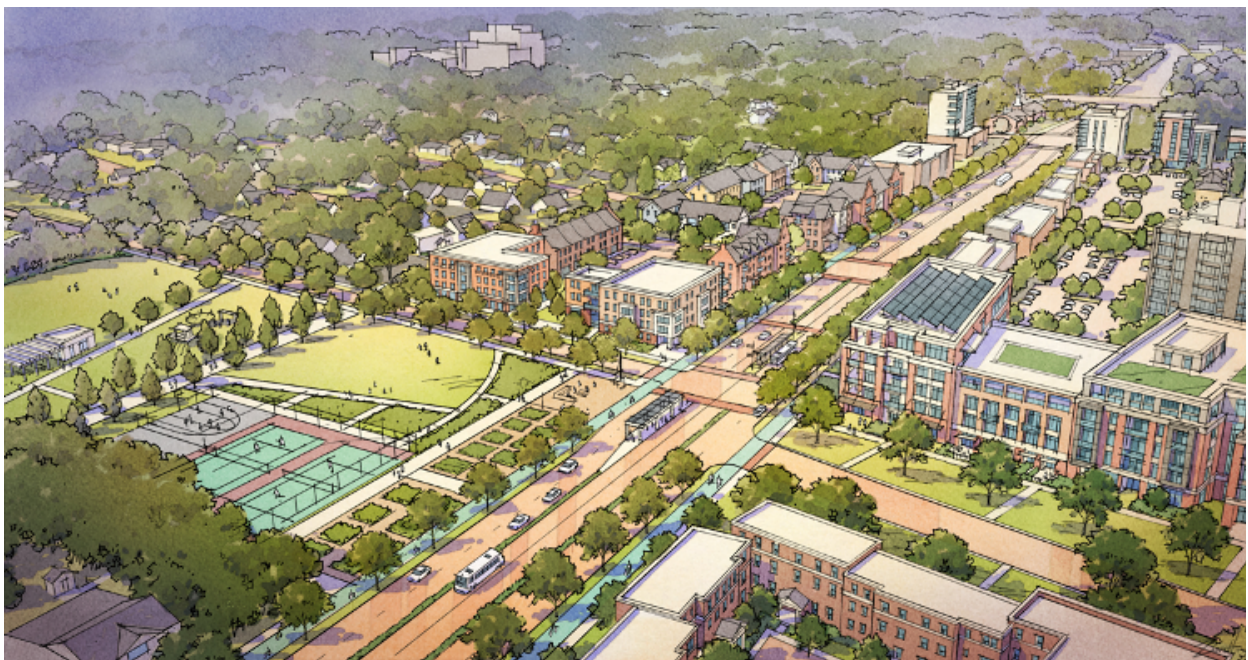
Georgia Avenue looking south from Evans Parkway Neighborhood Park— possible future

Start planning for people instead of planning for cars

Transit, walking and biking are key to achieving the Thrive Montgomery 2050 three main outcomes of a strong economy, equity and environmental resilience. Montgomery County needs to focus on safely moving people over the convenience of automobiles while prioritizing walking and cycling as both a form of transportation and an opportunity for exercise. This goes hand-in-hand with the idea of Complete Communities and a compact form of development to have more of our destinations nearby, reducing our reliance on automobiles as the main mode of travel. In addition to moving more people with a smaller footprint, transit use also encourages more walking and greater social interaction.

Eradicate greenhouse gas emissions

A broader range of housing types—particularly multi-family buildings with smaller units, shared walls, and proximity to a variety of destinations by bike or on foot will contribute to reduced energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions (GHG). Reducing our vehicle miles traveled by increasing public transit use is the best way to eliminate our transportation-related GHG emissions. In Montgomery County in 2015, transportation accounted for 41% of GHG emissions, after residential and commercial buildings combined at 51%.[6]

What is Thrive Montgomery 2050 proposing regarding single-family zoning?

Montgomery County's communities have diverse housing needs: affordability, the size and type of housing, and proximity to transit. We also have a housing supply gap that will continue into the future. Thrive Montgomery 2050 proposes to increase the production of different types of housing near transit, including in existing single-family zones. This is an important step toward addressing past inequities in housing choice, while also creating more options for affordable and attainable housing. Specifically, Thrive Montgomery 2050 recommends increasing densities along corridors especially those served by transit. These densities should be commensurate with context of the surrounding areas. In some cases, this will involve increasing densities in areas that have been historically characterized by single-family housing and could include duplexes, triplexes and small multi-family buildings.

Attainable housing for all income levels

Housing attainability and affordability is an economic as well as an equity issue. Unless we grow our housing supply to make room for the projected 200,000 new residents moving to the county by 2045, our existing communities will become more expensive, less diverse, and integrated, and it will be difficult to attract and retain a skilled workforce

Montgomery County needs a multi-prong strategy to deal with the housing affordability crisis including ways to increase the supply of all types of housing to put downward pressure on housing prices and rents. A greater variety of housing types such as duplexes, triplexes, and mid-rise multi-family construction is crucial to reduce reliance on a narrowly defined group of housing types such as

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[6] County Greenhouse Gas Inventory, Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection, 2018. https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/green/climate/ghg-inventory.html

single-family, townhouse and high-rise multi-family.

Figure 23: A duplex is a residential structure that has two units.

Evolution of single-family neighborhoods near transit

Single-family neighborhoods near employment centers and transit need to have a greater mix of housing types that provide less expensive options for our growing population and for existing residents, making our communities more affordable and equitable. This will require a comprehensive review of impediments to increasing the housing supply; a will to change current policies when necessary, such as reexamining our zoning and other controls to create a greater mix of housing types in new and existing communities; and an acceptance by all that more housing and new residents are a benefit to the county and the region.

Racial justice and equity

A thriving Montgomery County is a diverse county. Diversity is an asset that adds cultural richness to the county and furthers the county's economic competitiveness, attracting businesses and residents that prefer diverse, inclusive communities. While the county contends with constrained fiscal resources, we must ensure that existing and new communities of color receive an equitable share of services and investments like high-quality education, job training and other opportunities.

Addressing inequity and racial segregation will require a common understanding that we are all connected, and that we share an interest in how we grow in the future. The Plan's equity-related recommendations focus on addressing the land use and development-related factors that cause or exacerbate some of the county's racial and economic disparities and produce social fragmentation and isolation. The recommendations are also designed to improve planning, decision making, and resource allocation to achieve racially integrated and just communities.

Great design and the importance of place

Planning is about creating thriving communities and enhancing great places, both in the public realm and private development. With an emphasis on compact development, well-designed and attractive places are crucial to creating Complete Communities with buildings and open spaces of lasting beauty that are sustainable, foster social engagement, build community, and function effectively to create economic value and a sense of place.

Regional solutions and strategies

Montgomery County is part of two large regions—the Washington, DC, and Baltimore metropolitan areas—but we would benefit from more physical or institutional connections within them.

The DC region ranks fifth among metropolitan statistical areas (MSA) in gross domestic product (GDP), accounting for 3% of the total U.S. metropolitan GDP. Although the county is not officially considered part of the Baltimore MSA, we also have strong ties to the Baltimore region.

Close to 40% of county residents have jobs in some of the major employment centers nearby in Washington, DC; Northern Virginia; and Fort Detrick, Fort Meade, Columbia, Frederick, College Park and Baltimore in Maryland. Issues such as lack of affordable housing, economic competitiveness, transportation, and climate change require regional solutions and strategies. We share these issues with our neighbors throughout the Washington, DC, and Baltimore, MD, metro areas. We must consider regional solutions to all challenges and think of Montgomery County as part of a larger ecosystem.
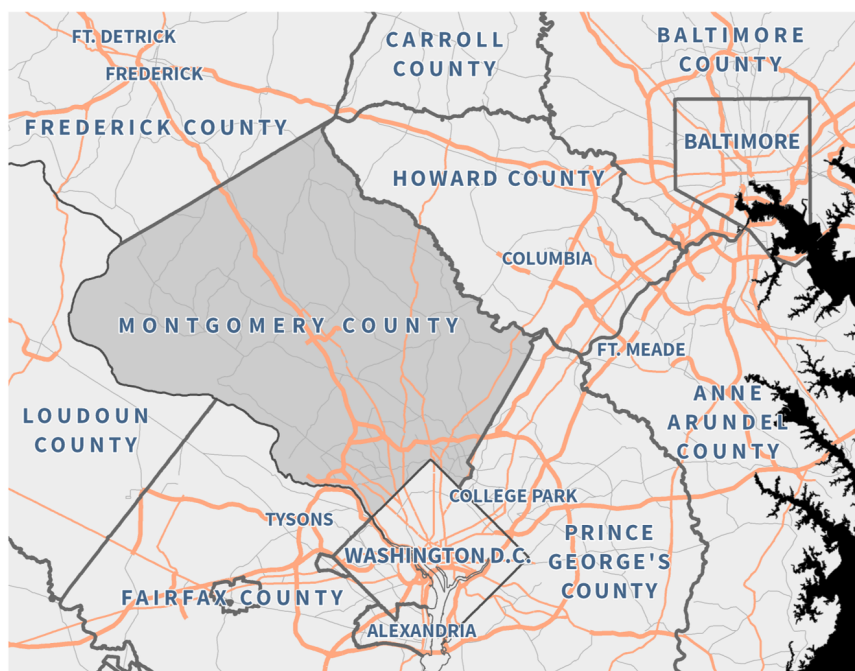
Figure 24: Montgomery County is part of Washington, DC, and Baltimore metropolitan regions.

THE PLAN VISION

Thrive Montgomery 2050 envisions a county that is more urban, more diverse, and more connected, providing a high quality of life for existing residents while also welcoming new residents and new ideas.

Specifically, Montgomery County in 2050 consists of a web of Complete Communities connected by vibrant corridors. Individual and unique centers of neighborhood activity and urban nodes optimize land use with a variety of housing types and price points. Housing is located close to transit, workplaces, needed goods and services, public amenities and active park spaces. Two types of corridors connect these Complete Communities to the rest of the county:

1. multimodal transportation and services; and
2. green parks, stream valleys, and trails.

This pattern of sustainable growth and development creates multiple benefits for Montgomery County and results in a future county that is:

- **Urban.** Much of the county grew in the 21st century with a compact form of development. Some buildings are mid- and high-rise, but a large number of other housing types exist such as duplexes, triplexes, small apartment buildings, and courtyard housing. Most people can live without a car and meet daily needs within a short walk, bike ride or transit trip. Residents have easy access to retail, schools, libraries, community centers, parks, and trails. Various housing types in each neighborhood offer the convenience of aging in place. Compact form of development, coupled with conservation of the Agricultural Reserve, has proven to be better for the environment resulting in improved stream water quality. Community members have easy access to healthy, locally grown food.

- **Affordable.** Access to affordable and attainable housing that aligns with every stage of life is a right, not a luxury. Increased housing density can leads to social, economic and racial integration of neighborhoods in every part of the county. Households have fewer or no cars and reduce their miles driven, thereby cutting expenses and benefiting the environment. Housing closer to workplaces and safe, affordable transit options save time and money and reduce greenhouse gases.

- **Connected.** People have a sense of shared values and a stake in each other's well-being. Residents feel welcome in public places to meet neighbors or spend time with family and friends. More gathering places and connections reduce social isolation and form stronger communities. Less time commuting and traveling for necessities provides more time for connecting with family and community.

- **Active.** County residents enjoy an active, healthy lifestyle. Connecting to the outdoors and their neighbors boosts their physical and mental health. Every resident has walkable access to opportunities for social engagement, physical activity, and quiet contemplation, whether in parks or other public spaces. The county's built and natural resources are designed to encourage

physical activity. Fewer vehicles using clean energy, have resulted in drastically reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

- **Safe.** More options for walking, cycling, and transit reduce the need for a car. Pedestrian lives are prioritized over speed. Neighbors know each other and look out for each other. A mix of populations of different ages, household types cultures, and a mix of uses has contributed to reduced crime and an increased sense of security day and night.

- **Inclusive.** Various housing types at a mix of price points in Complete Communities and along rail and BRT corridors accommodate diverse populations and help achieve equity and integration on a neighborhood scale. Residents have a say in how their neighborhoods look and feel. Planners engage everyone in decision making about the future of their communities.

- **Flexible.** Residents have a variety of choices when selecting their preferred community setting and housing type. The bulk of new residents live in more dense, urban areas. Concentrating new growth in already developed areas makes the best use of the county's available land and infrastructure, and helps to protect the environment. Flexible regulations and zoning controls result in a vibrant mix of residential and commercial uses.

- **Resilient.** Our community embraces the need for flexibility and adaptability to channel change in ways that strengthen us instead of overwhelming us. Our social and political institutions help build consensus around decisions. We combat climate change by creating more dense developments near transit resulting in reduced vehicle miles traveled; expanded use of transit services; and adoption of innovative and cost-effective environmental policies and technologies and conserving the Agricultural Reserve. Our actions reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air and water pollution. The county successfully meets the challenges of and seizes opportunities related to technological advances and cultural and economic shifts. Multimodal transportation options lead to a more resilient transportation system by creating redundancies during disruptions.

- **Competitive.** The county retains and attracts large companies, small businesses, and high quality educational institutions. We embrace the cultural, racial/ethnic, and linguistic diversity of our community as a competitive advantage, particularly in attracting employers recruiting staff who want to live and work in a diverse community. Montgomery County's forward-looking economy offers a variety of stable and well-paying jobs. All residents have the education and economic opportunities to develop skills and obtain work that sustains them and their families.

- **Inspiring.** Emphasis on design, arts, and culture enhance appreciation of the county's diverse residents, workers, and visitors. The county is an exciting and fun place that offers multiple choices for leisure and entertainment. Its vibrant arts and entertainment industry is a major contributor to economic development. Our parks, trails, and open spaces are focal points for community placemaking and cultural identity and allow for a mix of physical activity and contemplative experiences.

This vision respects the original 1964 "Wedges and Corridors" General Plan, with a greater emphasis on a compact form of development and the role of corridors as places to grow. It continues to protect

and honor the Agricultural Reserve—a nationally recognized planning landmark that provides economic and environmental benefits.

This vision of how we should grow over the next 30 years also involves making a series of adjustments and refinements in the way we live, work, relate, and play. It will require changes in the laws and regulations that shape our built environment. We will need to make tradeoffs that may not be easy. Realizing our vision will require a sustained commitment over decades from residents, community groups, businesses, developers, nonprofits, and government. Inaction is not an option.

Figure 25: Lining corridors with appropriate densities provides housing options.
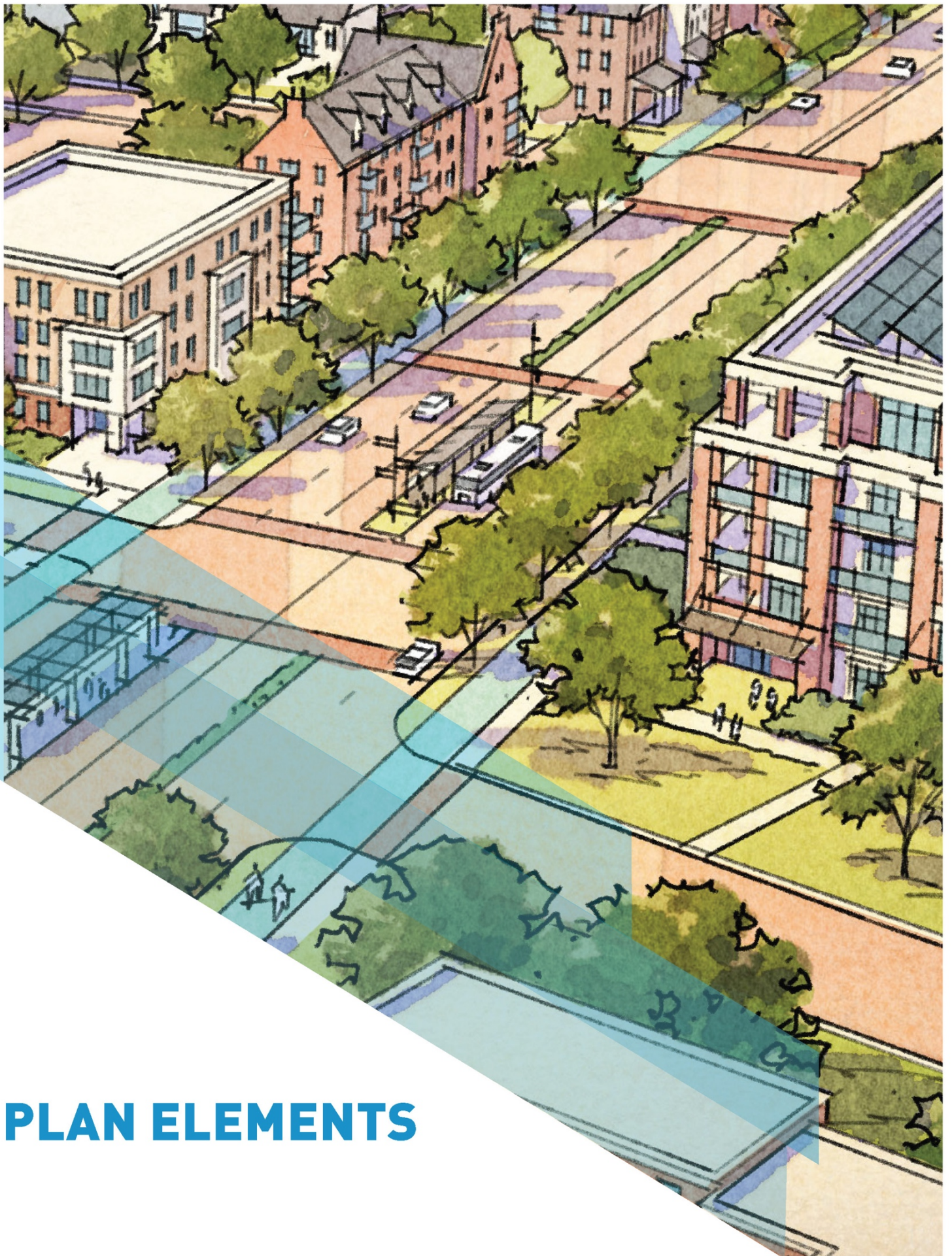
PLAN ELEMENTS

INTRODUCTION

The Plan is organized into eight chapters. Each chapter includes its own set of issues and challenges that are addressed through a set of vision, goals, policies, and actions. The issues are intertwined, impacting each other in complex ways.

1. Complete Communities
2. Connectedness
3. Resilient Economy
4. Safe and Efficient Travel

5. Affordability and Attainability
6. Healthy and Sustainable Environment
7. Diverse and Adaptable Growth
8. Design, Arts, and Culture

The overall vision and goals for each chapter are broad aspirational statements about what Montgomery County wants to accomplish over the next 30 years. Each chapter also includes more detailed policies and actions to achieve these goals.

- The policies are statements of intent and provide ongoing guidance for taking specific actions towards achieving the goals.
- Actions are concrete steps with specific outcomes or products that, individually or in combination with other actions, achieve the goals and policies of the Plan.

Many of these policies and actions will achieve multiple goals as the issues and challenges they address are complex and interrelated.
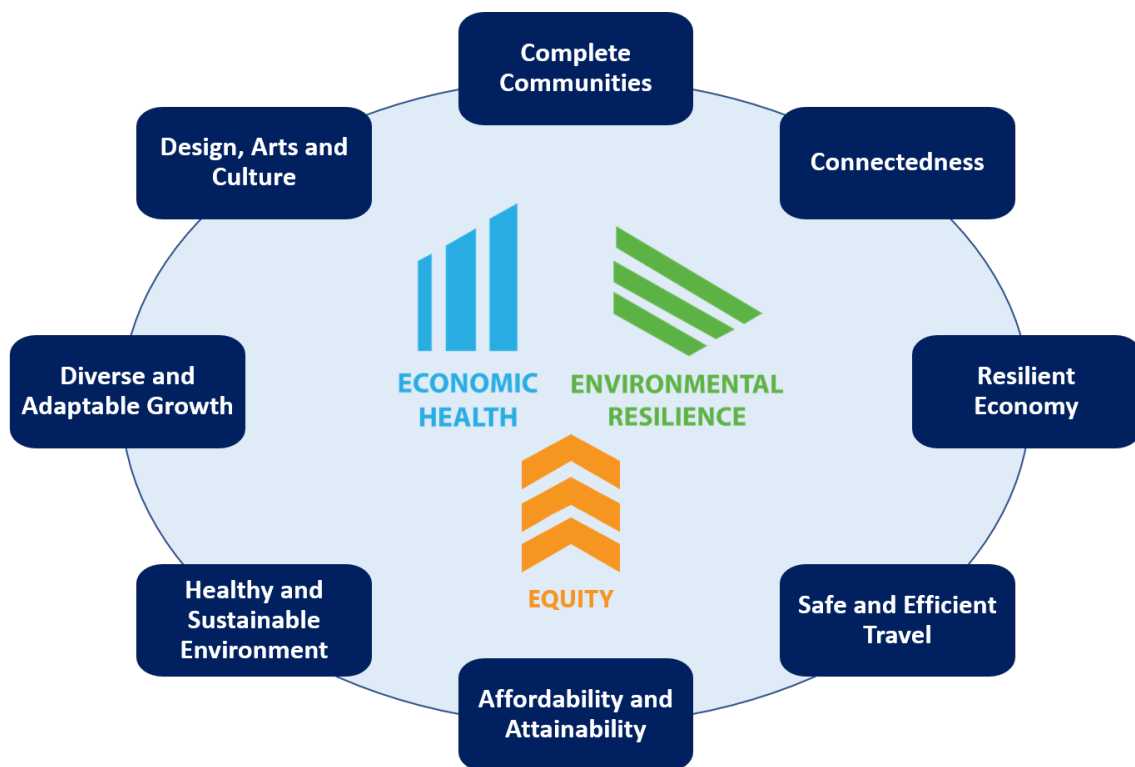
COMPLETE
COMMUNITIES

COMPLETE COMMUNITIES

Issues and Challenges

The county's current development pattern of separation of land uses grew out of the dominance of the automobile as the primary mode of travel. Starting after World War II, separating residential areas from retail, community services, office districts and even parks became a popular planning practice in suburban development.

For many working residents, commutes are long and hard due to jobs being concentrated in certain areas or located outside of the county and the lack of affordable housing near transit. Our cars contribute significantly to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and the roads and parking lots required for car travel pollute our streams and increase flood risk. Our single-family residential neighborhoods, designed to accommodate the car, are frequently not walkable, bikeable or accessible, particularly for people with disabilities.

Our suburban neighborhoods are generally defined by homogenous single-family detached houses and often lack places to walk or bike, such as corner stores or services. This is partly the result of county zoning and subdivision regulations and partly due to the restrictive covenants and other discriminatory practices of the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth century. While single-family detached homes, townhouses, garden apartments, or mid-to-high-rise apartments all exist in the county, they rarely coexist. Zoning techniques like minimum lot size requirements in single-family neighborhoods created uniform housing, which resulted in neighborhoods defined primarily by income.

The lack of housing diversity by type and size is a significant challenge in our county today. While Montgomery County is among the most diverse counties nationwide, the overall racial and ethnic diversity of the county is not reflected at the neighborhood level in many parts of the county. Access to better-paying jobs, high quality housing and education, healthy foods, parks, recreation and open spaces, and high quality healthcare and other vital services also varies dramatically by geography and demographics.

The lack of housing diversity by unit type and size is also a significant burden for the county's older adults. Most would continue to live in the same neighborhood where they raised their families if there were options to downsize. However, the current pattern of development forces them to continue to stay in larger houses they don't need or move to locations away from their families and social support network.

Decades of planning, zoning, and market preferences for suburban living had profound effects on the county. Today there are few remaining vacant properties to accommodate new growth. Approximately 85% of the county's land area is constrained by existing development, environmental constraints and other factors, leaving only 15% of land available to accommodate growth (see Issues Report for details). The growth must shift from the car-oriented and car-dependent patterns of the past several decades to patterns that are compact, mixed-use, and multimodal and reflect the urban, suburban, and rural context within the county.

Vision for Complete Communities

By 2050, Montgomery County is no longer developed around automobile usage. Instead, the county is made up of a series of people-focused Complete Communities, each designed to reflect their urban, suburban, or rural context. While Complete Communities in urban centers look and feel different from those in suburban neighborhoods or rural villages, each Complete Community shares defined features that contribute to a high quality of daily life, regardless of location. Complete Communities include a built environment with a mixture of uses; diversity of housing for all ages and abilities; and parks, trails, and open spaces where people from different backgrounds can gather, be active and live healthy lifestyles. Each Complete Community allows safe and comfortable walking, rolling, and biking access to destinations, and integrates nature, arts, and culture into its streets, buildings, and infrastructure. Complete Communities also provide access to food, healthcare, education, and transit. Complete Communities are equitable, anchor a strong economy and function sustainably to mitigate the impacts of climate change. Residents love Complete Communities as places to thrive for generations to come.

Complete Communities Achieve Multiple Goals

The concept of Complete Communities is a critical component of Thrive Montgomery 2050. It permeates all other General Plan themes and establishes the foundation for a more sustainable and equitable future. Complete Communities are characterized by a compact form of development with a variety of uses and housing types affordable to a range of incomes, which is essential to address increasing inequality in our society. The concept also encourages more walking, biking, and transit use to address climate change at the neighborhood level. (See more on the compact form of development in the Diverse and Adaptable Growth chapter). Creating Complete Communities with more people near parks, supermarkets, cafes, schools, libraries or other local services and amenities provides more vibrant and lively places, and also encourages a more active lifestyle, increases social interaction, and reduces our carbon footprint.

Complete Communities will be ethnically, racially, and economically diverse and include a mixture of housing types, uses, amenities, and services accessible by walking, biking, and transit. Complete Communities in urban, suburban, and rural areas will have distinguishing characteristics unique to each community and be based on factors such as the size of the community, proximity to transit, parks and public facilities, variation in physical features such as topography and environmental resources, and the unique history and building form of each neighborhood.

Complete Communities in urban areas will include every element necessary to support daily life within a 15-minute walk, with a mix of uses and high-density commercial and residential development

near Metrorail and Purple Line stations. Complete Communities in suburban areas will be located around and near MARC and bus rapid transit (BRT) stations and will support a mix of uses as well as moderate density housing, including types such as duplexes, triplexes, and low-rise multi-family buildings. Complete Communities in suburban and rural communities will be supported by microtransit and characterized by a variety of uses, amenities, and housing types to meet daily needs.

Currently, many places in the county have elements of Complete Communities. The town of Kensington is an example of a Complete Community in a suburban area. It has a diversity of housing types ranging from single-family to multi-family and senior housing, a diversity of services and amenities including offices, neighborhood serving retail and services, parks and a train station all within walking distance. However, its challenges include unsafe streets for walking and bicycling and expensive housing. Lyttonsville has some elements of a Complete Community, including a shopping center, restaurant, park, and elementary school. The town of Damascus is an example of a rural community, which offers some of the features of a Complete Community.

Since most of the county is already built out, creating Complete Communities means retrofitting our existing neighborhoods to accommodate new uses, housing types, services and amenities, and creating walkable and bikeable connections where none exist today. The implementation of Complete Communities will take time and will require us to reevaluate some of our long-held values, priorities and practices, including preservation and protection of single-family zones regardless of their context and location. We should also consider future opportunities for making our communities complete as circumstances change. Today's market dynamics, for example, do not support corner stores and coffee shops in smaller, off the main road locations. But as more people work remotely, demand for neighborhood coffee shops and even local work sites (such as shared workspaces in more urban locations) that people can access by walking, biking or transit may increase. At the same time, these neighborhood places of gathering could also address the need for interaction and socializing with others.

Goals, Policies and Actions

Goal 1.1: Retrofit existing communities and create new communities where people can meet their daily needs by walking, bicycling, or transit.

Policy 1.1.1: Allow and encourage a variety of uses within communities, with sufficient density to make these uses viable, so that people can experience 15-minute living. Every resident should have the opportunity to live, work, play, exercise, shop, learn, and make use of public amenities and services within a 15-minute walk or bike ride.

Action 1.1.1.a: Initiate a Complete Communities Functional Master Plan to assess neighborhood needs and gaps in the uses/services that would result in a broad array of Complete Communities throughout the county within the urban, suburban, and rural context.

Policy 1.1.2: Initiate master, sector, and corridor plans to analyze and apply Complete Communities on a neighborhood-scale. Identify strategies to increase overall neighborhood diversity and enhance single use areas through land use, transportation, public space,

and urban design improvements. Integrate the natural and built systems that are necessary to achieve Complete Communities.

> Action 1.1.2.a: Review and revise the zoning categories and requirements in the Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance as needed to accommodate a variety of uses and densities within Complete Communities.

Policy 1.1.3: Prioritize walking and bicycling as the highest priority mode of transportation in communities and the most critical infrastructure needs through master plans, future development, and county funding of Capital Improvements Program (CIP) infrastructure projects.

Policy 1.1.4: Create diversity in housing types by allowing residential buildings of various densities and types suitable for their urban, suburban, and rural context for people at every phase of life.

> Action 1.1.4.a: Further the Missing Middle Housing Study by identifying options and implementation strategies to increase the variety and density of housing types in areas zoned for single-family detached and semi-detached housing, particularly in areas located within a 15-minute walk or bike ride of rail and bus rapid transit (BRT).

Policy 1.1.5: Encourage co-location of essential services such as schools, medical clinics, daycare centers, libraries, and recreation centers within communities to make access to public services and amenities more convenient and accessible by walking and bicycling from home.

> Action 1.1.5.a: Implement innovative school design on more compact parcels of land and in adaptively reused buildings to promote walkable schools.

Goal 1.2: Orient communities around convenient social gathering places accessible to neighborhood residents by walking and biking.

Policy 1.2.1: Locate and design public buildings, including parks, libraries, recreation centers, and schools, as places where social gathering is encouraged. Promote walking and biking to gathering places. Ensure that the architecture and the site design are civic in nature and promote social gathering.

> Action 1.2.1.a: Work with relevant county agencies to develop best practices manuals that maximize the public benefits of existing and new public facilities through co-location, redevelopment, consolidation, redistribution, partnerships, and a focus on design excellence.

Policy 1.2.2: Promote design excellence in public buildings through programs like design competitions and priority funding in the CIP budget.

Policy 1.2.3: Preserve and support unique gathering places and sites that enhance neighborhood character and reflect local culture. Acknowledge and physically connect Complete Communities to their past through preservation and placemaking in historic and cultural sites, especially in locations where the past intersects with the experience of historically marginalized communities.

Goal 1.3: Promote active lifestyles by making parks and open spaces a central element of the community.

Policy 1.3.1: Ensure all people in urban and suburban communities have access to parks or public spaces that provide opportunities for vigorous physical activity, social engagement, and quiet contemplation or connections to nature within a comfortable 15-minute walk from their homes.

Policy 1.3.2: Employ the Energized Public Spaces Functional Master Plan to identify opportunities for new parks or open spaces, such as publicly owned land, property acquisition or public-private partnerships to more equitably serve communities with limited access to parks and public spaces.

Goal 1.4: Equitably distribute the benefits of land use planning and public and private investment throughout. Ensure that no community is disadvantaged by a disproportionate share of adverse impacts from future land use decisions and investments.

Policy 1.4.1: Eliminate disproportionate and adverse impacts on communities from land use policies and capital investments.

Action 1.4.1.a: Develop guidance to conduct a racial equity and social justice impact analysis when planning, designing and budgeting for new community facilities such as libraries, recreation centers, schools, parks, and public infrastructure to determine whether the new amenity will be accessible to nearby residents of all backgrounds and will reduce any existing inequities in access.

Policy 1.4.2: Advance racial equity and social justice in master plans, studies, and projects.

Action 1.4.2.a: Develop metrics to monitor implementation of recommendations that advance racial equity and social justice and measure outcomes.

CONNECTEDNESS

CONNECTEDNESS

Issues and Challenges

Humans innately desire connection with other people. Social engagement and participation in community and civic life is critical to our well-being. However, land use patterns; lifestyles and work environments; automobile dependence; isolation caused by poverty, age and linguistic differences; and fewer traditional public gathering spaces all limit our ability to connect with each other. Polarization in today's society—characterized by a lack of trust in government, civic institutions, and other social and ethnic groups; and fear of change—can be linked to how we conceive of "us" and build our communities. According to *Design for Health* by the University of Minnesota, "Studies show that different measures of social capital (e.g., increased levels of trust, political participation, knowing one's neighborhoods, participating in a protest, voting in elections, etc.) are supported by different built environments.[7]

Our sense of connectedness and participation in community life are at all-time lows, as is trust in each other and in government and other institutions. The places where we live, work, connect and play don't always facilitate and encourage social interaction and acceptance of all community members. We are losing our traditional gathering places such as local hardware stores, bookstores, places of worship and other places of social interaction. Even when there are such destinations nearby, they are not easily accessible except by driving. Both the private and the public sectors are moving toward consolidation of private places into larger facilities in fewer locations. This includes retail centers and public facilities like recreation centers, libraries, and other amenities. Cost savings often drive this consolidation but result in reduced opportunities for connectedness. This reinforces the already dispersed development pattern with significantly greater impact on lower-income populations and the elderly who don't own cars or are unable to drive anymore.

If we continue to build as we have in the past, we will separate more along socioeconomic lines. We need to make our neighborhoods more diverse so there is greater daily interaction among people of all backgrounds, incomes, and races/ethnicities. And we need to cultivate a greater understanding of the need for social cohesion as the foundation on which we build respect for diversity.

Additionally, it is not convenient or accessible for everyone to participate in planning processes. Historically, inherently complex development processes have favored those with power and influence. The causes of this disparity are many: decision making that focuses on land acquisition cost without weighing the unseen costs to low-income communities, language barriers, lack of time and access to transportation to attend meetings, distrust of government institutions, and lack of provision for residents with disabilities.

Vision for Connectedness

Montgomery County is a place where every resident feels a sense of shared interests and values as well as a sense of belonging. It is a place where people of all backgrounds, cultures, ages, abilities, incomes, and interests easily cross paths, exchange ideas, and work together to improve their communities. Montgomery County builds on the importance of people, places, and communities by

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[7] Design for Health, Building Social Capital with Comprehensive Planning and Ordinances, University of Minnesota, 2008. http://designforhealth.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/BCBS_SocCap_0408.pdf

strengthening the role of the public sector, in particular through its role in shaping the built environment, in promoting social interactions that increase trust, cooperation, and belonging. Our built environment creates an atmosphere of acceptance of all people. Public spaces are community social centers where residents interact, enjoy each other's company, exchange ideas, and collaborate to improve the community with a strengthened sense of connectedness and social capital. Our communities are safe and inclusive, empowering all residents to fully participate and benefit from living in Montgomery County.

Opportunities to unite the community and build social capital expand beyond land and building design. Montgomery County seeks social, environmental, and racial justice by strengthening relationships that bind our communities together rooted in the values of dignity, civility, mutual respect, and inclusive democracy. Essential technology that connects us, like internet networks, are accessible to all, instead of only the privileged. Community capacity-building and civic engagement takes place through deliberate, sustained outreach to a diverse body of stakeholders and shared leadership. This ensures that all residents have a voice and influence in planning and policy processes and in decisions to create an equitable future.

Social Interaction and Connectedness

The design of our communities can greatly influence whether and to what degree community cohesion and social interaction take place. Creating a higher degree of connectedness and social
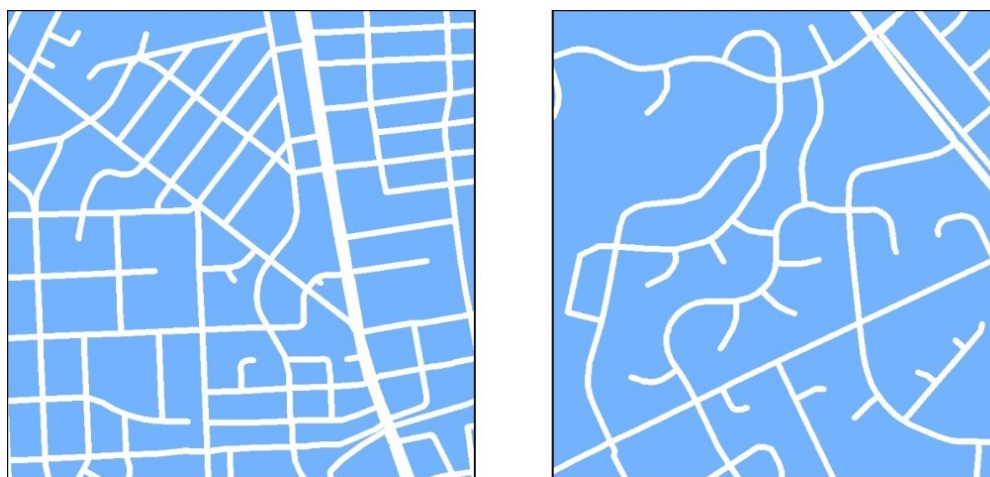
Figure 26: Street pattern and the level of neighborhood connectivity

Connectivity is higher in downtown Bethesda (left), which has a traditional and compact grid of streets is more conducive to walking and biking. Olney (right), has a typical suburban street pattern with fewer connections, which discourages walking and biking.

interaction, however, is both a physical and operational endeavor—we need both the hardware and software to complete this task. We need the built environment to be able to not only accommodate, but also encourage and make it easier for people to meet others and engage in social activities. For that, we need the right mix of housing types, nonresidential uses, and places of gathering connected through easy and convenient walkable and bikeable paths and trails. The previous chapter describes the kind of physical layout embodied in Complete Communities. As highlighted, creating places that encourage social interaction will require retrofitting our existing neighborhoods through a sustained effort over a long time. Replacing archaic planning and zoning processes with a new and flexible

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regimen of land use and development decision making will require constant attention.

The second part of this endeavor—entities and processes that will create and support social activities and programs—is also critical to achieving social cohesion and interaction. It will require a cultural mind shift by all parts of the society to accept and support the idea of more diverse and cohesive neighborhoods. And it will require both the public and private sectors to contribute technical, financial and human resources to achieve the Plan's vision. It will also require strong participation by residents in the community building process. The current land use and development decision-making process needs to be more accessible and inviting to all residents. Overcoming the barriers to greater participation will require collaborating with neighborhood organizations, cultural groups, religious institutions and other organizations with deep roots in the community.

Goals, Policies and Actions

Goal 2.1: Create strong neighborhoods and communities that foster communication and interaction among residents and create a culture of inclusion.

Policy 2.1.1: Use public space to facilitate active lifestyles, physical connections and interactions among diverse populations. Ensure each neighborhood has public spaces that establish a culture of inclusion and that encourage people to linger.

Action 2.1.1.a: Develop an index and metrics to measure the availability and performance of places that support inclusive social and civic networks. Emphasize the principles of universal design in the criteria for this index.

Action 2.1.1.b: Amend appropriate zones in the Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance to incentivize and prioritize design features in private development projects that facilitate day-to-day interactions. These features could include wide sidewalks, inviting and well-designed public gathering spaces, outdoor seating and lawn areas, and pathways and trails.

Action 2.1.1.c: Develop incentives to promote designated heritage areas, and historic and archeological sites and other properties with historical and cultural significance. Connect these sites with bike and pedestrian paths.

Policy 2.1.2: Ensure that every community has a network of inclusive, safe, and accessible public parks, trails, and other recreational spaces that connect neighborhoods, increase opportunities for social interaction, encourage active lifestyles, and connect residents to nature.

Action 2.1.2.a: Study and identify all publicly owned underutilized spaces (e.g., buildings, rights-of-way, parking lots, garages, etc.) throughout the county that have a high potential for being transformed into parks and public spaces.

Action 2.1.2.b: Study the walking and transit accessibility of the existing network of parks and trails, nature centers, and cultural sites to identify opportunities to improve accessibility to parks and trails for all residents.

Action 2.1.2.c: Update the state-mandated strategic plan for parks, recreation, and open spaces to reflect the evolving roles of parks in urban and urbanizing areas as platforms for social gathering, active and healthy living, and connection to nature.

Action 2.1.2.d: Create new design typologies for park facilities in urban areas such as community gardens, dog parks, skate parks, playgrounds, community open space, and picnic and grill spaces. Include guidance in the new typologies that the designs should reflect the culture and traditions of the communities where they are located.

Action 2.1.2.e: Create a "Nature Access Action Plan" that enables all residents to live within a 15-minute walk from a park or green space by 2035.

Policy 2.1.3: Design public infrastructure (e.g., streets, pathways, and trails) such that social gathering, recreation, and active living are major priorities. Use public art, seating, historic preservation and other placemaking techniques to create distinctive community-based places. Make these spaces safe, attractive, informative, convenient, and easy to access for all ages and abilities. Promote active lifestyles and social interaction among diverse community members.

Action 2.1.3.a: Create a pedestrian infrastructure improvements priority list in coordination with county and state transportation agencies in order to implement walkability standards in communities underserved by safe, walkable infrastructure. Use the Pedestrian Master Plan and the mapping analysis of community equity emphasis areas to inform this list.

Action 2.1.3.b: Inventory and map opportunities along streets, paths, and trails for neighborhood storytelling that celebrates underrepresented communities. Create tools to visualize, showcase, and share these stories. Erect interpretive signs and create new heritage walking or bike trails that celebrate local culture and history.

Goal 2.2: Build civic capacity within communities and make government planning and decision-making processes accessible, transparent, and easy for everyone to participate in and understand.

Policy 2.2.1: Build relationships and foster trust with community leaders, recognizing their knowledge of community dynamics. Develop protocols in consultation with community leaders for regularly engaging community members, even when master plans or projects are not underway in their neighborhoods. Help to build civic capacity to ensure true neighborhood representation.

Action 2.2.1.a: Launch an educational program that includes basic courses in planning, regulatory, and zoning processes for residents and all stakeholders to increase understanding, accessibility, and participation.

Action 2.2.1.b: Develop a placemaking toolkit to continue and enhance community-led initiatives for placemaking, neighborhood identity, and social enrichment. Periodically update the toolkit in close consultation with community leaders.

Policy 2.2.2: Remove barriers to community engagement and improve engagement of diverse participants including renters, people with disabilities, people of color, people experiencing language barriers, and others who are underrepresented in civic life.

Action 2.2.2.a: Conduct a biennial community outreach and engagement survey about awareness of, participation in and satisfaction with Montgomery Planning's outreach efforts. Set a baseline to track data over time and determine whether strategies to engage communities improved and if so, the extent of improvement.

Action 2.2.2.b: Develop a civic engagement toolkit to guide each Master Plan's Civic Engagement Plan. Include guidance on the development of demographic-based outreach strategies, equitable civic engagement, guidelines for accessibility (including scheduling and location of activities, translation and childcare), and methods for evaluating and adjusting engagement practices.

Action 2.2.2.c: Launch required racial equity, social justice, and cultural competency training programs for Montgomery Parks and Planning staff working on functional plans, master plans, and special projects to ensure the departments effectively engage residents from diverse communities, especially historically marginalized and immigrant residents.

Policy 2.2.3: Share information and increase transparency with residents, businesses, and community organizations.

Action 2.2.3.a: Continue branding and marketing campaigns to increase public awareness of the role of Montgomery Planning and Montgomery Parks in the county and the impact on residents' lives.

Policy 2.2.4: Use technology to gather public comments and feedback during the development of master, functional and park plans, and the review of regulatory cases. Use technology to inform the public about the status of recommendations in approved and adopted plans and to track the efficacy of implementation.

Policy 2.2.5: Develop strategies and tools to meet people where they are and to exchange information effectively. Employ tools such as digital technology/media protocols and an assessment of technology penetration within different neighborhoods and communities.

Goal 2.3: Improve access to neighborhood-based services such as housing, jobs, professional and government services, educational opportunities, and parks and open spaces at the local, county-wide, and regional level. Focus on county residents with the greatest socioeconomic needs and for those who are geographically isolated from these services.

Policy 2.3.1: Ensure a network of equitably distributed, easily accessible neighborhood-based services, ideally within walking or biking distance of residents' homes to allow for increased social connections.

Action 2.3.1.a: Complete a county-wide study mapping the distribution of public and private neighborhood-based services relative to underserved communities. The study could include a survey of county residents to identify disparities in access to quality services by area or region. Produce equity-access metrics at the local level to be evaluated and monitored in a timely manner.

Goal 2.4: Use technological innovation to increase community connectedness and resilience for all residents.

Policy 2.4.1: Equitably distribute new and existing communication and information technology to better connect areas of the county that have limited access. Technology may include hardware, software and network infrastructure.

Action 2.4.1.a: Inventory the use and availability of existing and emerging technology within disconnected communities to ensure that all residents have equal access to information infrastructure. Use the analysis of community equity emphasis areas to create a map of technology access deserts and a list of priority areas for bridging the digital divide.

Action 2.4.1.b Identify poor coverage (dead spots) in rural areas that are suitable for network expansion and information technology installation.

Policy 2.4.2: Meet the diverse technology needs of people in typically disconnected groups such as seniors, lower-income households, people with disabilities and people with cultural and/or language barriers.

Action 2.4.2.a: Facilitate digital literacy programs that enable people to find, evaluate, utilize, share and create content using information technologies to increase resident confidence and efficiency of use. Consider employing multigenerational approaches and informal community-based programs such as Montgomery County Public School's student community service hours to facilitate improving digital competency.

Policy 2.4.3: Expand communication and information technology infrastructure and equitably implement existing and emerging technologies.

Action 2.4.3.a: Identify locations in the county for free public network access to information technology services, such as public kiosks and Wi-Fi connected street furniture. Use public-private partnerships to provide network access in privately owned public spaces and in parks.

Action 2.4.3.b: Review current zoning and land use standards, permitting processes, and development standards to identify barriers and opportunities for locating existing and emerging technology infrastructure.

Action 2.4.3.c: Develop a county-wide technology strategy around the use of public infrastructure, including but not limited to autonomous vehicles, delivery robots and drones, and the supporting technology such as networked urban sensors, wireless mesh networks, and energy microgrids. The strategy will emphasize that municipal technology is a public

good, does not compromise privacy or security and narrows equity gaps. It could include county as the public technology provider for all citizens to access high quality services.

Goal 2.5: Assess racial equity and social justice impacts across all Montgomery Parks and Montgomery Planning initiatives.

Policy 2.5.1: Incorporate racial equity and social justice when preparing master and functional plans. Implement the guidance of the Equity in Master Planning Action Plan, including using current best practices to analyze adverse impacts on the community, strengthening our partnerships with stakeholders, and addressing challenges on a regional scale.

Action 2.5.1.a: Develop a model using socioeconomic criteria to identify community equity emphasis areas within the county. Use the results of this model to analyze racial equity and social justice issues for community and park planning and as a guide for Montgomery Parks to prioritize Capital Improvements Projects.

Action 2.5.1.b: Develop composite displacement risk and opportunity access indices. Use them to assist in making decisions about growth, to assess investment strategies that maximize equitable development, and to bring racial equity and social justice considerations into the master planning process.
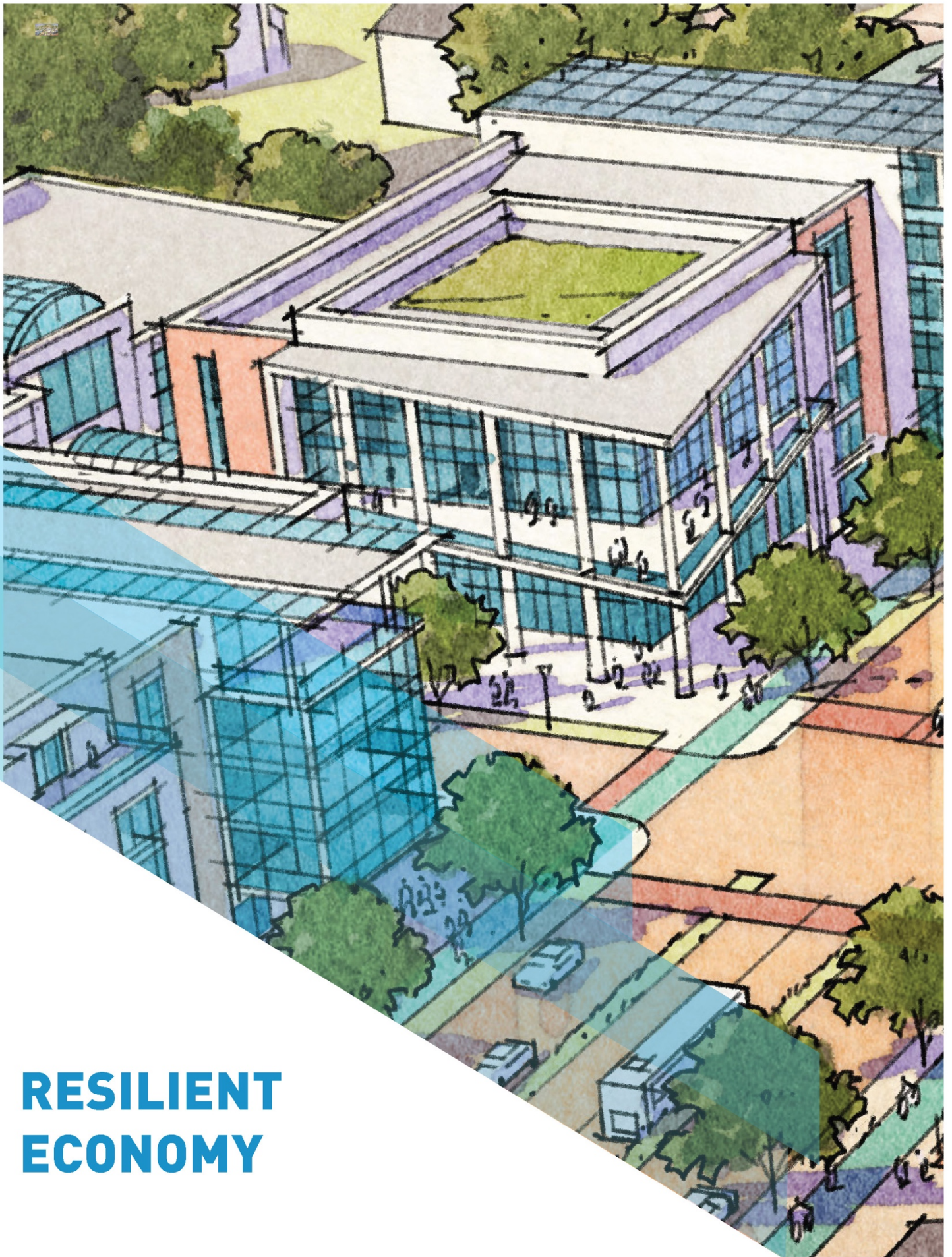
RESILIENT
ECONOMY

RESILIENT ECONOMY

Issues and Challenges

Montgomery County has a large, robust, and competitive economy: well-paying jobs, a highly educated workforce, a world-class life sciences and biotechnology industry, and several major federal government agency headquarters with many satellite agency locations. These qualities helped the county to weather past economic downturns better than other places around the country. Even with strong fundamentals, however, the county faces many economic challenges and must not rest on its laurels if it wants to remain competitive through the 21st century. Slow job growth, limited new business formation, wage stagnation, rising economic and social inequity, a high cost of living and doing business, and increasing traffic congestion negatively affect economic activity. These issues are barriers for companies trying to innovate and grow within the county and deter global businesses from opening offices in the county.

The affordability challenges to businesses affect all sectors and business types. The county's small, local retail and service businesses sustain neighborhoods and enhance resident and worker quality of life. In certain parts of the county, redevelopment of commercial centers near larger nonwhite populations are an economic opportunity but could also threaten displacement of small neighborhood businesses. Making sure these businesses can afford to operate and remain in Montgomery County—and that their workers can afford to live here—is necessary to continue the county's economic and social vibrancy.

Vision for a Diverse, Resilient, and Equitable Economy

In 2050, Montgomery County's robust and adaptable economy is propelled and sustained by a diverse base of industries and workers. This diversity enables the county to absorb and adjust to unpredictable technological, environmental, and societal disruptions that inevitably emerge. This diverse economic base includes current strengths, such as biotechnology research and manufacturing, scientific and technical services, public administration, and corporate management, as well as new and emerging industries that the county has identified and nurtured.

A strong economic ecosystem requires connections between businesses, workers and related public and private support agencies. These connections are encouraged physically through bustling, walkable and transit-rich commercial centers, as well as "virtually" through world-class communications technology infrastructure to link businesses to each other and to the rest of the world and to accommodate remote working. Montgomery County plays a lead role in creating and fostering such connections throughout the Baltimore-Washington, DC, region because a strong and cooperative region is more innovative and grows more efficiently.

Montgomery County's economic tapestry, though tightly woven, is open and accessible. It welcomes and easily incorporates people and businesses from diverse places and backgrounds. Thus, it enables the county to offer new entrepreneurial opportunities and fulfilling careers for residents and to create the technologies that drive the regional, national, and global economy forward.

Cultivating a Resilient Economy

A fundamental goal for Montgomery County's economy over the next 30 years is resilience--the ability to adapt when confronted with changing circumstances. Becoming more resilient will enable the county to adjust its current economic trajectory and turn stagnation into growth. Resilience is also part of a long-term strategy to ensure that the county's economy can adjust to unforeseen—yet inevitable—challenges. The entire Thrive Montgomery 2050 Plan is an economic resilience strategy. Achieving the other goals in the Plan will increase the quality of life and opportunities in the county, making it a place that residents and employers care about and stick with in both prosperous and difficult times.

Montgomery County is often referred to as a "mature" county, meaning that it has achieved a comfortable level of prosperity and stability but struggles to spur new waves of growth. While the county has competitive businesses and industries with long records of success, its challenge is to build on this past success without being weighed down by it. The county's economy must continue to evolve with the global economy. As the worldwide economic shocks of the Great Recession and the Covid-19 pandemic, less than 13 years apart, have shown, no place in the world is invulnerable to uncertainties and disruptions.

With these circumstances in mind, the Resilient Economy chapter maps out a route to resilience along three pathways: diversity, connectedness, and efficiency.

Diversity

A diverse local economy is like a diversified investment portfolio. Dispersed risk allows one segment of the economy to take a blow without taking the rest of the economy with it, making recovery easier. Economic diversity occurs along several dimensions. One is by having many types and sizes of businesses, such as small "mom and pop" entrepreneurs, large stable companies that employ large numbers of employees, and all types in between. Montgomery County already has several competitive industries such as biotechnology and the federal government, but it must cultivate new ones to ensure that its portfolio remains competitive.

The county can also support a diverse array of work environments. Re-energizing the county's commercial centers is a major goal of the plan, but so is the recognition that small offices or storefronts in Complete Communities (see Chapter 1) and even home offices will be common workplaces in the 21st century.

Finally, and most importantly, a resilient economy needs diversity in its people and workplaces. Different skill and education levels and linguistic, racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds infuse the local economy with the varied pool of perspectives necessary to solve problems and innovate.

Connectedness

Diversity alone won't lead to resilience unless it is harnessed through strong physical and social connections. The Connectedness chapter outlines Thrive Montgomery 2050's approach to harnessing these connections in detail. For economic purposes, connectedness means shaping the kinds of vibrant, human-scale places and infrastructure that encourage idea generation and collaboration. It also means making a deliberate and continuous effort to link the county's full spectrum of economic

opportunity to those who have historically been denied and shut out. These people include immigrants, people of color, people with disabilities, and women.

Innovation and economic prosperity—like traffic and pollution—do not stop at county borders. Strong jurisdictions reinforce each other and create a strong region, which is why fostering cooperative economic and other connections with neighboring jurisdictions is also central to Thrive Montgomery 2050's effort to achieve resilience. Montgomery County is part of a region that extends through much of Maryland, Virginia, and even to West Virginia. It has multiple centers, including Tysons, Baltimore, Fort Meade, and Bethesda, among others. Thrive Montgomery 2050 positions Montgomery County as a leader in this effort in the years to come.

Goals, Policies and Actions

Goal 3.1: Sustain a cutting-edge economy supported by private, public, and nonprofit employers in multiple industries, local and federal government, and small business entrepreneurship. This diverse economic base helps the county be resilient and respond to changes in business cycles, enhances our competitive attractiveness to new employers, and provides a path for growth for workers of all skill levels.

Policy 3.1.1: Support the efforts of the county's economic development agencies to retain and grow existing businesses and attract new businesses.

Action 3.1.1.a: Conduct space and infrastructure assessments for industries and industry clusters targeted by economic development agencies as part of master plans and ensure that land use planning efforts address deficiencies.

Policy 3.1.2: Improve physical and technological infrastructure to support existing businesses and attract new businesses. Study and keep current on emerging municipal technologies and create strategies for their implementation.

Policy 3.1.3: Make housing more affordable so that talented workers in all industries and occupations can afford and choose to live in Montgomery County.

Policy 3.1.4: Emphasize and reinforce a welcoming and inclusive culture and highlight this quality in communications and marketing material so that people and organizations from around the nation and the world find the county a welcoming place to relocate

Goal 3.2: Grow vibrant commercial centers that are attractive as headquarters locations for large, multinational corporations, major regional businesses, federal agencies, and small and locally owned businesses. These centers will be accessible by multiple modes of transportation, balance a mix of commercial and residential uses and amenities, have a distinctive look and feel through high quality design, and include attractive and active parks and open spaces.

Policy 3.2.1: Encourage high densities, a compact form of development, a diverse range of activities and urban amenities in existing and emerging commercial centers located near transit to increase economic competitiveness.

Action 3.2.1.a: Study potential land value capture strategies including a differential tax or split-rate property tax—where land is taxed at a higher rate than improvements—to return publicly-created land value to the public, to encourage dense development of existing commercial centers and to discourage vacant and underutilized properties.

Action 3.2.1.b: Study the potential to establish innovation districts. Offer financial and regulatory support to organizations engaged in innovative building, infrastructure and social initiatives in areas such as sustainable building construction (e.g., net-zero and net-positive buildings, and cradle-to-cradle or "circular" construction methods), green infrastructure, smart electric grids and state-of-the-art affordable housing.

Policy 3.2.2: Improve transportation connections between existing commercial and employment centers and transit hubs to connect Montgomery County businesses to workers and the rest of the region, nation, and world.

Action 3.2.2.a: Establish a one-seat transit service from major employment centers to at least one of the three international airports in the region (Baltimore-Washington International, Dulles International, or Reagan National Airport).

Action 3.2.2.b: Expand non-auto transportation options between and within the county's major employment centers such as Bethesda, the National Institutes of Health/Walter Reed campus, Silver Spring, Rockville, and the Great Seneca Science Corridor.

Policy 3.2.3: Preserve and expand minority-owned small businesses, and international and neighborhood retail. Enhance efforts to understand and address barriers to business ownership and expansion of these types of businesses.

Goal 3.3.: Increase the number of well-paying jobs for all education and skill levels. Encourage the expansion of job training and other professional development opportunities to encourage economic mobility.

Policy 3.3.1: Prioritize job access and job generation in land use planning, including development review processes, master planning and functional plans.

Action 3.3.1.a: Complete an Employment Growth and Access Functional Plan to determine if and where land use policies limit growth of and access to a variety of job types. Recommend strategies for addressing these limits.

Policy 3.3.2: Update the master planning process to include the development of employment objectives and assess the employment impacts of plan scenarios.

Policy 3.3.3: Reinforce county policies and investments that improve long-term and equitable employment outcomes in coordination with public schools, the workforce development board, Montgomery College, other relevant agencies, and employers.

> Action 3.3.3.a: Conduct an Economic Equity Study to determine baseline levels of and barriers to employment equity for people of color, people with disabilities, immigrants, people for whom English is not a primary language, and LGBTQ people. Set measurable targets and timelines to increase inclusion and equity.

Policy 3.3.4: Create new educational and workforce development opportunities in the East County.

> Action 3.3.4.a: Explore creating a fourth Montgomery College campus in the East County.

Policy 3.3.5: Develop an inclusive employment and innovation strategy that identifies occupations in competitive and emerging industries that do not require a bachelor's degree such as pharmaceutical manufacturing technicians or biotechnology laboratory technicians. Align training, mentorship, and real estate considerations to expand these opportunities in the county.

Goal 3.4: Preserve land for Production, Distribution, and Repair (PDR) activities that provide well-paying jobs to those without advanced degrees, provide essential goods and services, and propel economic competitiveness for the county.

Policy 3.4.1: Determine whether existing regulations and policies support current and emerging Montgomery County PDR businesses that fit criteria listed in this goal, and design new regulations where necessary.

> Action 3.4.1.a: Create a county-wide freight plan in partnership with MCDOT to ensure the efficient movement of goods over road, rail and water while eliminating environmental and equity impacts associated with freight logistics.

> Action 3.4.1.b: Develop an urban logistics strategy to ensure that the increasing volume of e-commerce-related deliveries are accommodated without disrupting quality of life.

> Action 3.4.1.c: Conduct a refined study of types and locations of space needed by PDR businesses to help the county make informed decisions about redevelopment and ensure adequate industrial land for the modern economy.

Goal 3.5: Lead nationally in innovation and entrepreneurship, building on existing assets and enhancing job and business growth for industries in which Montgomery County has a competitive advantage.

Policy 3.5.1: Strengthen the county's innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem.

> Action 3.5.1.a: Conduct a Regional Innovation Capacity and Connectivity study to identify innovation assets in the region such as federal, private and university research labs; assess the

type and quantity of innovations they produce; assess their physical proximity and accessibility to one another; and compare these factors to peer regions.

Policy 3.5.2: Strengthen partnerships between existing federal agencies with a Montgomery County presence and county businesses to promote innovation, entrepreneurship, and growth.

Action 3.5.2.a: Advocate for the restructuring of federal technology transfer policies to better facilitate new entrepreneurial spinoffs from federal labs in the county.

Policy 3.5.3: Build connections between the private sector, the community, and higher education, and research organizations, including the Universities at Shady Grove, Montgomery College, and the University of Maryland's flagship campus in Prince George's County, to enhance the innovation economy.

Action 3.5.3.a: Consider establishing or recruiting a major non-federal research institute or branch campus to expand doctoral and professional-level research, innovation, and entrepreneurship capacity in the county.

Action 3.5.3.b: Encourage and facilitate the physical integration of higher education campuses such as Montgomery College and the Universities at Shady Grove into their surroundings to increase non-automobile access for students and the intellectual vibrancy of the larger community.

Goal 3.6: Identify and remove regulatory and other barriers to encourage real estate development and business establishment and expansion.

Policy 3.6.1: Continue to improve interagency collaboration to streamline review of development projects.

Policy 3.6.2: Encourage infill development by making the associated processes accessible to smaller or newer developers that want to take advantage of a diverse range of opportunities such as building Missing Middle Housing.

Policy 3.6.3: Continue to use innovative technology to improve the development process internally and for the public, including routinely evaluating existing review software and updating to suit requirements and processes.

Goal 3.7: Play a prominent role in creating a culture of regionalism and in making the combined Baltimore-Washington region a global leader in economic innovation and sustainable development practices.

Policy 3.7.1: Work with municipalities across the region to promote cooperation in economic development.

Action 3.7.1.a: Study development regulations of neighboring municipalities to identify opportunities to increase consistency, predictability, and costs across Washington, DC, and its core suburbs to promote fair competition for business.

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Action 3.7.1.b: Add rail and/or BRT connections to key regional business hubs outside of Montgomery County including Tysons and Arlington in Virginia, and Frederick, Columbia, and Downtown Baltimore in Maryland.

Policy 3.7.2: Consider regional impacts of major land use decisions and infrastructure investments.

SAFE AND EFFICIENT TRAVEL

SAFE AND EFFICIENT TRAVEL

Issues and Challenges

The framework of Montgomery County's and the region's transportation network developed in the early 20th century primarily for automobile travel with all major roads leading to Washington, DC, the region's main employment center. Over time, the county and the region created many employment centers served mainly by car and a land use pattern defined by low-density sprawl. Each subsequent residential subdivision, office park, shopping center, public service, and amenity was designed to connect with the nearest major road with little or no consideration given to walking, bicycling, or transit. Today, the Washington metro area experiences some of the worst traffic congestion in the country. In addition to the drag on the economy and lost personal time congestion causes, transportation has a huge environmental impact in the form of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. In 2015, 41% of the county's GHG emissions were generated by transportation.[8]

Although the county has made significant investments in its transit network in the intervening years, the underlying land use pattern of low-density sprawl is a challenge to creating a fast and reliable transit system. People who can't afford or don't desire to own cars, people with disabilities and young adults rely on public transit for reliable access to early morning, 9-to-5, and late-night jobs, and education, health care, food, and entertainment options. These groups are disproportionately affected by the limits of the county's existing transportation options. Locations with good access to transit or employment centers are generally too expensive for many people, forcing them to live farther from job centers and other destinations, limiting their access to job opportunities, recreation spaces and other county resources. While owning and operating a vehicle is expensive, transit can also be expensive and, for many, difficult to access.

Additionally, many of our major roads and neighborhood streets are unsafe for pedestrians, bicyclists, and especially people with mobility difficulties. This discourages walking, rolling and bicycling as transportation and exercise. Major roadways have become barriers dividing adjacent neighborhoods. People living along many of these corridors tend to have lower household incomes, rely heavily on public transit and are disproportionately impacted by these unsafe conditions.

Vision for Safe and Efficient Travel

In 2050, Montgomery County's high quality transportation system plays a critical role in supporting the county's economic health, environmental resilience, and equity. County residents shifted from heavy reliance on private vehicles to walking, bicycling, and public transit. This safe, reliable, and efficient transit network is composed of Metrorail, Purple Line, commuter rail, bus rapid transit (BRT) and regional and local buses, and a robust network of sidewalks, bikeways, and trails. A large majority of people use the system to connect to their destinations within the county and the region. Technologies such as micromobility, autonomous vehicles, and ridesharing offer new options for transportation. Some of this technology increases transit ridership by making it easier for people to connect to rail or BRT. Major roadways are transformed into safe and attractive boulevards with reduced speeds, frequent safe crossings, trees and dedicated lanes for transit. Walkways and

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[8] County Greenhouse Gas Inventory, Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection, 2018.
https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/green/climate/ghg-inventory.html

bikeways, as well as crossings are safe enough to allow children to walk and bike to nearby schools. In major commercial centers, downtowns and town centers, a dense mix of land uses, slow motor vehicle speeds and high quality walkways and bikeways make walking, bicycling, rolling and micromobility the preferred modes of travel. All greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are eliminated from the transportation system thanks to the significant reduction in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and the conversion of all motorized vehicles to renewable energy.

Focus on Transit and Walkability

To achieve our goals of GHG emissions reduction, economic competitiveness, and equity, we need to shift our transportation focus from automobiles to public transit, walking, biking, and micromobility. We simply cannot be equitable, address climate change, and support a strong economy by building more roads. And we are not yet benefiting fully from the promise of technological advances such as telework, drone deliveries and autonomous vehicles that could revolutionize how we travel and transport goods and services. Until all our energy is generated from renewable sources and we become truly net-zero energy consumers, public transit is the best way to reduce our transportation related GHG emissions.

Embracing transit as the preferred mode of travel will require making it competitive and even superior to car travel. This will require a cultural shift. For example, Metrorail can be too expensive for low-income residents or not close to their homes, so they use buses instead. However, bus service can be slow, less frequent, and not considered high quality (bus stops are exposed to the elements), so more affluent residents who can afford to drive may choose not to take buses. Therefore, Montgomery County should continue to enhance the desirability and ridership experience of bus travel.
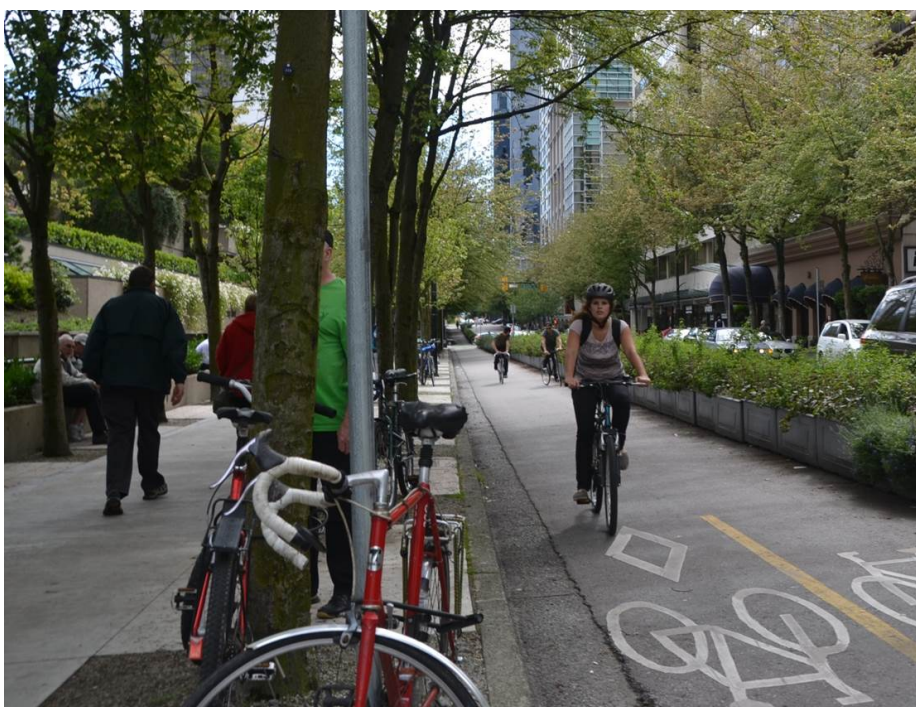
We also need to reorient the underlying land use pattern into walkable, bikeable Complete Communities and make transit more accessible to a greater number of people by concentrating all future development in transit-oriented places. The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, working with Montgomery County and other jurisdictions across the DC region, set a target of putting at least 75% of new housing in mixed-use centers near rail and BRT. We must also make sure that our employment centers that are currently not accessible by transit have transit access. New

micromobility solutions such as e-scooters and rideshare bicycles will provide new capabilities to solve the first mile/last mile problem to bring reliable daily access to high speed transit.

The county's major roadways (or corridors—University Boulevard, Randolph Road, Georgia Avenue, MD 355, New Hampshire Avenue, Veirs Mill Road, Route 29, Corridor Cities Transitway and the North Bethesda Transitway) with existing and planned rail and BRT have great potential to become more transit-oriented places with safe multimodal travel options. They can accommodate a larger portion of the growth through infill and redevelopment to create vibrant mixed-use nodes around transit stations and bus stops. Some of these corridors provide the critical east-west connections in the county. Since it is not desirable to expand existing roads or create major new roads, implementing new transit or improving transit capacity and the performance of the existing east-west corridors will be essential to address the east-west travel issue. These existing east-west corridors include the new Purple Line and the planned BRT along Randolph Road.

Transportation is as much a regional issue as it is a local one. Various jurisdictions control the regional network but it acts as one system and affects the ability of all residents and workers to travel throughout the region. Montgomery County will need to increase coordination with our regional partners to improve accessibility to employment, education and other opportunities. We should also be cognizant of challenges and opportunities that may arise from improvements in the regional travel network. We need to consider how to adapt and keep pace with them to make sure that Montgomery County residents and workers benefit from them. Some of the far-reaching and visionary ideas for regional connection, if realized, may have significant consequences for Montgomery County. For example, early conceptual planning and regulatory review stages have begun on the proposed high-speed superconducting magnetic levitation (maglev) system between Washington, DC, and Baltimore, and a proposed 35-mile underground tunnel/loop to move electric vehicles between Washington and Baltimore in 15 minutes. Supporters of regional connectivity have also discussed a Purple Line extension to create suburb-to-suburb connection between Tysons in Fairfax County, VA, and Largo in Prince George's County.

Goals, Policies and Actions

Goal 4.1: Get people out of their cars and transform Montgomery County into a community of walkable, people-centric places. Make public transit, walking, and bicycling the preferred travel mode for daily trips and substantially reduce the need for personal vehicles.

Policy 4.1.1: Change the primary function of streets from moving automobiles to moving people and creating great places that are accessible and safe for all roadway users, environmentally sustainable and economically competitive. All rules and regulations regarding how we approve growth should support this approach.

Action 4.1.1.a: Prepare a Transportation Master Plan that enables safe, convenient, and comfortable travel and access for people of all ages and mobility abilities regardless of their mode of transportation.

Action 4.1.1.b: Update the Master Plan of Highways and Transitways to consider whether to remove master-planned but unbuilt highways and road widenings.

Policy 4.1.2: Plan and implement a high quality transit network that seamlessly connects the county's downtowns and town centers and regional destinations. Make transit the fastest and most reliable way to get between downtowns, town centers, and rail and BRT corridors.

Action 4.1.2.a: Update the Master Plan of Highways and Transitways to reexamine whether to create additional rail and BRT corridors and to upgrade master-planned BRT corridors to run in the median and limiting the number of through-lanes on rail and BRT corridors to four general purpose lanes. Reallocate excess space to other uses, such as for walking, bicycling and transit; stormwater management; and street trees. Discourage new turn lanes in downtowns and town centers.

Action 4.1.2.b: Develop a strategy to expand commuter rail capacity on the MARC Brunswick Line to provide additional station locations in Montgomery County and provide bidirectional all-day service, seven days a week.

Policy 4.1.3: Prioritize safe, connected, low-stress bicycle, and pedestrian networks in downtowns, town centers, rail and BRT corridors, and community equity emphasis areas over projects that increase traffic capacity.

Policy 4.1.4: Extend rail and bus rapid transit (BRT) directly to regional destinations such as Tysons and Arlington in Virginia; and Frederick, Columbia, and Downtown Baltimore in Maryland.

Action 4.1.4.a: Provide dedicated transit lanes as part of the replacement of the American Legion Bridge.

Policy 4.1.5: As part of all transit projects, evaluate station access for walking and bicycling and ensure safe and comfortable access to transit stations upon project completion.

Policy 4.1.6: Develop and regularly update short-term and long-term bus transit plans. These plans will extend local and regional bus service to underserved communities in Montgomery County, improve reliability, frequency, and span of service and restructure local and regional bus service to integrate with existing and planned rail and BRT.

Policy 4.1.7: Reduce single-occupancy vehicle use and incentivize non-auto transportation options by locating most new growth near rail and BRT.

Policy 4.1.8: Strengthen access from low-density areas to rail and BRT stations, commercial areas and other services by providing flexible transportation services, including microtransit and micromobility.

Goal 4.2: Redesign street systems in downtowns and town centers to be active, people-centric places. Most travel to, from and within these areas will occur via walking, bicycling, and transit.

Policy 4.2.1: Expand the street grid in downtowns, town centers, rail and BRT corridors, and suburban communities to create shorter blocks, improve access and transportation system redundancy, and slow the speed of traffic. Use development projects and roadway modifications to provide new street connections.

Policy 4.2.2: Redesign downtowns and town centers so that walking and bicycling are the preferred modes of transportation by breaking up large blocks, adding more frequent safe crossings, creating space for wide sidewalks, bikeways, trees and adequate lighting, and providing accessibility to the transportation system.

Action 4.2.2.a: Update the Master Plan of Highways and Transitways to limit the number of through-lanes in downtowns and town centers to a maximum of four general purpose lanes and repurpose space for transit lanes, wider sidewalks, bikeways, trees, and stormwater management. Discourage new turn lanes in downtowns and town centers.

Action 4.2.2.b: Develop curbside management strategies and regulations to provide reliable access to homes, jobs, retail opportunities, and public facilities and amenities. This should include a logistics plan to facilitate increasing volumes of e-commerce-related deliveries.

Policy 4.2.3: Reallocate some street space dedicated to motor vehicle travel to other uses such as walking, bicycling, and transit; environmental features such as stormwater management and street trees; and placemaking opportunities to align with the economic, environmental, and equity values in this plan.

Goal 4.3: Have fewer parking spaces and manage the spaces that remain effectively.

Policy 4.3.1: Reduce public and private space dedicated to motor vehicle storage.

Action 4.3.1.a: Eliminate motor vehicle parking minimums for new development projects in downtowns, town centers, and rail and BRT corridors to encourage travel by walking, bicycling, and transit.

Policy 4.3.2: Manage parking effectively.

Action 4.3.2.a: Update motor vehicle public parking rates to increase to market rates.

Goal 4.4: Eliminate all transportation-related fatalities and severe injuries. Provide a transportation system that is safe for everyone.

Policy 4.4.1: Prioritize eliminating transportation-related fatalities and severe injuries in public and private planning and development initiatives and programs, including master plans, capital

projects, and development projects. Area master plans and transportation capital projects must include safety analyses to inform plan recommendations and project design.

Action 4.4.1.a: Create guidelines for developing a safety component for master plans focused on eliminating transportation-related fatalities and severe injuries. Create metrics and other components for a safety analysis for proposed transportation capital projects and capital budgeting decision making.

Action 4.4.1.b: Develop an Access Management Plan.

Policy 4.4.2: Require the design of public and private development transportation projects to focus on the transportation and personal safety needs of the most vulnerable users of the transportation system. All projects should strive to eliminate the risk factors associated with transportation-related severe injuries and fatalities.

Policy 4.4.3: Prioritize changes to the transportation system at locations with a history of high rates of crashes and address safety issues in areas with little or no crash history. Base priorities on an analysis of locations where future crashes are likely to occur.

Policy 4.4.4: Assess and harness technology to improve transportation safety, such as innovative roadway designs, safety enforcement, autonomous vehicles, and new vehicle technology.

Goal 4.5: Eradicate greenhouse gas emissions and dangerous pollutants from the transportation system.

Policy 4.5.1: Incentivize the use of modes other than single-occupant vehicles by providing high quality transit, walking, and bicycling networks.

Policy 4.5.2: Use pricing mechanisms to deter the use of single-occupant vehicles and encourage more walking, bicycling, and transit use.

Action 4.5.2.a: Conduct a study to determine how to apply congestion pricing in Montgomery County, including how to foster equity and distribute the revenue to promote walking, bicycling, and transit.

Policy 4.5.3: Facilitate the mass adoption of zero emission vehicles.

Action 4.5.3.a: Develop an implementation plan for transitioning to zero emission fueling in residential and commercial development and public facilities and spaces.

Action 4.5.3.b: Update all county fleets and contracted fleet providers to zero emission vehicles.

Action 4.5.3.c: Develop county incentives to accelerate conversion of privately-owned fleets to sustainable, zero emission vehicles.

Goal 4.6: Create an equitable transportation system that provides affordable and accessible travel options to jobs, education, and services.

Policy 4.6.1: Prioritize projects that provide safe, comfortable, reliable, and affordable transit for low-income communities, communities of color, seniors, and physically challenged residents.

Action 4.6.1.a: Conduct a study to reexamine the travel needs of vulnerable users of the transportation system and create strategies to improve their access to jobs, food centers, age-restricted housing, health care, and other services. Prepare an Aging Readiness Functional Master Plan to support safe transportation options for the county's aging population and address topics such as transit use, curbside management, and street infrastructure.

Action 4.6.1.b: Incorporate universal design principles into the county code, regulations, policies, and guidelines to improve access for seniors and persons with disabilities.

Action 4.6.1.c: Develop an approach to prioritize transportation projects to improve walking, bicycling, and transit in community equity emphasis areas.

Policy 4.6.2: Provide low-cost transportation for low-income populations through transit fare and toll policies.

Goal 4.7: Convert auto-centric transportation corridors into safe, people-centric multimodal streets with rail and BRT. Most travel to, from and within transportation corridors will occur via walking, bicycling, and transit.

Policy 4.7.1: Prioritize implementing safe and connected low-stress bicycle and pedestrian networks in rail and BRT corridors over projects that increase traffic capacity.

Policy 4.7.2: Plan and implement a grid of streets and alleys to reduce roadway speeds, provide frequent safe crossings, and eliminate driveways along rail and BRT corridors.

Figure 27: Thrive Montgomery 2050 envisions Rockville Pike in Montgomery County (left) to be more like 14th Street in Washington D.C. (right)

Goal 4.8: Create a seamlessly integrated regional transportation system by coordinating transportation planning within the region and between neighboring jurisdictions.

Policy 4.8.1: Coordinate transportation policy with jurisdictions throughout the region (including all municipalities in the county) to improve economic vitality, environmental sustainability, and equity.

Action 4.8.1.a: Work with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) and other jurisdictions to create a regional active transportation plan and prioritize walking, cycling, and transit in interjurisdictional infrastructure projects.

Policy 4.8.2: Coordinate policies with regional partners to discourage the use of single-occupant vehicles to improve air quality regionwide and explore ways to raise revenue and better coordinate transportation policy and projects in Maryland counties surrounding Washington, DC.

Action 4.8.2.a: Form a subregional transportation or transit authority, such as the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority, that would include Montgomery County and Prince George's County, among others.

Policy 4.8.3: Assemble a regional coalition of jurisdictions and other stakeholders to guide transportation technological change related to connected and autonomous vehicles in a way that supports our goals and that addresses the needs of disadvantaged populations.

Goal 4.9: Increase resilience of the transportation system to withstand future climate conditions and natural or human-made disasters.

Policy 4.9.1: Create and enhance redundancy in the transportation system to ensure the continued flow of people, goods, and services in the region in the event that segments of the system become constrained or unusable for extended periods.

Policy 4.9.2: Promote the integration of climate-adaptive, resilient design into transportation projects.

Action 4.9.2.a: Prepare a plan to develop, prioritize, and implement flood mitigation measures for existing flood-prone county transportation facilities based on vulnerability assessments and consideration of extreme precipitation events and sea level rise.

Policy 4.9.3: Design streetscapes to mitigate disruption from climate change, manage stormwater effectively, and provide tree canopy for shade and habitat.

Policy 4.9.4: Ensure that government can provide quick responses to events such as terrorism, environmental disasters, and public health crises that create major impacts to the transportation system.

AFFORDABILITY AND ATTAINABILITY

Seth Harry and Associates

AFFORDABILITY AND ATTAINABILITY

Issues and Challenges

High demand resulting from Montgomery County's reputation for quality of life makes it an expensive place to live with housing prices among the highest in the Washington metropolitan area.

The county and the region have not produced enough appropriate and attainable housing to meet the growing demand, creating a housing supply mismatch with negative, secondary effects on our neighborhoods, schools, environment, transportation infrastructure and economic health. The region's economic health is dependent on an adequate and attainable supply of housing for their workers. Attracting and retaining an employment base requires a diverse range of housing types in both size and price points.

The county's housing attainability gap for both renters and owners is increasing, especially for low- and moderate-income households. Between 2014 and 2018, the supply gap (the number of units affordable to households at a certain income segment) worsened for renter households earning up to 65% of the area median income (AMI)—receding by almost 5,000 units in five years.

Household growth in the county has been concentrated in the lowest and highest end of the income distribution.

In 2018, households earning less than $50,000 comprised just under a third of total households. Existing households increasing their income could have contributed to this trend. However, more significantly, about half of all new households who have moved into the county since 2010 earn less than $50,000 annually.
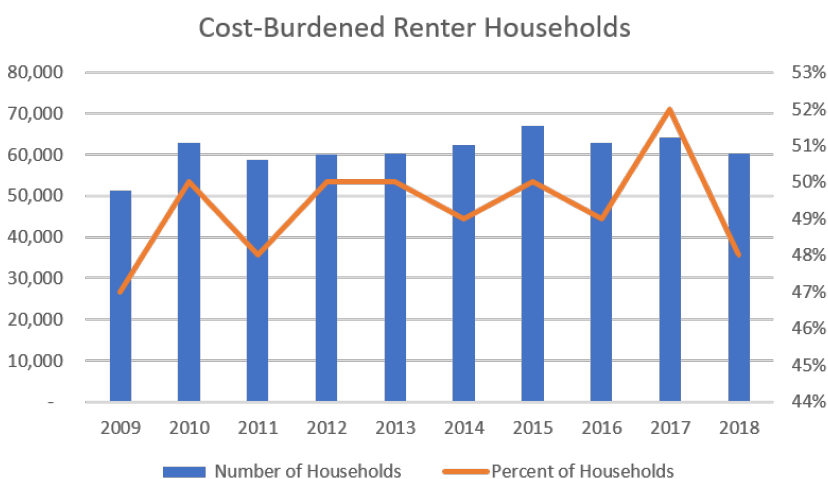
Figure 28: Number of cost burdened renter households

This bifurcated income growth is expected to continue. By 2040, Montgomery County expects to add more than 60,000 new households, both working and non-working, including seniors and persons with disabilities. Based on the wages of new jobs and incomes of non-workers, the greatest share of new households are expected to have incomes under $50,000 a year (27% of forecasted new households), and over $125,000 a year (24% of new forecasted households). These income trends indicate a need for housing options across the income spectrum, particularly a growing need for affordably priced housing.

Lower-income households most impacted by the county's housing and income mismatch are often disproportionably burdened with high housing and transportation costs. Many households are forced to pick between long commutes that further strain the transportation systems, or unaffordable housing that may not be suitable to the households' needs. We need Complete Communities with housing affordable to different incomes; better connections between housing, jobs, and amenities; and a greater emphasis on pedestrian and bicycle accessibility.

The county's shifting demographics also require us to reexamine how we plan to meet the housing needs of a changing population. Non-family households have been the dominant household type in the county since 1990. The percentage of householders living alone also has increased from 7% in 1960 to 25% in 2018. These trends have implications for the kind of housing that is needed in the future as well as services and amenities to support a different mix of household types than in the past.

> Montgomery County currently has 1.05 million residents. Even with a population growth rate below 1% this decade that is expected to decline even further over the next 30 years, population is projected to increase by 200,000 people by 2045. Unless we grow our housing supply to make room for these new residents, our existing communities will become more expensive, less diverse, and integrated, and it will be difficult to attract and retain a skilled workforce.

Aside from housing, the cost of land, labor costs, and regulatory fees in the country also affect small businesses, tech and other entrepreneurs, arts and cultural institutions and nonprofits. The ripple effect of these issues impacts transportation, economic development, equity and the environment. Addressing affordability means looking at the relationship between these issues to help achieve our goal of making the county a thriving place for all.

Vision for Affordability and Attainability

In 2050, all Montgomery County residents have a right to affordable and attainable housing. Housing is not only a right, but a value added to the community and a means to meet our economic development, environmental resilience and equity goals. The county's housing supply is affordable as well as attainable, meaning the market creates units that respond to the broader housing demands of the community.

Housing policies, regulations, and practices address the deep disparities that exist in wealth and homeownership shaped by a legacy of institutional racism and discriminatory laws, policies, and lending practices.

In order to thrive, Montgomery County must ensure the availability of housing that meets the needs of residents. In 2050, our housing supply grew to relieve pressure on the market, stabilize rents, and ensure housing is attainable for a broad range of incomes. This involved a comprehensive look at impediments to building housing, a will to change current policies when necessary, and an understanding that new housing and new residents are a benefit to Montgomery County.

Wide-ranging housing policies and actions that address supply, type, size, development costs, affordability, preservation, tenant protections, homelessness, and housing for older adults and

people with disabilities are deployed to meet the varied housing needs of a diverse and growing population.

Figure 29: Single-family neighborhoods near transit should allow a greater variety of housing types to increase housing choice.

Build More Housing, of More Types, in More Ways

Montgomery County needs to build more housing. Declining production and increased development costs have resulted in rising housing costs and an increase in the number of cost-burdened households. Without an appropriate range of housing types at attainable price points, the county will be unable to attract and retain the employment base necessary to support our economic wellbeing.

Building more housing also involves strengthening and refining current housing policies and programs that help build income-restricted affordable housing. Montgomery County should continually strengthen its pioneering inclusionary program, the Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit Ordinance, to meet the affordable needs of moderate-income households. The county should also leverage and expand its housing trust fund, the Housing Initiative Fund, tax abatement policies like Payments In Lieu of Taxes (PILOTS), and state resources like the Low-Income Housing Tax when possible to help meet our growing need.

The county needs housing growth in transit accessible locations including current and planned rail and bus rapid transit corridors. Predominantly single-family detached houses currently line these transit corridors limited by zoning that only allows only this type of housing. Low to moderate density increases would allow the introduction of more housing types near transit to serve a mix of incomes and household types.

In order to build more housing, community-led support for and championing of new housing

development is critical. This support can promote the value that new residents and housing bring to our neighborhoods. Communities have become highly adept at using the public process to block new housing and solving the county's housing shortage will require a shared vision throughout Montgomery County.

Goals, Policies and Actions

Goal 5.1: Provide and produce housing units that meet the diverse household sizes and needs of all Montgomery County residents in terms of type, size, accessibility, affordability, and location.

Policy 5.1.1: Encourage the production of a broad variety of housing types to achieve attainable price ranges.

Action 5.1.1.a: Expand housing options in detached residential areas near high-capacity transit by modifying the zoning code to allow duplexes, triplexes, and quadruplexes, residential types by-right and with smaller lot areas.

Action 5.1.1.b: Look at market-oriented mechanisms to incentivize affordable housing production, including inclusionary zoning requirements, automatic Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOTs) or tax abatement requirements.

Policy 5.1.2: Increase opportunities for new housing, especially affordable housing, using office parks, shopping centers, and other underutilized properties.

Action 5.1.2.a: Create and analyze an inventory of available surplus, vacant and underutilized private and public lands for public and private partners to acquire for housing, with special attention to assembling land.

Action 5.1.2.b: Establish incentives to encourage conversion of existing high-vacancy office and retail sites into residential uses through adaptive reuse or redevelopment of the site. Create flexible zoning incentives for conversion of planned and existing office and retail sites to residential uses, including allowing properties to reallocate their non-residential Floor Area Ratio to residential use.

Policy 5.1.3: Continue exploring and prioritizing co-location of housing and other uses between public agencies, especially during the master planning and public lands disposition processes.

Action 5.1.3.a: Establish a more streamlined process for affordable housing projects, including revisions to the Local Map Amendment, Floating Zone, Conditional Use, and Mandatory Referral processes.

Action 5.1.3.b: Study the possibility of implementing a progressive tax structure that rewards investment in vacant and underutilized sites and shifts the tax burden to sites that

remain vacant and underutilized, through tools such as differential or split-rate property taxation.

Policy 5.1.4: Build capacity for affordable housing development production with faith-based institutions, employers, the private sector, and nonprofits through education and technical support on the development review process.

Action 5.1.4.a: Create an affordable housing ombudsman to manage projects with an emphasis on coordination across agencies.

Policy 5.1.5: Reduce development costs by pursuing and encouraging new and innovative housing construction types to help reduce construction costs, including modular prefabricated housing, and mass timber.

Action 5.1.5.a: Consider using financial tools and zoning incentives to encourage alternative construction types.

Policy 5.1.6: Support the production of innovative and creative housing options including single-room occupancy units (SROs), duplexes, triplexes, quadruplexes, multiplexes, shared housing, co-housing, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), and cooperative housing to help meet housing needs and diversify housing options.

Action 5.1.6.a: Review regulations and policies, including impact taxes and zoning, to remove barriers and encourage the production of creative housing options, including multi-generational housing, single room occupancy, shared housing, cooperative housing, and co-housing.

Action 5.1.6.b: Consider fee waivers, financial assistance, and other incentives to increase ADU production.

Action 5.1.6.c: Explore the possibility of county-offered low-cost financing or financial assistance to homeowners who are willing to enter their ADU into a deed restriction that restricts the rent.

Policy 5.1.7: Provide family-sized housing units in new multi-family housing developments.

Action 5.1.7.a: Develop incentives and tools to encourage the development of housing units that meet the needs of families, including larger size three-bedroom (or more) units.

Policy 5.1.8: Build or retrofit housing that meets the needs of older adults to enable them to age in place, downsize, choose rental or ownership, or find housing with the appropriate level of services.

Policy 5.1.9: Expand current state and county programs and identify new tools to increase access to homeownership in order to support and improve paths to homeownership, especially among low-income residents, people of color, and younger households.

Action 5.1.9.a: Expand state and county down payment assistance programs, like the SmartBuy program.

Action 5.1.9.b: Expand support for county and nonprofit organizations like the [Housing Opportunities Commission's Mortgage Purchase Program](#) that provide education and financial counseling on homeownership, especially for low- and moderate-income households and households of color.

Action 5.1.9.c: Create employer-supported homebuyer and renter counseling programs and assess the feasibility of developing programs for employer contributions to closing cost and down payment assistance programs for their employees.

Action 5.1.9.d: Consider exempting first-time homebuyers from county-imposed fees and taxes like the recordation tax.

Action 5.1.9.e: Explore establishing a community land trust to create permanent, affordable homeownership opportunities.

Policy 5.1.10: Collaborate with neighboring jurisdictions to expand housing resources and tools; share data, resources, and best practices; and identify and consider regional solutions to housing challenges.

Action 5.1.10.a: Create a Housing Functional Master Plan to provide measurable housing goals and strategies for different market segments in Montgomery County as well as an analysis of affordability gaps and impediments to the housing supply.

Policy 5.1.11: Encourage affordable, sustainable, green development, and environmental sensitivity in housing, neighborhood design, and redevelopment.

Policy 5.1.12: Develop and update shared housing supply targets for both Montgomery County and the region through collaboration with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.

Policy 5.1.13: Explore ways to work adaptability into building design to ensure buildings can respond to changing demographics and generational need over the lifetime of a building.

Goal 5.2: Ensure that the majority of new housing is located near rail and BRT stations, employment centers and within Complete Communities that provide needed services and amenities for residents.

Policy 5.2.1: Pursue financial and zoning opportunities to increase residential density, especially for older adults and people with disabilities, near high-capacity transit that will result in increased walkability and access to amenities.

Action 5.2.1.a: Provide appropriate financial incentives, such as tax abatements, Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOTs), and Tax Increment Financing (TIFs) to increase housing production in targeted locations near high-capacity transit.

Action 5.2.1.b: Provide incentives to encourage county employers and property owners to develop mixed-income housing at employment centers by redeveloping surface parking lots and underutilized property.

Policy 5.2.2: Ensure all established residential communities have access to affordable, high quality transit.

Goal 5.3: Continue to promote the policy of mixed-income housing development through the implementation of county policies, programs, regulations, and other tools and incentives.

Policy 5.3.1: Combat the concentration of poverty and segregation with financial and zoning incentives that help spur targeted housing investments to increase demographic and income diversity across the county.

Action 5.3.1.a: Consider changes to the regulatory requirements for new development, including the Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit (MPDU) requirements, in low-income areas to increase economic diversification and reduce the barrier to development.

Policy 5.3.2: Fully integrate affordable housing into our communities and ensure it is indistinguishable from market-rate housing, including quality of design, sustainability features, and community amenities.

Policy 5.3.3: Encourage the development of affordable housing by strengthening the capacity of the Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit (MPDU) program and other affordable housing programs.

Action 5.3.3.a: Consider implementing income averaging to reach broad levels of affordability.

Action 5.3.3.b: Create a centralized MPDU application system for rental units, including establishing a waiting list.

Action 5.3.3.c: Ensure that the Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) has the ability and flexibility to terminate and modify covenants due to unaffordability.

Action 5.3.3.d: Allow for rent increases in Moderately Priced Dwelling Units to be indexed to increases in Area Median Income to help preserve affordability.

Action 5.3.3.e: Explore the county's and the state's ability to make homeowner's association (HOA) and condo fees more affordable for residents of affordable units.

Action 5.3.3.f: Work with Prince George's County and the State of Maryland to attain a 9% Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) set-aside for Montgomery and Prince George's County.

Action 5.3.3.g: Expand local housing choice voucher programs with dedicated funding to meet the needs of lower-income households.

Policy 5.3.4: Explore public-private partnerships to build 100% affordable housing projects in areas where the project is consistent with the idea of increasing income diversification.

Policy 5.3.5: Continue to grow and identify new sources of revenue for the Housing Initiative Fund (HIF).

Action 5.3.5.a: Explore changes to the recordation tax to generate additional funding for the HIF.

Goal 5.4: Eliminate homelessness by providing safe, stable, and affordable housing opportunities for homeless youth, singles, and families.

Policy 5.4.1: Enhance implementation of the county's Housing First Initiative, which places people experiencing homelessness into housing as rapidly as possible and provides wraparound services to help them maintain their housing.

Action 5.4.1.a: Increase access to housing options for tenants who face challenges in obtaining housing, including expanding resources for the Risk Mitigation Fund.

Policy 5.4.2: Increase the number of permanent supportive housing units to address the unmet need in the county.

Action 5.4.2.a: Explore changes to the zoning code to support the creation of permanent supportive housing units like Single-Room Occupancy (SRO) or Personal Living Quarter (PLQ) units by-right in all residential and mixed-use zones.

Policy 5.4.3: Continue to focus on reducing the time families and individuals spend in temporary shelters.

Policy 5.4.4: Use the master plan process to collaborate with the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services to evaluate the housing needs of individuals and families on the homelessness spectrum including identifying potential locations for supportive housing.

Policy 5.4.5: Eliminate racial disparities across the homelessness spectrum.

Goal 5.5: Minimize displacement of people, especially among low-income residents, people of color, people with disabilities and older adults.

Policy 5.5.1: Preserve market-rate and income-restricted affordable housing stock, striving for no net loss of affordable housing in the event of redevelopment. Develop targeted, balanced, priority-based strategies that minimize displacement, increase our housing supply and reinvestment, and help the creation of mixed-income communities.

Action 5.5.1.a: Create a "No Net Loss" of Affordable Housing Floating Zone in targeted areas like the Purple Line corridor.

Action 5.5.1.b: Consider allowing developers to preserve existing affordable housing as an alternative compliance method to the MPDU requirement.

Action 5.5.1.c: Explore the creation of an affordable housing preservation Transfer of Developable Rights (TDR) program.

Action 5.5.1.d: Explore low-cost incentives to motivate landlords to adhere to the Voluntary Rent Guidelines.

Action 5.5.1.e: Create, maintain, update, and analyze a comprehensive inventory of housing properties at-risk for affordability loss by type, location, and risk profile to enhance preservation pipeline management, prioritization, and resource allocation decisions.

Policy 5.5.2: Monitor and work with owners of affordable housing to develop preservation plans for properties to ensure long-term affordability.

Action 5.5.2.a: Consider implementing Housing Affordability Strategy[9] plans for small areas with expiring subsidies or existing market-rate affordable housing that allow for the enhancement and preservation of long-term housing affordability through the provision of additional density and zoning changes.

Policy 5.5.3: Consider and support enhancement of the Right of First Refusal and other efforts to aid the Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC) and other county and nonprofit partners in the purchase of affordable rental buildings that are at risk of being sold to keep the units affordable.

Policy 5.5.4: Continue to use the Housing Initiative Fund acquisition and rehabilitation loans and the Right of First Refusal contracts to acquire and preserve or create extended affordability in housing developments.

Action 5.5.4.a: Create financial and technical assistance and zoning incentives to preserve market-rate affordable rental and common ownership condominium properties.

Action 5.5.4.b: Create a preservation fund in targeted areas to help nonprofits purchase market rate affordable properties.

Policy 5.5.5: Encourage the replacement of larger family sized units in redevelopment, relocation, and right to return processes.

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[9] See an example in South Patrick Street Housing Affordability Strategy, City of Alexandria, 2018.
https://www.alexandriava.gov/planning/info/default.aspx?id=100785

Action 5.5.5.a: In the case of redevelopment, create strategies to retain naturally occurring affordable housing and existing housing types that are typically not constructed in the marketplace including 3+ bedroom units for families.

Policy 5.5.6: Protect tenants' rights, improve living conditions in rental housing, and ensure renters' contributions to the community are emphasized and valued.

Action 5.5.6.a: Promote financial and technical assistance and counseling to renter households that may be at risk of eviction.

Action 5.5.6.b: Collect and report data on evictions and use of emergency financial assistance to find opportunities to enhance existing assistance.

Policy 5.5.7: Support various programs (nonprofit, private, county-sponsored and philanthropic) that aid residents in the upkeep and repair of their homes and properties.

Policy 5.5.8: Continue and strengthen the county's vigorous Housing Code Enforcement program to maintain in good condition the county's aging but vital rental housing stock.

Policy 5.5.9: Continue to strengthen the rights of tenants in properties with multiple code-enforcement violations that require more frequent inspections ("troubled properties") through education to ensure timely maintenance and safe living conditions.

Policy 5.5.10: Identify and implement programs to meet any shortfall of housing for people with disabilities. As funds are available, increase rental subsidies and opportunities to the most at-risk populations. Obtain and leverage federal and state funds when possible.

Action 5.5.10.a: Develop zoning and financial incentives to designate and build housing for people with disabilities.

Action 5.5.10.b: Modify regulatory controls to incorporate accessible design features such as no-step entrances, wider doors, barrier-free entrances, and other improvements to help people age in place, assist persons living with a disability, and accommodate populations with mobility limitations.

Policy 5.5.11: Monitor indicators of neighborhood change and establish programs to minimize the concentration of poverty or the involuntary displacement of existing residents.

Action 5.5.11.a: Create an interactive monitoring database that maps indicators of neighborhood change including gentrification and displacement, and concentration of poverty and segregation.

Policy 5.5.12: Use the county's Subdivision Staging Policy to monitor the secondary effects of targeted growth policies, including loss of market-rate affordable housing and displacement.

Policy 5.5.13: Continue to use and strengthen Rental Agreements and Rental Assistance Payments to and expand affordability in private and nonprofit owned housing properties.

Action 5.5.13.a: Consider expanding utilization of Rental Agreements. Ensure such expansion does not overly restrict availability of the property for high priority acquisitions and/or Rental Agreements in future years.

Policy 5.5.14: Enhance coordination between DHCA and Montgomery Planning to better facilitate preservation of affordable units through redevelopment. Enhanced coordination would increase opportunities to allow near term, less costly approaches to serve as a bridge to later, more comprehensive preservation efforts.

Policy 5.5.15: Integrate people with disabilities and older adults into communities with affordable and accessible housing that offer services and amenities. Continue and enhance coordination between county and other agencies and nonprofits that provide housing with wraparound services.

**Goal 5.6: Expand housing access through elimination of fair housing barriers and enforcement
of fair housing laws to protect residents from discrimination.**

Policy 5.6.1 Provide education, outreach, and services for residents regarding their rights as tenants and homebuyers under the Fair Housing Law and additional protections offered through the state and county.

Policy 5.6.2: Provide education and training to landlords, property managers, real estate agents, lending institutions, and others on their obligations under the Fair Housing Law and additional protections offered through the state and county.

Policy 5.6.3: Conduct fair housing testing to ensure access to housing choice for protected classes and compliance by public and private sector housing providers.

Policy 5.6.4: Commit to the principles of Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing by pursuing meaningful actions, in addition to combating discrimination, that overcome patterns of segregation and foster inclusive communities free from barriers that restrict access to opportunity.

Action 5.6.4.a: Develop a Regional Fair Housing Plan with other jurisdictions and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.
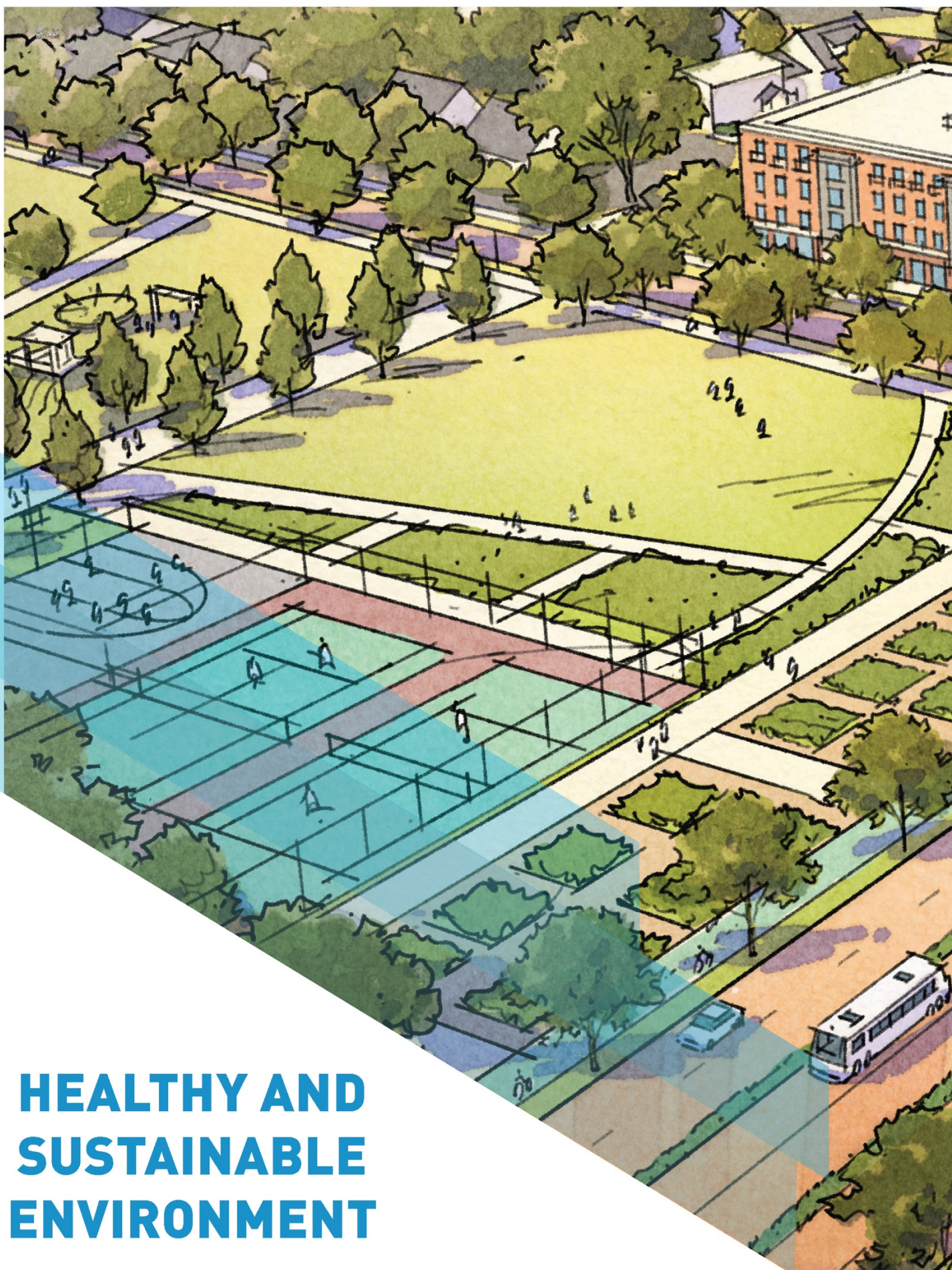
HEALTHY AND
SUSTAINABLE
ENVIRONMENT

HEALTHY AND SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

Issues and Challenges

Climate change is the most serious environmental and public health issue to confront our society. The negative impacts of climate change are diverse and far-reaching: heat waves, increased storm frequency and intensity, flooding, stormwater runoff and stream erosion, urban heat island effects, droughts, loss of species and habitat and many others. Economic impacts include increased energy costs, infrastructure failure and damage, impacts to outdoor labor, recreation, tourism, food production, and financial loss of ecosystem services. These impacts are only projected to increase. Historically disadvantaged and vulnerable communities such as communities of color, low-income residents, older adults, people with limited mobility, and those with chronic health challenges bear a disproportionate share of these negative consequences.

Public health issues are exacerbated by climate change and they are intertwined with the quality of the physical environment. Higher temperatures have health implications already evident in cities. Climate change will affect the occurrence of infectious diseases and may impact our housing and infrastructure and restrict access to healthcare.[10]

Opportunities to eat well and be active are impacted by the quality of neighborhoods and the availability of services and opportunities. The inequitable distribution and accessibility of job opportunities, public transportation, parks and recreation facilities, and healthy food choices lead to inequitable health outcomes. Sedentary lifestyles contribute to obesity and related health issues. Except for much of our parks system, Montgomery County is not designed to encourage and promote physical activity or active personal transit (walking and cycling to destinations). County roads and sidewalks are not safe or comfortable for people exercising, running errands or commuting on foot or bicycles. Our built environment doesn't encourage incorporating movement into our everyday lives.

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[10] "Health impacts of climate change" - https://www.apha.org/-/media/files/pdf/topics/climate/guide_section4.ashx?la=en&hash=118F4FD2E4719EF51A76C0B0865BAEF57BEB7EDB

Montgomery County is a leader in protecting and enhancing the natural environment through a broad range of planning initiatives, policies, and regulations to protect sensitive environmental resources. But many indicators such as stream water quality, forest loss, loss of plant and animal species, and increased imperviousness point to greater stewardship challenges. As the population expands and the region continues to develop, pressures on our natural systems increase.

Vision for Healthy and Sustainable Environment

In 2050, Montgomery County has a culture of sustainability embraced by residents, workers, businesses, and government agencies. Living in Complete Communities, residents work, play, and obtain most of their basic needs close to their homes. Biking, walking and public transit are the major modes of travel in urban areas and are common elsewhere while reliance on cars is significantly reduced. Virtually all vehicles owned and operated in the county are zero emission vehicles. Using a compact form for new growth, infill, and redevelopment has resulted in Complete Communities that reflect the character of our urban, suburban, and rural areas and reduce the amount of impervious surface. Tree canopy and green areas exist in places where none did before, providing cleaner air and water and supporting and encouraging outdoor physical activity, thereby improving health for all residents. Climate change is factored
into all land use and planning initiatives resulting in highly resilient and adaptive natural and built environments. The county pursues best practices and innovative technologies to absorb more greenhouse gases than it generates. Most buildings are net-zero energy buildings. All energy used in the county is 100% clean energy. Reuse, recycling and composting of food and yard waste results in very little municipal solid waste generation.

Montgomery County provides thriving, livable, and healthy habitats for both humans and wildlife. Green resources and the many benefits they provide are distributed equitably throughout the county. Creative programs and public investments ensure that communities that once experienced deficits of these resources are just as cool, green, and healthful as the rest of the county. Residents benefit from improved health outcomes no matter where they live. The county's parks and open spaces provide or enable essential environmental benefits including tree canopy and shade; greenhouse gas reduction; clean water and air; and wildlife habitat. Comprehensive watershed management and park stewardship efforts safeguard the health of our natural areas and improve water quality.

Urbanism as Key to True Sustainability

Montgomery County has been a pioneer in protecting and preserving its natural environment. One of its significant achievements—the Agricultural Reserve—occupies more than one-third of the county's land area (35.1%). Many streams originating here have the best water quality of any in the county. Another 13.8% of the county is designated parkland (some of it in the Agricultural Reserve). Together, these two land uses and numerous regulatory mechanisms and policy initiatives have put the county in the forefront of environmental protection in the country. In 2017, Montgomery County was the first suburban jurisdiction to pass a resolution declaring a Climate Emergency and committing the county to reducing greenhouse gas emissions to zero by 2035. In 2019, the county began working on a Climate Action and Resilience Plan. In tandem with that plan, Thrive Montgomery 2050 aims to help support the implementation of related goals and policies in the General Plan. We must continue to address the threat of climate change and adjust the county's planning framework to help achieve

environmental resilience.

The county was also a leader in adopting smart growth principles in its planning and land use policies, which have helped reduce and contain the negative environmental impacts of new development. It started concentrating new development around Metrorail stations through the implementation of Central Business District zones in the early 1970s and later through mixed-use centers in the 1990s.

Thrive Montgomery 2050 is proposing to embrace "urbanism" and a compact form of development to reduce its carbon footprint. (See more on compact development in the Diverse and Adaptable Growth chapter). A compact form of development implies having multiple options for transportation such as walking and biking, without relying on a car. Compact development will also allow more land for parks, trails and other recreation spaces that promote active lifestyles. It will also help us achieve Complete Communities that emphasize a mix of uses, pedestrian and bicycle facilities and 15-minute living.

These goals are not mutually exclusive. For example, a compact form of development can reduce stormwater runoff and heat island effects using green roofs, other green cover, and building design and orientation to reduce urban temperatures. Of course, we must continue to protect forests, wetlands, meadows, and streams, as they are the principal components of our natural areas and act as the lungs, backbone, and circulatory systems of our natural environment. Street trees, parks and other green spaces provide similar benefits in the built environment. Both ecosystems provide clean air, water, habitat, recreation, and other needs that are vital for human, animal, plant, and economic health.

Goals, Policies and Actions

Goal 6.1: Use a compact form of development including a mix of uses and reduced reliance on cars to create and support a variety of urban, suburban and rural places that benefit human health. Encourage active lifestyles to reduce our carbon footprint, mitigate climate change, and protect natural resources.

Policy 6.1.1: Accommodate growth through a compact, bikeable, walkable, mixed-use form of infill and redevelopment to create long-term sustainability for both human and environmental health.

Action 6.1.1.a: Develop urban environmental guidelines to incorporate green features and amenities in urban areas that will address climate change; provide cleaner air, water and shading, and cooling features; and improve human health.

Policy 6.1.2: Develop compact development strategies suitable for different parts of the county to more efficiently use or redevelop sites as much as possible and create walkable, bikeable neighborhoods. Use smart growth principles and best practices to increase open spaces for active recreation.

Policy 6.1.3: Plan in three dimensions. Creatively integrate and use different building levels, from below ground to rooftops, to provide sustainability benefits in densely developed areas. Examples include using underground spaces for stormwater, utilities, and soil volume for trees; using terraces, building step-backs, and rooftops for gathering spaces and vegetation; and using building faces and rooftops for solar energy generation.

Policy 6.1.4: Direct new development and redevelopment to areas with existing or master-planned infrastructure to support the concepts of compact form of development and Complete Communities, and to avoid sprawl.

Goal 6.2: Mitigate, reduce, and adapt to climate change through land use and infrastructure that
is more resilient to climate change and moves the county to a climate positive future.

Policy 6.2.1: Use compact, dense, urban development to help reduce, mitigate and adapt to climate change. Use building and site design and other development features to address the effects of extreme temperatures, increased and more frequent flooding, and extreme weather events.

Action 6.2.1.a: Develop guidelines and standards for climate-sensitive design principles and materials for new public and private development projects. Ensure these standards include strategies to maximize greenhouse gas reductions in the built environment, including approaches for generating clean renewable energy and reducing heat island effect.

Action 6.2.1.b: Conduct a study to identify areas vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change. These impacts include new or increased flooding and a higher potential for heat island effect. Include an analysis of areas with historically disadvantaged and vulnerable populations most likely to be negatively impacted by these conditions, such as communities of color, low-income residents, older adults, and those with chronic health challenges. The study also should assess how floodplains in Montgomery County will change over the coming decades.

Policy 6.2.2: Meet the county's greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction goals and maintain the GHG reductions over the long-term through innovative land use, multimodal transportation options, energy conservation measures, vegetative and other landscaping treatments, and design standards and practices. Incorporate recommendations from the county's [Climate Action Plan](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/green/climate/climate-action-planning.html)[11] to reduce GHG emissions in planning and development initiatives, regulatory controls, and strategies, paying particular attention to historically disadvantaged and vulnerable communities. Collaborate with regional partners to seek and implement climate change solutions that address GHG reduction and sequestration, adaptation actions, and strategies for creating more resilient communities. Use the latest tools and resources to assess the impacts of planning initiatives in addressing climate change.

Action 6.2.2.a: Develop incentives such as a carbon tax or fee to reduce GHG emissions.

Action 6.2.2.b: Expand the inclusion of electric vehicle charging stations for all new development and redevelopment.

Action 6.2.2.c: Create or choose a tool to apply during the planning process to evaluate land use options to meet our GHG reduction goals.

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[11] https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/green/climate/climate-action-planning.html

Policy 6.2.3: Upgrade the county's water supply and distribution systems to withstand the effects of climate change and continue to meet the county's current and long-term needs for safe and adequate drinking water supply.

Policy 6.2.4: Plan and design new utility infrastructure, including electrical, water and sewer, stormwater, communications, and other infrastructure improvements that incorporate climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies to ensure service continuity during major hazard events.

Action 6.2.4.a Create performance standards for utility infrastructure to mitigate and adapt to climate change and track the effectiveness of climate adaptation strategies for infrastructure.

Policy 6.2.5: Reduce the county's energy demand and generate all energy needs by clean, efficient, and renewable methods that are more climate resilient, less centralized in generation and distribution, and increasingly able to use more local sources of power.

Action 6.2.5.a: Identify and evaluate opportunities for siting alternative energy production and storage systems. This effort should be coordinated with recommendations from Montgomery County's Climate Action and Resilience Plan.

Goal 6.3: Improve health and well-being for all Montgomery County residents and address the health disparities that currently exist.

Policy 6.3.1: Incorporate a "Health in all Policies"[12] approach into policies, programs, and practices affecting all aspects of the built environment. Develop cross-agency collaborations to promote health equity for all residents.

Action 6.3.1.a: Develop Health Impact Assessment tools for use at all levels of decision making specific to each agency and to inform cross-agency collaboration. Predict and advance the health and well-being of our residents using technological innovations for data gathering.

Policy 6.3.2: Create convenient and safe opportunities for physical activity for residents of all ages, cultures, abilities, and income levels. Include walking, biking, and informal activity. Ensure safe, convenient connections to parks and open spaces.

Action 6.3.2.a: Expand Montgomery Planning's Recreation Guidelines and requirements to include design guidelines for informal activities.

Action 6.3.2.b: Identify communities with chronic health conditions and prioritize them for improving deficiencies in access to physical activity.

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[12] https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/healthymontgomery/programs/health-policies.html

Policy 6.3.3: Ensure that all residents breathe clean air and are not exposed to an unhealthy environment.

Action 6.3.3.a: Reduce vehicle miles traveled and the use of single-occupancy cars.

Policy 6.3.4: Consider the health threats of climate change when creating and implementing climate adaptation strategies. Partner with health-focused organizations on climate adaptation projects. Analyze health outcomes data, particularly for historically disadvantaged and vulnerable communities such as communities of color, low-income residents, older adults and other residents with greater health challenges, as part of developing mitigation and adaptation projects to reduce exacerbated impacts of climate change on those residents' health.

Policy 6.3.5: Promote active and healthy lifestyles and active transportation including walking and biking for all segments of the population in all parts of the county, by maintaining and improving built and natural environments. Ensure that all county residents in urban and suburban communities have access to a park or open space within walking distance from their homes. Enhance and protect our park system of natural and built elements to promote and increase opportunities for healthy active lifestyles and physical fitness. Foster human-to-human and human-to-nature connections.

Policy 6.3.6: Use master plans and the regulatory review process to protect communities from excessive noise, especially in places where it is not possible to mitigate all noise impacts.

Policy 6.3.7: Achieve nighttime light levels near natural areas that protect wildlife and enhance our ability to enjoy the night sky.

Action 6.3.7.a: Review county lighting standards for potential revision to address energy efficiency, fixture design, and other considerations that avoid light spillover into adjacent areas.

Action 6.3.7.b: Evaluate the Dark Skies Initiative and similar approaches for ways to limit light pollution.

Goal 6.4: Provide all residents with safe, convenient access to affordable, healthy foods.

Policy 6.4.1: Provide safe, convenient opportunities to obtain affordable fresh fruits and vegetables in all neighborhoods.

Action 6.4.1.a: Evaluate existing public and private open space and facilities and identify opportunities for the inclusion of community gardens and the development of urban farms.

Policy 6.4.2: Avoid concentrations of sources of unhealthy food, particularly in communities with chronic health conditions.

Policy 6.4.3: Study and evaluate options for creating a comprehensive food system including appropriate locations for food crop growth, storage, processing, and distribution.

Goal 6.5: Preserve, restore, enhance, expand, and sustainably manage natural and other green areas to support human life and a diversity of animal and plant life. Provide appropriate and accessible outdoor recreation opportunities for all.

Policy 6.5.1: Minimize imperviousness by limiting and removing unnecessary impervious surfaces while respecting goals, needs, and conditions in different parts of the county.

Action 6.5.1.a: Research and create guidance for innovative development, retrofit and construction designs, and techniques that minimize imperviousness.

Policy 6.5.2: Protect, enhance, and increase the coverage, connectivity, and health of natural habitats such as forests, non-forest tree canopy, wetlands, and meadows through land acquisition, easements, habitat restoration, and ecosystem management.

Action 6.5.2.a: Conduct a study to identify forests and other natural areas with high value for climate mitigation, resilience, and biological diversity. Establish appropriate forest and non-forest canopy goals and strategies to protect plant and wildlife diversity and human health.

Action 6.5.2.b: Conduct a study of the Special Protection Area (SPA) program law, regulations and implementation and determine what changes are needed to achieve the original SPA program goals and objectives.

Action 6.5.2.c: Study the County Forest Conservation Law and regulations intended to preserve specimen and champion trees. Identify improvements to the law and regulation's effectiveness and efficiency, including guidelines of native trees for inclusion in development and natural area protection projects that are resilient to climate change and support native wildlife, including pollinators.

Action 6.5.2.d: Develop a long-range forest quality management plan to address fragmentation, deer pressure, invasive threats, and the forest's capacity to withstand and mitigate climate impacts.

Policy 6.5.3: Design and construct transportation and other infrastructure improvements using environmentally sensitive methods.

Policy 6.5.4: Preserve and enhance privately owned forest land through incentives and other approaches such as easements, forest mitigation bank programs, or transfer of development rights.

Policy 6.5.5: Reduce and manage invasive and other problem species to levels that pose no significant threats to green areas.

Policy 6.5.6: Protect watersheds and aquifers and improve water quality and stream conditions through enhancements and retrofits such as green streets, increased tree canopy, and green stormwater management.

Action 6.5.6.a: Develop incentives for developers to restore existing streams and daylight piped streams during the redevelopment process.
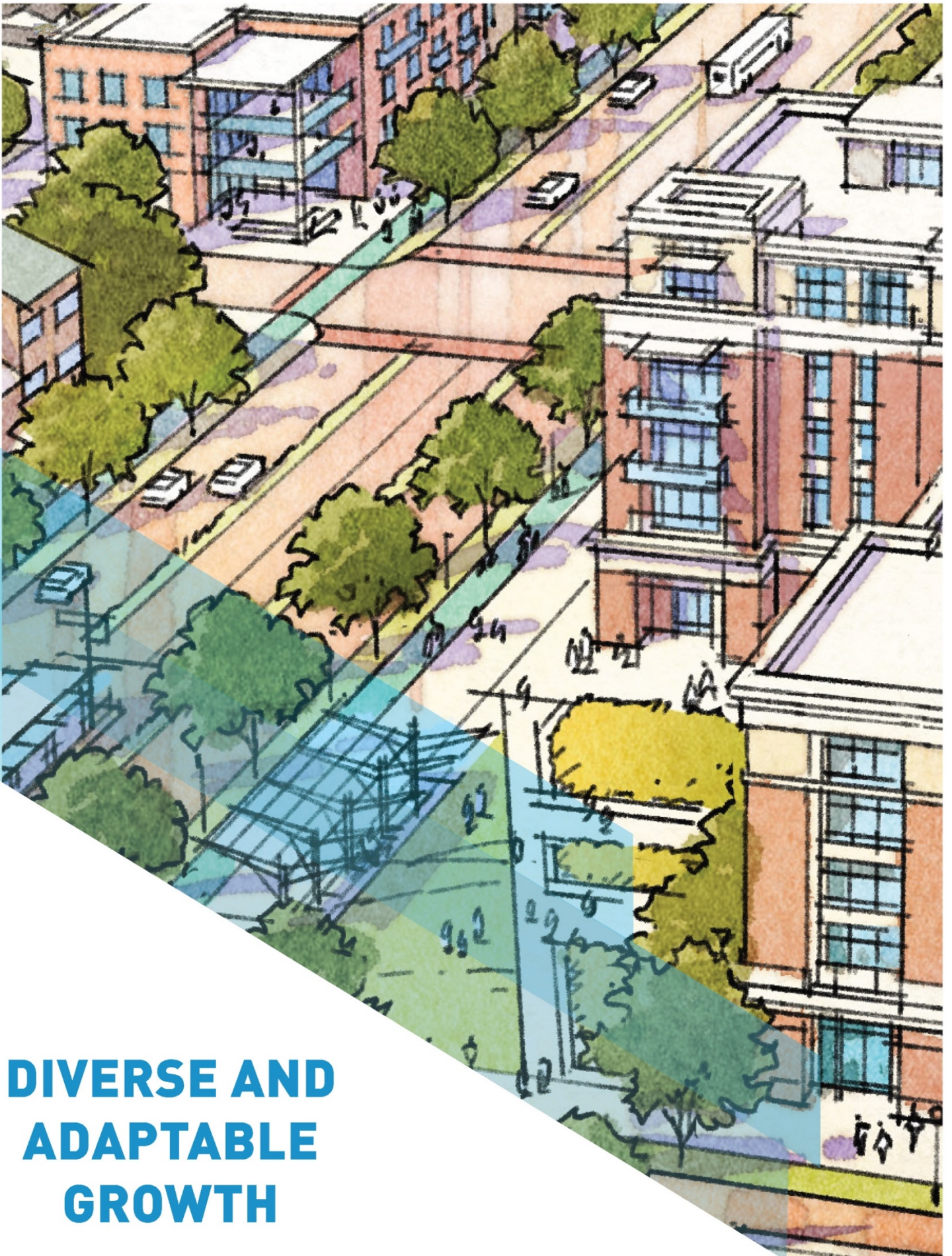
DIVERSE AND ADAPTABLE GROWTH

DIVERSE AND ADAPTABLE GROWTH

Issues and Challenges

The 1964 General Plan established broad planning principles based on a "Wedges and Corridors" concept. These principles generally worked, and the county grew in an orderly fashion into an economic engine for the state and a desirable home to more than a million people with nearly one-third of the county's land preserved for agricultural and rural open space in the Agricultural Reserve. However, the county's current land use and development patterns need to be reimagined to deal with the current and emerging issues of technological innovation, traffic congestion, economic and equity issues, and the threats of climate change.

Continuing the current land use pattern supported mainly by driving is not sustainable. As outlined in the previous chapters, this pattern of development has negative implications for the county's economy, housing affordability, traffic congestion, and environmental sustainability and resilience. Continuing the pattern of development will also perpetuate the county's inequality and separation of neighborhoods by income and race.

The Agricultural Reserve has significant value as a tool to conserve farming, farmland, and rural open space as well as to provide numerous environmental benefits (e.g., protecting downstream water quality) and opportunities for local food production and carbon sequestration. However, the Agricultural Reserve faces local and global challenges including a loss of contiguous farmland, lack of funding to purchase preservation easements, extreme weather events associated with climate change, technological advancements, and global trade disputes.

Vision for Diverse and Adaptable Growth

In 2050, Montgomery County's growth is focused on infill development and redevelopment in areas of the county supported by rail and bus rapid transit (BRT) that lead to improved human and environmental health and active lifestyles. Focusing new growth and redevelopment along transit corridors transforms auto-centric roads into people-centric places. Reduction of automobiles fosters stewardship of treasured resources, including the Agricultural Reserve, parkland, and environmentally sensitive areas. Residents have access to healthy, local food provided through agriculture integrated into urban and suburban neighborhoods and increased local food production in the Agricultural Reserve. Farming and horticulture flourish in the Agricultural Reserve, which provides crops, native plants, and materials that support parks, open spaces, and community gardens throughout the county. Growth and development are served by adequate, timely, and equitable public facilities and infrastructure. The regulatory mechanisms to support this development are nimble and focused on design excellence and achieve measurable, equitable outcomes.

Diverse and Compact Growth

Thrive Montgomery 2050 envisions a shift from the conventional suburban model of car-oriented greenfield development to transit-oriented infill development and redevelopment that is compact, mixed-use, and walkable and achieves the concept of Complete Communities described in the first chapter.

A compact form of development uses the idea of a village or a town center with places of commerce and gathering in the center of a walkable residential community. The compact form of building uses a smaller footprint of buildings placed close together. When designed appropriately, compact development provides a number of advantages over suburban sprawl including efficient land use, more natural areas for recreation and preservation, reduced automobile travel, increased walking and biking, and reduced expense for building and maintaining infrastructure. "When a variety of uses are close together, people are more likely to walk, public places are livelier, and a civic identity develops more readily than in a conventionally planned development."[13]

The principles of urbanism and compact development can be applied in urban, suburban, and rural areas to address the variation in context, scale, intensity and the desired community character. According to *Growing Cooler, The Evidence on Urban Development and Climate Change*, the term "compact development" does not imply high-rise or even uniformly high density, but rather higher average "blended" densities. Compact development also features a mix of land uses, development of strong population and employment centers, interconnection of streets, and the design of structures and spaces at a human scale."[14]

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[13] https://coastalsmartgrowth.noaa.gov/elements/design.html
[14] Growing Cooler, The Evidence on Urban Development and Climate Change, 2008
By *Reid Ewing*, By *Keith Bartholomew*, By *Steve Winkelman*, By *Jerry Walters*, By *Don Chen*
https://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/app/legacy/documents/growingcoolerCH1.pdf

Present

Future

Figure 30: Major transit corridors can be transformed from existing unsafe traffic arteries to a series of Complete Communities with a variety of housing and other uses.

Location of growth

Growth in the county must be transit-oriented with both jobs and housing located within walking distance of the existing and planned rail and BRT stations. Montgomery County should focus growth not only around these transit stations but also on the connections between them—the existing network of major corridors (MD 355, Georgia Avenue, Route 29, Veirs Mill Road, University Boulevard, New Hampshire Avenue, Corridor Cities Transitway, and North Bethesda Transitway). As Montgomery County transitions from greenfield development to infill and redevelopment to accommodate growth in a changing social and natural environment, these corridors provide an opportunity to help the county grow and improve economic health, equity, and environmental resilience.

Managing growth as a mature, built-out county

Since the future is unpredictable, we must be flexible and nimble in our plans and implementation tools to quickly adapt to new conditions and continue to achieve desired outcomes no matter what challenges and disruptions we face. Today, technological innovations such as wayfinding apps can give us real time information expanding our ability to manage traffic in a different way. Increasing remote work and decreasing demand for office space could change traffic conditions significantly. We must manage growth and development as a mature, built out county by maximizing use of constrained land and explore new mechanisms to evaluate and deliver public facilities and infrastructure improvements.

Agricultural Reserve and the role of agriculture in communities

The Agricultural Reserve, which successfully preserved the county's farming, farmland, and rural open space, complements the compact, transit-oriented infill development and redevelopment envisioned for the future. It can produce locally grown food, offers forests, wildlife habitats, and biodiversity, and protects soil, water, and air quality. As the county transitions to a compact, transit-oriented development pattern, the commitment to maintain the Agricultural Reserve is critical to achieve economic health, equity, and environmental resilience.

Figure 31: Montgomery County Agricultural Reserve
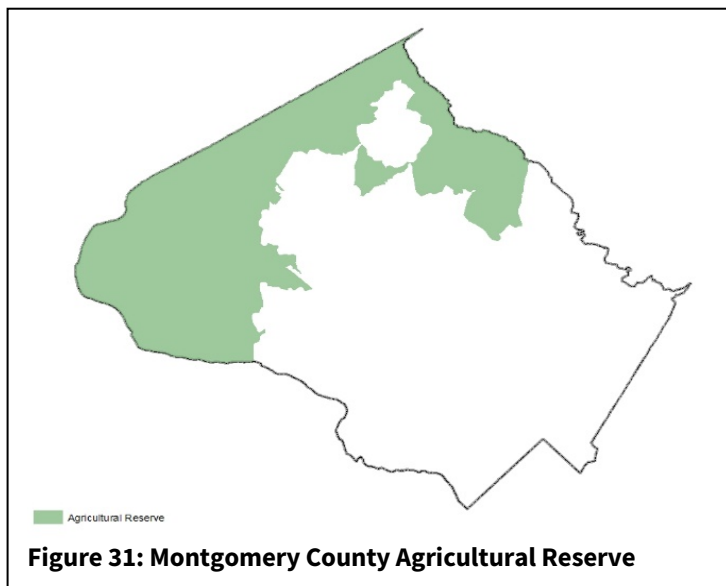
Conserving the Agricultural Reserve will also expand access to healthy food and agricultural employment through the diversification of the agricultural sector, including agritourism, farm alcohol production, and farming in urban, suburban, and rural communities.

Goals, Policies and Actions

Goal 7.1: Focus growth on infill development and redevelopment concentrated around rail and BRT.

Policy 7.1.1: Direct Montgomery County's growth—to include a mixture of uses and a diversity of housing types—to areas supported by rail and BRT.

Action 7.1.1.a: Initiate master, sector and corridor plans to analyze land use and zoning in areas accessible to rail and BRT to identify opportunities for infill development, redevelopment, and adaptive reuse.

Policy 7.1.2: Leverage federal, state, and local tax incentives, publicly owned land, and land investment opportunities to achieve a diverse mixture of housing options and activities in areas supported by transit.

Policy 7.1.3: Prioritize the development of the highest density around rail and BRT.

Policy 7.1.4: Encourage redevelopment of underutilized properties, particularly near rail and BRT, by updating zoning and developing a suite of financial tools needed to catalyze redevelopment.

Policy 7.1.5: Create new and enhance existing parks near rail and BRT to provide an equitable distribution of active, social, and contemplative park experiences.

Goal 7.2: Transform land uses surrounding rail and BRT corridors to accommodate future population growth and varied lifestyle preferences in attractive, walkable, and mixed-use communities.

Policy 7.2.1: Incentivize development and public realm improvements along rail and BRT corridors.

Action 7.2.1.a: Initiate master, sector, and corridor plans to transform rail and BRT corridors and station areas and identify opportunities to incentivize development and improvements.

Action 7.2.1.b: Conduct an evaluation of the Commercial / Residential and Employment Zones Incentive Density Implementation Guidelines for development projects, including the required public benefits, and public benefit categories and criteria to provide incentives for increased density around rail and BRT corridors.

Policy 7.2.2: Develop the county as an interconnected web of transportation and green corridors focused on pedestrians and bicyclists.

Action 7.2.2.a: Identify transportation and green corridors across the county and develop a framework for enhancing their quality, connectivity, and potential to support neighborhood centers for the communities they connect.

Action 7.2.2.b: Develop an action plan to link stream valleys, natural lands, parks, open spaces, and tree-lined boulevards throughout the county with trails for walking and biking and to link habitats.

Action 7.2.2.c: Develop an action plan to convert auto-dominated corridors and underutilized utility rights-of-way into high-performance, sustainable environments that link transit-oriented communities and allow appropriate connections into less dense adjacent neighborhoods.

Policy 7.2.3: Advance compact, mixed-use development surrounding rail and BRT stations in land use and zoning policies and regulations.

Policy 7.2.4: Retrofit single-use areas to accommodate higher densities and a mixture of uses within a 15-minute walk or bike ride of rail and BRT stations.

Goal 7.3: Manage growth and development as a mature, built-out county by maximizing use of constrained land and identifying innovative solutions to deliver public facilities and infrastructure.

Policy 7.3.1: Create flexible and adaptable land use policies, programs, and regulations that allow the county to respond to unanticipated changes in technology, economy, climate change, and other factors by quickly updating the county's regulatory mechanisms. .

Policy 7.3.2: Use public space and redevelopment opportunities to build resilience and respond and adapt to climate change.

> Action 7.3.2.a: Identify opportunities for adaptive reuse in suburban communities for stormwater management and flood control.

Policy 7.3.3: Develop new methods of funding public infrastructure by capturing increases in land value due to growth, development, and increased density. Recover and reinvest this value in public infrastructure.

> Action 7.3.3.a: Identify successful case studies to learn how other communities across the United States are using land value capture to fund investment in public infrastructure.

Policy 7.3.4: Leverage existing publicly owned land to provide public facilities and services and encourage co-location of essential services such as schools, medical clinics, daycare centers, libraries, parks, and recreation centers.

Policy 7.3.5: Expand the use of public-private partnerships to achieve co-location of essential public services with private redevelopment using a compact form of development to make these facilities more accessible to communities and achieving the goals of a healthy and sustainable environment.

Goal 7.4: Strengthen Montgomery County's agricultural character to ensure the prosperity of the Agricultural Reserve into the future. Sustain farmland, rural open space and rural environmental resources to support the well-being of the entire county.

Policy 7.4.1: Maintain and enhance the Agricultural Reserve as a national model for supporting and protecting agriculture and rural open space that provides vital economic, environmental, and health benefits in a major metropolitan area. Study, promote, and monitor the economic, environmental, and health benefits of the Agricultural Reserve.

> Action 7.4.1.a: Conduct a study of the economic impacts of the county's agricultural industry. Identify future trends and opportunities to remain competitive in food production and distribution.

> Action 7.4.1.b: Develop a strategic plan that builds upon the Agricultural Reserve to engage culinary entrepreneurs, leading food research organizations and high-tech rural and urban farmers in food-based innovation and self-reliance in food production.

Policy 7.4.2: Maintain agriculture as the primary land use in the Agricultural Reserve through policies, regulations, easements, and incentives, including those that maintain a critical mass of contiguous farmland. Promote farming, support farmland, and open space conservation; protect environmentally sensitive areas; respond to climate change; and ensure that rural Complete Communities are compatible with the intent of the Reserve.

Action 7.4.2.a: Conduct a study of the impact of the evolution in agriculture on the Agricultural Reserve's economic viability and environmental resilience. Include recommendations to enhance these characteristics of the Reserve.

Action 7.4.2.b: Analyze the Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance, including industrially zoned land, to support an evolving agricultural industry. Identify recommendations for flexibility in accommodating industries and services that support agriculture including food processing, distribution, sale, consumption, and waste management.

Action 7.4.2.c: Explore opportunities to enhance the Transfer of Development Rights and the Building Lot Termination programs to incentivize their use. Create additional capacity to ensure that the programs continue to preserve contiguous farmland and maintain the economic viability of farming.

Action 7.4.2.d: Develop incentives to transition existing commodity farms to the production of table food for local distribution and consumption.

Policy 7.4.3: Increase public awareness of the agricultural, environmental, and economic benefits of the Agricultural Reserve and better connect communities throughout the county to this vital resource through public education and outreach, school programs, and fostering agritourism and ecotourism.

Policy 7.4.4: Provide residential communities in the Agricultural Reserve with improved access to services and telecommunications in a way that preserves the agricultural heritage and the unique character of this resource and supports evolving agricultural practices.

Policy 7.4.5: Connect students with growers and producers in the Agricultural Reserve and with relevant federal and state agencies to help develop a talent pipeline for sustainable agriculture.

Goal 7.5 Promote and encourage agricultural production throughout the county, including at smaller scale sites, to broaden access to affordable, healthy, and local food and provide opportunities for agricultural employment.

Policy 7.5.1: Support and diversify the agricultural sector including agritourism, farm alcohol production, and farming in urban, suburban and rural areas to broaden access to healthy food and agricultural employment.

Action 7.5.1.a: Identify opportunities for adaptive reuse of underutilized urban and suburban land for agriculture.

Action 7.5.1.b: Update the Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance to identify urban and suburban farming as permitted uses.

Action 7.5.1.c: Examine the Urban Agricultural Property Tax Credit to identify opportunities to enhance and expand the tax credit to support urban and suburban farming.

Action 7.5.1.d: Revise the Commercial/Residential and Employment Zones Incentive Density Implementation Guidelines to identify urban and suburban farming as a public benefit.

Policy 7.5.2: Support and enhance policies that provide opportunities for new farmers who want to own and operate their own farms in the county.

Policy 7.5.3: Establish food production and distribution infrastructure to enable county growers to process their products locally and to reach residents through culinary, grocery, and wholesale outlets. This system will increase the competitiveness of farmers and reduce reliance on imported agricultural products and associated carbon emissions.

DESIGN, ARTS, AND CULTURE

Charlotte Planning Department

DESIGN, ARTS, AND CULTURE

Issues and Challenges

Today, Montgomery County's arts and culture sector is considerable in its scope; taken as a whole, it would be the sixth-largest employer in the county. Aspects of arts and culture sector reach into almost every corner of life and are one of the most visible barometers of our increasing cultural diversity. Montgomery County is home to one of the most diverse populations in the nation. The county's diversity, however, is not fully represented in its arts and cultural institutions. Additionally, the county's arts and culture sector faces impediments to its growth.

While the county makes numerous direct and indirect investments in its arts and culture sector, they are not made in a strategic and holistic manner. We lack comprehensive tracking and data-driven alignment of these investments to broader county goals. County artists and arts organizations cite the lack of affordable living, working, and sales spaces as a key challenge to their sustainability. Emerging and stabilizing arts organizations that support underserved communities lack the funding and operational resources of their well-established counterparts. The public art field at large has been expanding to embrace a wider range of approaches, including civic and placemaking practices, but the county's public art programs are lagging in their ability to deliver such projects.

Similarly, not all communities in the county have benefitted equitably from the positive impacts of good design principles. The 1964 Plan envisioned a variety of living environments and encouraged "imaginative urban design" to avoid sterile suburban sprawl. Different parts of the county have achieved this vision to varying degrees. Development in many parts of the county lacks character and appears "cookie-cutter." Major corridors within the county have become auto-dominated traffic arteries, devoid of a sense of place, mostly due to poor decisions regarding land use and urban design. Many residents must drive to meet their daily needs and commercial areas and civic facilities lack gathering spaces for residents to interact.

As we seek to retrofit our existing neighborhoods to become Complete Communities, good urban design and equitable, inclusive planning processes will help resolve conflicts and concerns about the changes needed in our built environment. These design changes include introducing new housing types in our single-family neighborhoods and creating a more resilient infrastructure in the face of climate change. As the county strives to create more places with an emphasis on walkability and opportunities for social interaction, the design of every part of our built environment—buildings, streets, parks and open spaces, public facilities and infrastructure—needs greater attention.

Vision for Design, Arts, and Culture

In 2050, Montgomery County is home to diverse cultures and is a leader in new ideas and emerging trends in culture, arts, and entertainment. Arts and culture is integrated into the daily lives and well-being of county residents and communities, with resources accessible to all county residents, regardless of their socioeconomic, racial, or geographic circumstances. Arts and culture activities offer everyone an opportunity for creative expression, support the county's cultural diversity, strengthen civic connection and engagement, deepen residents' attachment and commitment to their communities, and spur economic vibrancy.

A comprehensive urban design vision strengthens and creates a collection of great towns, cities, and rural villages across Montgomery County. Each of these places has a rich character with neighborhoods built around walkable centers of varying densities. Montgomery County's buildings, public spaces, streets, and infrastructure are designed to meet the needs of a changing population and combat climate change. Beautiful buildings frame walkable streets and welcoming public spaces that engage residents in activities that build relationships. All buildings and infrastructure contribute positively to the environment and improve the physical and mental health of users by encouraging an active lifestyle and exposure to nature at various scales. Streets are designed as a part of the public space network, offering a reliable and delightful journey that encourages people to walk, bike or take transit. Public buildings and major infrastructure projects are conceived by world-class designers who work directly with residents to integrate art, showcase local cultures and set a high bar for innovative design.

All residents have a say in how their neighborhoods look and everyone benefits equally from good design. The county celebrates its heritage while welcoming newcomers. Urban design and planning policies protect vulnerable communities, including communities of color and low-income residents, against gentrification and displacement, and the planning process engages all residents in decision making about the future of their communities. Architecture is used as a problem-solving tool to encourage innovation, increase affordability and provide access to well-designed buildings for everyone. A strong emphasis on design, arts and culture in Montgomery County makes our communities equitable, resilient, and economically competitive.

Good Design, Arts, and Culture Build Resilient Places

Montgomery County is one of the most livable places in the country with a high per capita income. It has a wealth of cultural, economic, and natural resources. However, not all residents can equitably access these assets that make Montgomery County a great place to live. In addition, we are facing increased competition regionally to attract jobs and are projected to add 200,000 residents over the next 30 years. All this is set to unfold in a period certain to be marked by increased disruption caused by climate change, technological advancement, and a higher frequency of unforeseen events such as the current pandemic.

Design affects all aspects of the built environment—overall land use pattern, infrastructure, public facilities, buildings, open spaces and physical accessibility. Good design is not a luxury. It must be considered as a critical tool to create resilient places that can adapt to change, be attractive to workers and businesses and house residents in diverse neighborhoods with welcoming public spaces that build social trust.

As the county strives to increase walking, biking, and accessibility for people with disabilities, the design of every part of our communities will need to prioritize people over cars. Redevelopment will put pressure on the county's historic resources and require a greater emphasis on preserving them for future generations. Likewise, communities in areas of the county where development and upkeep has not been as active will need to be supported and retrofitted with good design interventions. Ensuring that all communities benefit from good design is key to a successful Thrive Montgomery 2050 effort.

The arts and culture sector taps into creative, social, and economic ecosystems, and its practitioners have developed creative tools that can share untold stories, encourage empathy, and empower creative and civic voices, fostering civic dialogue and connectedness. Therefore, supporting a healthy arts and culture ecosystem can provide collaborative tools that support other county goals. Not only do arts and cultural organizations enrich the lives of county residents, they can also become significant contributors to the county's economy by attracting talent, spurring innovation through exchange of ideas, and creating a robust creative economy.

Good design and a healthy arts and culture ecosystem can create a resilient foundation, where the county's residents feel a strong sense of belonging to places that reflect their values and history and are offered equitable opportunities to express their creativity and prosper.

Goals, Policies and Actions

Goal 8.1: Use design to shape Montgomery County as a collection of world-class towns, cities and rural villages, with neighborhoods that celebrate their history, geography, and culture.

> Policy 8.1.1: Use form-based codes, design guidelines, and other innovative regulatory tools to ensure future developments across the county respond to their context through massing, architecture, public spaces, landscape, and street design.

> > Action 8.1.1.a: Create a county-wide urban design vision and guidelines for growth using a rural-to-urban transect.

Goal 8.2: Create and preserve great places with attractive streets and public spaces, inspired urban design, and high-quality architecture that delivers lasting beauty.

> Policy 8.2.1: Ensure high quality design for all public and private architecture, infrastructure, and open space projects using design guidelines, design advisory panels, and other tools. Make design excellence a priority, even when cost saving measures are considered. Use design competitions for major new civic facilities to create the highest-quality public structures that are a source of civic pride.

> > Action 8.2.1.a: Create county-wide or area-specific design guidelines that facilitate the construction of well-designed, accessible, cost-efficient housing at various price points.

Action 8.2.1.b: Create design guidelines for projects that deliver high levels of affordable housing to illustrate how great architecture can be achieved at an affordable price point through simple design and new construction technologies that reduce costs.

Policy 8.2.2: Create a variety of existing and new parks and trails to support and connect existing and new development in Complete Communities using compact development and sustainable design.

Policy 8.2.3 : Implement the [Energized Public Spaces Functional Master Plan](#)'s analysis tool and implementation framework. Promote an integrated system of parks and public spaces where every resident is within walking distance of an appropriate space for community gathering, physical activity, and events.

Policy 8.2.4: Through the regulatory process, incorporate accessible design features such as a no-step entrance, wider doors, and barrier-free entrances. These and other improvements in housing will help people age in place, assist those living with a temporary or permanent disability, and accommodate populations with mobility limitations.

Policy 8.2.5: Use placemaking activities to engage residents in higher levels of social interaction in public spaces. Create public spaces that are welcoming and encourage all residents to gather and interact in ways that build a sense of community.

Policy 8.2.6: Develop placemaking plans that define and highlight distinctive identities for all neighborhoods based on local history and culture in collaboration with local community leaders.

Action 8.2.6.a: Establish and fund a program that invites communities to submit applications to implement their placemaking ideas within their neighborhoods.

Policy 8.2.7: Integrate on-the-ground placemaking activities as a part of community engagement for master plans intended to transform infill and redevelopment sites. Include placemaking recommendations in new sector plans, functional plans, and studies when appropriate.

Policy 8.2.8: Maximize use of county and state-owned rights-of-way to create more opportunities for active transportation and public use spaces.

Policy: 8.2.9: Encourage walking and bicycling through smaller blocks, narrower streets, buffered bike lanes and sidewalks, the lowest possible auto speeds, and no new surface parking.

Action 8.2.9.a: Adopt a Vision Zero approach regarding public service vehicles (e.g., purchasing smaller fire engines) so that street safety improvements, quality urban design, and public safety are not compromised.

Action 8.2.9.b: Adopt the 8-80 Principle as official county policy. This policy promotes the idea that if all buildings, streets, and public spaces are safe and easily accessible for an 8-year-old and an 80-year-old, then they will function well for all people.

Action 8.2.9.c: Create a "Ciclovia" or "open streets" program for the county that facilitates temporary and long-term closures of streets for community events, recreation, and play.
.
Action 8.2.9.d: Create a Parklet program for the county that facilitates the creation of small-scale public spaces to support retail businesses and provide gathering places within rights-of-way.

Goal 8.3: Use design as a tool to avoid and mitigate the negative effects of climate change.

Policy 8.3.1: Maximize the environmental benefits of transit-oriented development by increasing density and removing regulatory barriers such as parking requirements within one-half mile of Metro and Purple Line stations.

Policy 8.3.2: Retrofit the design of single-use commercial developments and car-oriented residential communities to reduce their energy consumption. Promote walking and biking to

reduce reliance on single-occupancy vehicles and minimize disruptions caused by a changing climate.

Action 8.3.2.a: Develop a sprawl repair manual for the county that highlights strategies to retrofit the design and mix of uses for single-use commercial areas and car-oriented residential communities on a neighborhood as well as a county-wide scale. The manual can also be used as a guide to prioritize capital improvement projects and to implement new and existing master plans and studies.

Policy 8.3.3: Make high-impact sustainability features such as net-zero/positive buildings, biophilic design and district-level energy generation a top priority for the design of structures, blocks and neighborhoods across the county.

Action 8.3.3.a: Create design guidelines, regulations and incentives that help achieve the goal of having all new and retrofitted buildings and projects in the county be net-zero by 2035.

Action 8.3.3.b: Create a funding stream that provides incentives for upgrading existing buildings to minimize their energy consumption.

Action 8.3.3.c: Create an Urban Tree Canopy Assessment and analyze trends from 1990 to 2020. Establish policies to regain and exceed 1990 tree canopy levels. Ensure a county-wide net-zero loss of tree canopy through a robust street tree-planting program in coordination with bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Goal 8.4: Make buildings in the county more resilient to disruption through flexible design and high adaptive reuse potential.

Policy 8.4.1: Prioritize the reuse of existing structures where possible through incentives to maintain building diversity, preserve naturally occurring affordable space and retain embodied energy of structures.

Action 8.4.1.a: Partner with DPS and other county agencies to update the County Code to fast track and create incentives for projects that adaptively reuse at least 50% of an existing structure or preserve at least 50% of all existing building materials on site.

Action 8.4.1.b: Update and strengthen the Historic Preservation Ordinance to prioritize adaptively reusing or repurposing existing buildings. Require mitigation and other offsets to benefit arts and cultural uses in the community when demolition is required.

Action 8.4.1.c: Create a program that periodically catalogs building types in the county with a high risk of obsolescence such as suburban office buildings and shopping malls and promotes their conversion and adaptive reuse through design guidelines and ideas competitions.

Action 8.4.1.d: Conduct a study exploring future uses for parking and automobile related transportation infrastructure in the context of impending automation and shared mobility trends.

Policy 8.4.2: Design all buildings and parking structures to be adaptable to changing demographics, technologies, generational and program needs over time. Prioritize resilient design for all buildings and promote ideas through design guidelines that enable buildings and communities to function well during periods of disruption. For example, encourage residential building types in the county to incorporate semi-public spaces such as porches, stoops, and balconies that can function well during periods requiring social distancing.

Action 8.4.2.a: Update the Zoning Ordinance and Commercial-Residential (CR) Public Benefit Guidelines to prioritize flex-use buildings to serve as venues for multiple functions throughout a typical day or week.

Policy 8.4.3: Encourage trade organizations, colleges, and high schools to teach building trades and connect them with local businesses that repair structures and reuse building materials.

Goal 8.5: Sustain an arts and culture ecosystem that enriches the lives of county residents and the vitality of its communities, supporting *Thrive Montgomery 2050's* strategic goals for economic health, community equity, and environmental resilience.

Policy 8.5.1: Provide a framework for managing the resources that the county invests in its arts and culture sector in an equitable and sustainable manner. Establish goals, criteria, and priorities for arts and culture investments that are aligned with Thrive Montgomery 2050's strategic goals. Strengthen ongoing data collection and analysis practices to inform policy and investment strategies.

Action 8.5.1.a: Document all county arts and culture investments and track their impacts in a centralized, easy-to-use database.

Action 8.5.1.b: Create a broadly inclusive Cultural Plan that establishes a refreshed vision, sets goals, criteria, and priorities for the county's support of the arts and culture sector and addresses the processes by which the county's resources are allocated.

Action 8.5.1.c: Create a new Public Art Master Plan that guides the provision of public art and better aligns it with planning processes, development review, capital project budgeting, and county services.

Policy 8.5.2: Provide a framework for an equitable and sustainable arts and culture ecosystem.

Action 8.5.2.a: Collaborate with arts advocacy partners to develop shared service strategies to support the capacity of small- and medium-sized arts and culture organizations.

Action 8.5.2.b: Partner with educational institutions to evaluate issues and overcome obstacles related to the provision of bachelor's- and master's-level art, design, and cultural

management programs.

Action 8.5.2.c: Develop strategies, in collaboration with arts advocacy partners, for building arts capacity as a component of social service and other community-based organizations.

Policy 8.5.3: Support ongoing efforts to develop technical resources to assist arts and culture organizations in addressing diversity, equity, inclusion, and resilience in programming and audience development.

Policy 8.5.4: Improve access for artists and arts organizations to affordable living, administrative, working, and presentation spaces. Prioritize economic, geographical, and cultural equity in the allocation of these spaces.

Action 8.5.4.a: Create an "arts space bank" of underused spaces and allow arts and culture organizations to manage them via an arts and culture non-profit. The "arts space bank" could include new or existing county facilities (such as community centers, libraries, and schools) and underused commercial (office, retail) and institutional buildings.

Action 8.5.4.b: Update the county's Zoning Ordinance to further incentivize the provision of affordable space for arts and cultural uses (live/work space; rehearsal and workshop space; presentation and exhibition space, etc.). Eliminate regulatory barriers to live-work spaces, home studios, galleries, and other small-scale art-making and creative businesses.

Action 8:5.4.c: Strengthen incentives for repurposing historic properties for arts uses.

Action 8.5.4.d: Research the applicability of the concept of "naturally occurring cultural districts" to the county and develop policies that will support these places.

Action 8.5.4.e: Invest in and activate small-scale creative hubs, which could be co-located in community anchors such as community centers, housing developments, places of worship, educational institutions, or in commercial spaces. Make them low cost and easily accessible for all county residents.

Policy 8.5.5: Include recommendations promoting public art, cultural spaces, and cultural hubs in all future sector plans.

Policy 8.5.6: Provide every resident in the county with opportunities to experience art and culture daily
by making public art an integral part of the public realm, physical infrastructure, and public services.

Action 8.5.6.a: Update the county's public art ordinance to allocate 0.5% of the county capital budget to the Public Art Trust.

Action 8.5.6.b: Develop a policy, in collaboration with arts advocacy partners, for allocating funds from the Public Art Trust into county construction projects, such as buildings, parks, and transportation infrastructure.

Action 8.5.6.c: Amend the Zoning Ordinance to make public art a prerequisite of receiving incentive density within the Commercial/Residential and Employment Zones. Update the Incentive Density Implementation Guidelines and Art Review Panel review processes to streamline, expand, and clarify options for the provision of public art benefits.

Policy 8.5.7: Partner with private property owners, non-profit organizations, and county agencies to maximize the economic potential of parks and public spaces through programming, activation, placemaking events, and updates to operating procedures.

Policy 8.5.8: Implement recommendations of the county's Public Art Roadmap in partnership with arts advocacy organizations.

Policy 8.5.9: Partner with arts advocates, arts and community organizations, field leaders and county agencies to develop specialized arts initiatives related to topics such as youth, elder issues, environment, restorative justice, public health, food justice, and other public issues.

Action 8.5.9.a: Develop an artist residency program in county agencies.

Goal 8.6: Ensure all communities benefit equitably from good design, regardless of their location or demographics.

Policy 8.6.1: Develop and implement tools and strategies to ensure that the quality of design of public and private buildings, streets, and public spaces in all parts of the county are equitable and respond to the needs of local residents.

Action 8.6.1.a: Create a design literacy campaign for the county, with a focus on educating residents regarding the positive impacts of equitable and innovative design.

Action 8.6.1.b: Partner with Montgomery County Public Schools to introduce all students to the Thrive Montgomery 2050 vision as a part of the standard educational curriculum.

Action 8.6.1.c: Establish a neighborhood design center within the Planning Department that equitably supports citizens through community-engaged design and planning services for projects identified by neighborhood residents.
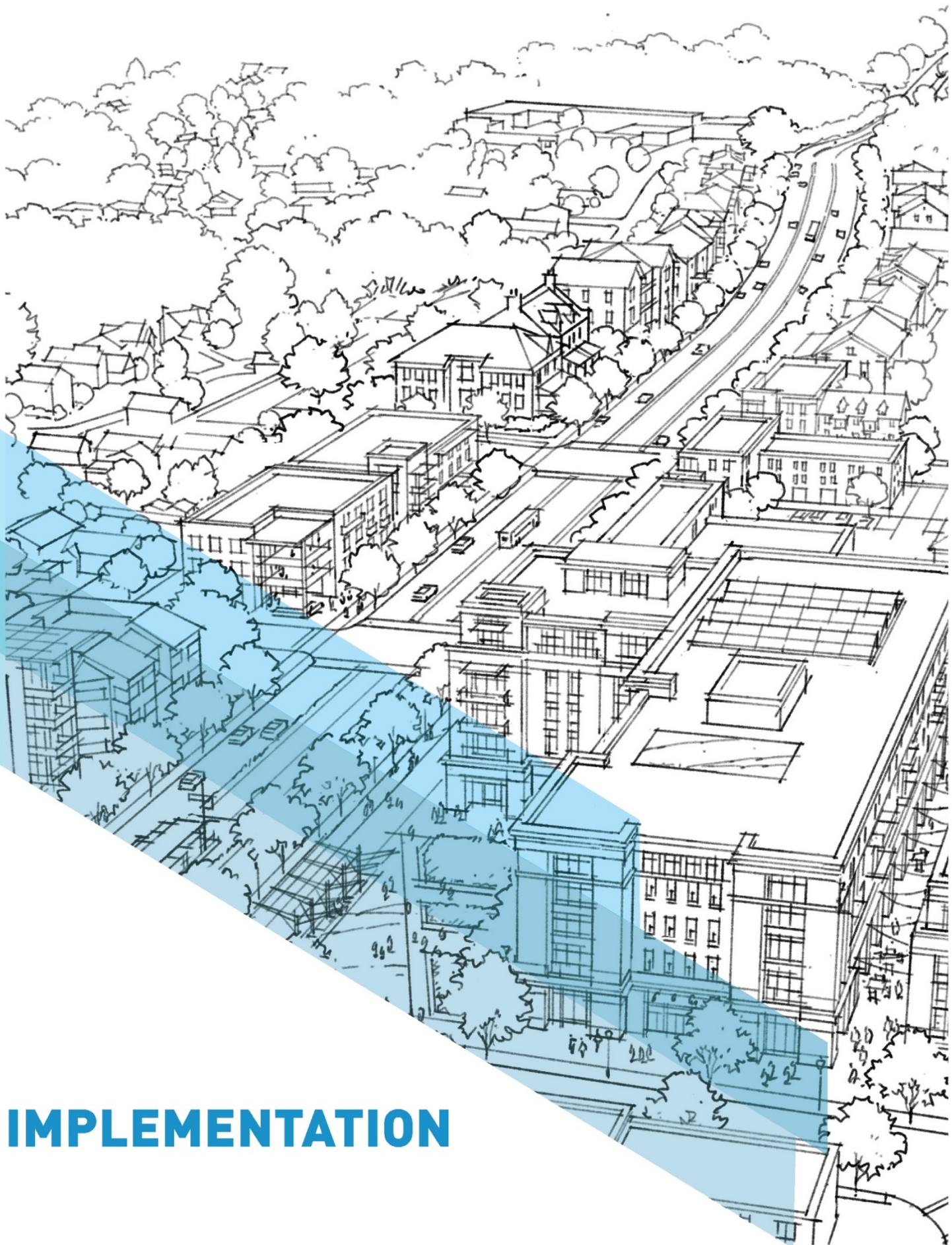
IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction

Implementation of Thrive Montgomery 2050 will occur over the next three decades and will require a significant amount of work and coordination across government agencies serving Montgomery County and state, private and non-profit sectors, community members, and regional entities. The General Plan is a guidebook, not a roadmap, to influence future actions that we know are needed—and will influence future actions. The actions contained in this Plan are starting points, not an exhaustive list. As time passes over the three decades of Plan implementation, new tools, and additional actions will arise to respond to changing conditions.

This chapter details the key implementation tools and inter-agency and cross-sector partnerships needed to achieve implementation of Thrive Montgomery 2050 and highlights short-term actions to jumpstart Plan implementation.

Actions for policy implementation

Thrive Montgomery 2050 contains over 200 proposed actions to implement its proposed goals and policies. Actions are one-time initiatives that must be completed to advance General Plan policy implementation. There are various types of actions, including:

- Reviews of existing policies, regulations, or programs for potential changes;
- Additional studies or new master, functional, or facility plans to dive deeper into the topics addressed in the policies, conduct data and other targeted analysis, and identify detailed strategies for decision making and implementation;
- The development of tools and templates to support master plan and other department processes; and
- Changes to agency responsibilities and governance to impact how decisions are made.

For example, implementing some of the transportation goals and policies may require the transfer of control of major roadways from the State Highway Administration (SHA) to Montgomery County to give the county more control over road design and function.

Each of the preceding chapters list actions under goals and policies. The section at the end of this chapter titled "Getting Started" provides more detail on the types of short-term actions required to begin plan implementation.

Tools to implement the General Plan

Thrive Montgomery 2050 sets the high-level policy framework for the community's desired future land uses. While non-government entities will play a role in General Plan implementation, the public sector— Montgomery Planning, Montgomery Parks, the Montgomery County government, and other government agencies—will all play critical roles in implementing Plan policies over the coming decades. Government agencies have multiple tools needed to achieve Thrive Montgomery 2050's goals and policies. The following section describes these tools and how each will be used to implement the Plan's policy guidance over the coming decades.
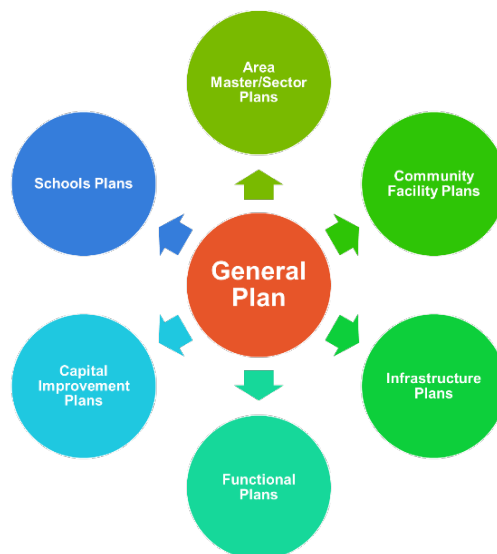
- **Master plans**

  Master plans (or area master plans or sector plans) are long-term planning documents for a specific place or geographic area of the county. All master plans are amendments to the General Plan. They provide detailed land use and zoning recommendations for specific areas of the county. They also address transportation, the natural environment, urban design, historic resources, affordable housing, economic development, public facilities, and implementation techniques.

  Many of Thrive Montgomery 2050's recommendations cannot be implemented with a one-size-fits-all approach. Area master plans will help refine Thrive Montgomery 2050 recommendations and implement them at a scale tailored to specific neighborhoods. For example:
  - Connectedness Chapter Action 2.2.2b calls for the development of a civic engagement toolkit to guide the civic engagement plan for each master plan.
  - Resilient Economy Action 3.3.2 calls for an update to the master planning process to include the development of employment objectives and the assessment of plan scenario employment impacts. Different areas of the county support different levels of employment, so the employment objectives will need to be considered specifically for each master plan.

- **Functional plans**

  Functional plans are master plans addressing a system, such as traffic circulation or green infrastructure, or a policy, such as agricultural preservation or housing. A functional master plan amends the General Plan, but does not make land use or zoning recommendations. *The Master Plan of Highways and Transitways*, the *Energized Public Spaces Functional Master Plan*, and *the Master Plan for Historic Preservation* are examples of functional plans. New and revised functional master plans are needed to refine and implement Thrive Montgomery 2050 recommendations that affect county-wide policies. For example:
  - Complete Communities Action 1.1.1.a recommends initiating a Complete Communities functional master plan to assess neighborhood needs and gaps in the uses/services that

would result in a broad array of Complete Communities throughout the county within the urban, suburban, and rural context.

- Proposed actions include the creation of a housing functional master plan to provide measurable housing goals and strategies for different county market segments as well as an analysis of affordability gaps and impediments to the housing supply (Action 5.1.10.b).
- The Plan recommends an aging readiness functional master plan to support safe transportation options for the county's aging population by addressing transportation topics such as transit use, curbside management, and street infrastructure (Action 4.6.1.a.).

- **Montgomery County Code Chapter 59 – Zoning Ordinance**
  The division of a locality into zones is done for the purpose of regulating the use of private land. All land in Montgomery County is zoned. Within each zone, the County Zoning Ordinance permits certain uses by right and allows others conditionally through special exception. The Ordinance also excludes or limits certain uses from each zone. Within each of these zones, the text of the Ordinance specifies the permitted uses, the bulk of buildings, the required yards, the necessary off-street parking, and other prerequisites to obtaining permission to develop. The County Council, acting as the District Council (which has the legal oversight authority over land use), makes final decisions on the application of all types of zoning.

  The Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance is maintained in Chapter 59 of the Montgomery County Code. Updates to the Ordinance are proposed as zoning text amendments and must be adopted by the County Council.

  Implementing Thrive Montgomery 2050 policies will require changes to the zoning code. Creating Complete Communities requires the development of more varied types of housing than are currently allowed by zoning in many places. Changes in zoning are also needed to build housing that better serves the diverse needs of the population. For example, under the goal of eliminating homelessness, Action 5.4.2.a recommends exploring changes to the zoning code to support the creation of permanent supportive housing units like single-room occupancy or personal living quarter units by-right in all residential and mixed-use zones.

- **Other regulations**
  In addition to Chapter 59, other chapters in the Montgomery County Code also include regulations governing land use and development in the county. Chapter 50 of the County Code contains the subdivision regulations, which govern the legal division and subsequent transfer of land to ensure new developments are coordinated with other existing and planned developments. Chapter 50 also includes the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance which ensures transportation and public school facilities are planned and in place to serve new development.

- **Capital Improvements Program (CIP)**
  The implementation of Thrive Montgomery 2050 will require major public investments in infrastructure over many years. The Capital Improvements Program (CIP) is the mechanism by which the county plans for and funds major infrastructure projects, including new and renovated schools, streets, and parks. The county adopts a new six-year CIP on even numbered years. The General Plan, master plans, functional plans, and the Subdivision Staging Policy are important

planning tools for informing which projects are prioritized in the CIP. These plans provide a link between the needs for specific projects and county-wide or neighborhood development needs.

- **Facilities plans**
  Thrive Montgomery 2050 includes guidance that applies specifically to the design, placement, and funding of public facilities. Future planning for public facilities, including county government facilities, park facilities, public schools, and Montgomery College, should reflect this guidance and direction in order to ensure they are compatible with and help implement the goals of Thrive Montgomery 2050.

- **Other funding sources**
  Given constraints on the amount of money the county can borrow, Thrive Montgomery 2050 recommends consideration of new funding sources to support infrastructure development. A funding source such as the Advanced Land Acquisition Revolving Fund could be established to proactively acquire private property to implement master plan recommendations. The Plan also recommends researching how land value capture fund infrastructure in other counties as well as considering changes to tax policy to use land value capture in Montgomery County.

- **Other resources**
  Sometimes a more detailed level of guidance is needed to implement a policy than is appropriate to provide in a regulation or master plan. In these cases, Montgomery Planning works collaboratively with other agencies to develop guidelines and reference manuals that provide further information on the objectives of a policy and more detailed tactical guidelines on the process for implementation. Examples include:
  o Design guidelines for master plans.
  o Other guidelines developed through collaboration between agencies, as represented by the Fire Department Access Performance-Based Design Guide, 2018. Montgomery Planning served as project lead in drafting this guide, which was formally issued by the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services as a resource to facilitate the design of communities that are fully accessible by the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Services.

Partnerships for implementation

Implementing the visionary goals, policies, and actions in Thrive Montgomery 2050 will require extensive cooperation across government agencies, private sector firms, community-based organizations, and non-profit/institutional organizations in Montgomery County and the overall region. This Plan will likely require some level of involvement from all departments and agencies in county government, so the following list is not intended to be exhaustive. Agencies and organizations critical to implementation include but are not limited to:

- Montgomery Planning
- Montgomery Parks
- Montgomery County Government
  - Department of Environment Protection
  - Department of Permitting Services
  - Department of Housing and Community Affairs
  - Department of Transportation
  - Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County

- ○Office of Management and Budget
- ○Department of General Services
- Montgomery County Public Schools
- Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation
- WSSC Water
- State of Maryland
- Additional regional entities such as Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, and neighboring jurisdictions
- Community-based organizations and advocacy groups
- Private sector and non-profit organizations

The cost of implementation

Thrive Montgomery 2050, as a General Plan, is a long-term high-level policy plan and serves a very different purpose than master or sector plans. General Plans do not typically contain detailed, site-specific recommendations and zoning changes. The role of a General Plan is to guide growth and development from the highest scale—both geographically (here, county-wide) and topically. General Plans set an overarching vision that in turn influences the direction of the implementation tools listed above. As a high-level policy plan, Thrive Montgomery 2050 does not specify the cost of implementing the recommendations of the Plan. This is due to two reasons:

- Future land use, facility and infrastructure plans, the capital budgeting process and public investments, and private development will be the mechanisms to identify specific actions, new programs, infrastructure improvements, and other changes that will have associated cost estimates. For example, the General Plan will not specify how many bridges will need to be rebuilt to address higher flooding due to climate change or how many properties will need to be acquired to provide new schools, libraries, parks, and other facilities. Future schools, transportation, parks, library, and other infrastructure plans will determine all that.

- New implementation actions will be identified in the coming decades as solutions and resources become available and challenges and opportunities arise. For example, the 1969 Plan did not recommend an exact mechanism to protect farming in the county. Its recommendation to protect agricultural lands[15] led to the creation, over 10 years later, of the Agricultural Reserve and the related Transferable Development Rights Program (TDR) in 1980.

Performance measures

Performance measures are important for ensuring implementation of Thrive Montgomery 2050. Given the scope and scale of the Plan, this document does not include a comprehensive set of performance measures for all of the actions identified.

The Plan recommends developing baseline performance measures as a Montgomery Planning work program item within two years of Plan adoption. This work builds on Montgomery Planning's existing

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[15] Objective N. Ensure that agriculture in the region becomes or continues as a viable land use. Guidelines: 1. Protect agricultural lands to preserve their value as farmland as long as the pressures of urbanization permit. 2. Promote the development of profitable agricultural endeavors. https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/1969UpdatedGeneralPlanocr.pdf

master plan performance measurement efforts as of August 2020, including the 2017 *Master Plan Reality Check* study, Biennial Master Plan Monitoring Report, and the Bethesda Implementation Annual Monitoring Report. Based on the final Plan key priorities, the baseline performance measures work will develop tangible metrics for which data is available to track over time. The metrics will track progress in achieving the three key outcomes in the Plan: Community Equity, Economic Health, and Environmental Resilience. Following the establishment of baseline measures, an evaluation should be conducted every five years to track progress in achieving the Plan's goals and envisioned outcomes.

As appropriate, the performance metrics will also help assess the Plan implementation's fiscal impacts. For example, we may measure property value impacts of investments in parks and other infrastructure or the county's fiscal impacts from compact development by enabling the more efficient provision of some county services.

Relationship of Thrive Montgomery 2050 to Maryland local planning requirements

From time to time, the State of Maryland establishes new planning requirements for local jurisdictions, typically through new state legislation or regulations. In Montgomery County, these requirements are usually met through new master plans, which amend the General Plan. In some cases, state planning requirements are met through existing new county regulations or guidelines, which are summarized below and are incorporated by reference.

- **Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Act of 1992**
  (House Bill 1141 Land Use Planning – Local Government Planning, 2006 (HB 1141)
  The 1992 Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Act required local jurisdictions to have a "sensitive areas" element that contained goals, objectives, principles, policies and standards designed to protect sensitive areas from the adverse effects of development. Sensitive areas included streams and their buffers, 100-year floodplains, habitats of threatened and endangered species, steep slopes, and other areas in need of special protection. In 2006, under House Bill 1141 (HB 1141), wetlands and agricultural or forest lands intended for resource protection or conservation were added to the designated list of sensitive areas.

  In Montgomery County, the sensitive areas element was satisfied by the Montgomery County Planning Board's approval of the *Guidelines for Environmental Management of Development in Montgomery County* (the Guidelines). The Guidelines—first approved in 1983 and subsequently revised in 1991 and 1997—are a compilation of existing policies and guidelines that affect the protection of sensitive resources during the development review process.

- **Senate Bill 236**—**Sustainable Growth and Agricultural Preservation Act of 2012** (SB 236)
  Senate Bill 236 (SB 236) requires local jurisdictions to map and adopt specified growth tier designations to limit the proliferation of onsite sewage disposal systems and protect and conserve agricultural and other open space land.

  The law stipulates the creation of four tiers of land use categories to identify where major and minor residential subdivisions may be located in a jurisdiction and what type of sewerage system will serve them. It includes a four-tier classification for all areas within a jurisdiction:
  o Tier I - Areas currently served by sewerage systems.
  o Tier II - Growth areas planned to be served by sewerage systems.

- Tier III - Areas not planned to be served by sewerage systems. These are areas where growth on septic systems can occur.
- Tier IV - Areas planned for preservation and conservation.

Montgomery County implemented SB 236 by adopting a Tiers Map through an amendment to the *county's Subdivision Regulations* (Chapter 50, §50.4.3).

- **The Agricultural Stewardship Act of 2006 – House Bill 2 (HB 2)**
  House Bill 2 (HB 2) requires counties certified under the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation to receive funding for farmland preservation to establish Priority Preservation Areas in their comprehensive or general plans and manage them according to certain criteria.

  In Montgomery County, the requirements of HB 2 are met through the county's existing Functional Master Plan for the Preservation of Agriculture and Rural Open Space.

Timing of implementation

Thrive Montgomery 2050 is not a plan that can be implemented overnight. It requires extensive time and commitment over the next 30 years by Montgomery Planning, Montgomery Parks, Montgomery County and State of Maryland agencies and other government agencies, elected officials, the private sector, and community partners. One approach to prioritizing actions is to categorize them based on when they can be implemented:

- Short-term: Actions to be completed within five years. These are the highest priority actions needed to jump start Thrive Montgomery 2050 implementation.
- Medium-term: Actions to be completed in six to 15 years. These actions follow the short-term actions and may take more time to implement.
- Long-term: Actions that will take 16+ years to complete. Additional, incremental work in the short- and medium-term may be required to complete implementation of long-term actions.

Getting started

Given the scale of change anticipated, the diversity of land uses in the county, and complexity of infill development, the Plan itself does not contain all the tools necessary to implement it. Thrive Montgomery 2050, as a General Plan, is not a tactical plan. Instead, the Plan lays out an overall vision and set of high-level policies. Thrive Montgomery 2050's list of actions guides the priorities for the work programs of Montgomery Planning and other government agencies for the next several years. The public sector tools listed above under "Tools for Implementation" and other mechanisms to implement Thrive Montgomery 2050 will be developed over time. Based on detailed analyses of the issues, development of the tools will result in more nuanced and targeted policy direction and tactical strategies, including cost estimates, than is possible under the scope of a General Plan.

Thrive Montgomery 2050's short-term actions generally fall into the following categories. Examples of the various types of actions are provided on the following pages.

- Further studies to collect additional information, refine the ideas introduced in the Plan, and allow for more nuanced and detailed public policy development.
- The creation of new master and functional plans and updates to existing plans and the Zoning Ordinance to reflect Thrive Montgomery 2050's policy direction.

- The development of new tools and guidelines to provide direction on policy implementation.
- The development of new programs to support the goals of Thrive Montgomery 2050.

Action examples: Additional data collection and studies

Montgomery Planning will undertake a number of additional studies to collect more data, refine and expand analysis of targeted issues, and develop more detailed guidance and specific and actionable recommendations to implement the policies of Thrive Montgomery 2050. Some examples include:

Action 2.3.1.a: Complete a county-wide study mapping the distribution of public and private neighborhood-based services relative to underserved communities. Produce equity-access metrics at the local level to be evaluated and monitored in a timely manner.

Action 3.5.1.a: Conduct a Regional Innovation Capacity and Connectivity study to identify innovation assets in the region such as federal, private, and university research labs; assess the type and quantity of innovations they produce; assess their physical proximity and accessibility to one another; and compare these factors to peer regions.

Action 4.5.2.a: Conduct a study to determine how to apply congestion pricing in Montgomery County, including how to foster equity and distribute the revenue to promote walking, bicycling, and transit.

Action 6.5.2.a: Conduct a study to determine and establish appropriate forest and non-forest canopy goals to protect biological communities and human health.

Action 8.4.1.d: Conduct a study exploring future uses for parking and automobile related transportation infrastructure in the context of impending automation and shared mobility trends.

Action examples: New plans, updates to existing plans and Zoning Ordinance

The implementation of Thrive Montgomery 2050 will require changes to existing master and functional plans and the zoning code and the creation of new plans to reflect its policy guidance and provide targeted, detailed, and tactical recommendations for implementation. Examples include:

Action 4.1.1.b: Update the Master Plan of Highways and Transitways to consider whether to remove master-planned but unbuilt highways and road widenings.

Action 4.1.2.b: Update the Master Plan of Highways and Transitways to reexamine whether to create additional rail and BRT corridors and to upgrade master-planned BRT corridors to run in the median by repurposing existing travel lanes.

Action 4.2.2.a: Update the Master Plan of Highways and Transitway to limit the number of through-lanes in downtowns and town centers to a maximum of four general purpose lanes and repurpose space for transit lanes, wider sidewalks, bikeways, trees and/or stormwater management. Discourage new turn lanes on rail and BRT corridors.

Action 4.4.1.b: Develop an Access Management Plan.

Action 5.5.1.a: Create a "No Net Loss" of Affordable Housing Floating Zone in targeted areas, like the Purple Line corridor.

Action 7.5.1.b: Update the Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance to identify urban and suburban farming as permitted uses.

Action 8.5.4.b: Update the county's Zoning Ordinance to further incentivize the provision of affordable space for arts and cultural uses (live/work space; rehearsal and workshop space; presentation and exhibition space etc.). Eliminate regulatory barriers to live-work, home studios, galleries and other small-scale art-making and creative businesses.

Action 8.5.6.c: Amend the Zoning Ordinance to make public art a prerequisite of receiving incentive density within the Commercial/Residential and Employment Zones. Update the Incentive Density Implementation Guidelines and Art Review Panel review processes to streamline, expand, and clarify options for the provision of public art benefits.

Action examples: Creation of new tools and guidelines

General Plan implementation will include the development of new tools and guidelines, which will provide additional principles, direction, and structure to be applied to the provision of infrastructure and public facilities, the design of development projects, public engagement processes, and other activities. Examples include:

Action 2.1.2.d: Create new design typologies for park facilities in urban areas such as community gardens, dog parks, skate parks, playgrounds, community open space, and picnic and grill spaces. Include guidance in the new typologies that the designs should reflect the culture and traditions of the communities where they are located.

Action 4.4.1.a: Create guidelines for developing a safety component for master plans focused on eliminating transportation-related fatalities and severe injuries. Create metrics and other components for a safety analysis for proposed transportation capital projects and capital budgeting decision making.

Action 6.2.2.c: Create or choose a tool to apply during the planning process to evaluate land use options to meet our greenhouse gas reduction goals.

Action 6.2.4.a: Create performance standards for utility infrastructure to mitigate and adapt to climate change and track the effectiveness of climate adaptation strategies for infrastructure.

Action 6.5.1.a: Research and create guidance for innovative development, retrofit, and construction designs and techniques that minimize imperviousness.

Action 4.4.1.a: Create guidelines for developing a safety component for master plans focused on eliminating transportation-related fatalities and severe injuries. Create metrics and other

components for a safety analysis for proposed transportation capital projects and capital budgeting decision making.

Action examples: New programs

The development of new programs will provide additional resources, educational opportunities, and other activities to enact the vision and goals in Thrive Montgomery 2050. Some examples include:

Action 2.2.1.a: Launch an educational program that includes basic courses for residents and all stakeholders to increase understanding, accessibility, and participation in planning, regulatory, and zoning processes.

Action 2.2.2.c: Launch required racial equity, social justice, and cultural competency training programs for Montgomery Parks and Planning staff working on functional plans, master plans and special projects to ensure the departments effectively engage residents from diverse communities, especially historically marginalized and immigrant residents.

Action 5.5.4.b: Create a preservation fund in targeted areas to help nonprofits purchase market rate affordable properties.

Action 8.2.10.c: Create a "Ciclovia" or "open streets" program for the county that facilitates temporary and long-term closures of streets for community events, recreation, and play.

Action 8.2.10.d: Create a Parklet program for the county that facilitates the creation of small-scale public spaces to support retail businesses and provide gathering places within rights-of-way.

Action 8.4.1.c: Create a program that periodically catalogs building types in the county with a high risk of obsolescence such as suburban office buildings and shopping malls and promotes their conversion and adaptive reuse through design guidelines and ideas competitions.

Action 8.6.1.a: Create a design literacy campaign for the county, with a focus on educating residents regarding the positive impacts of equitable and innovative design.
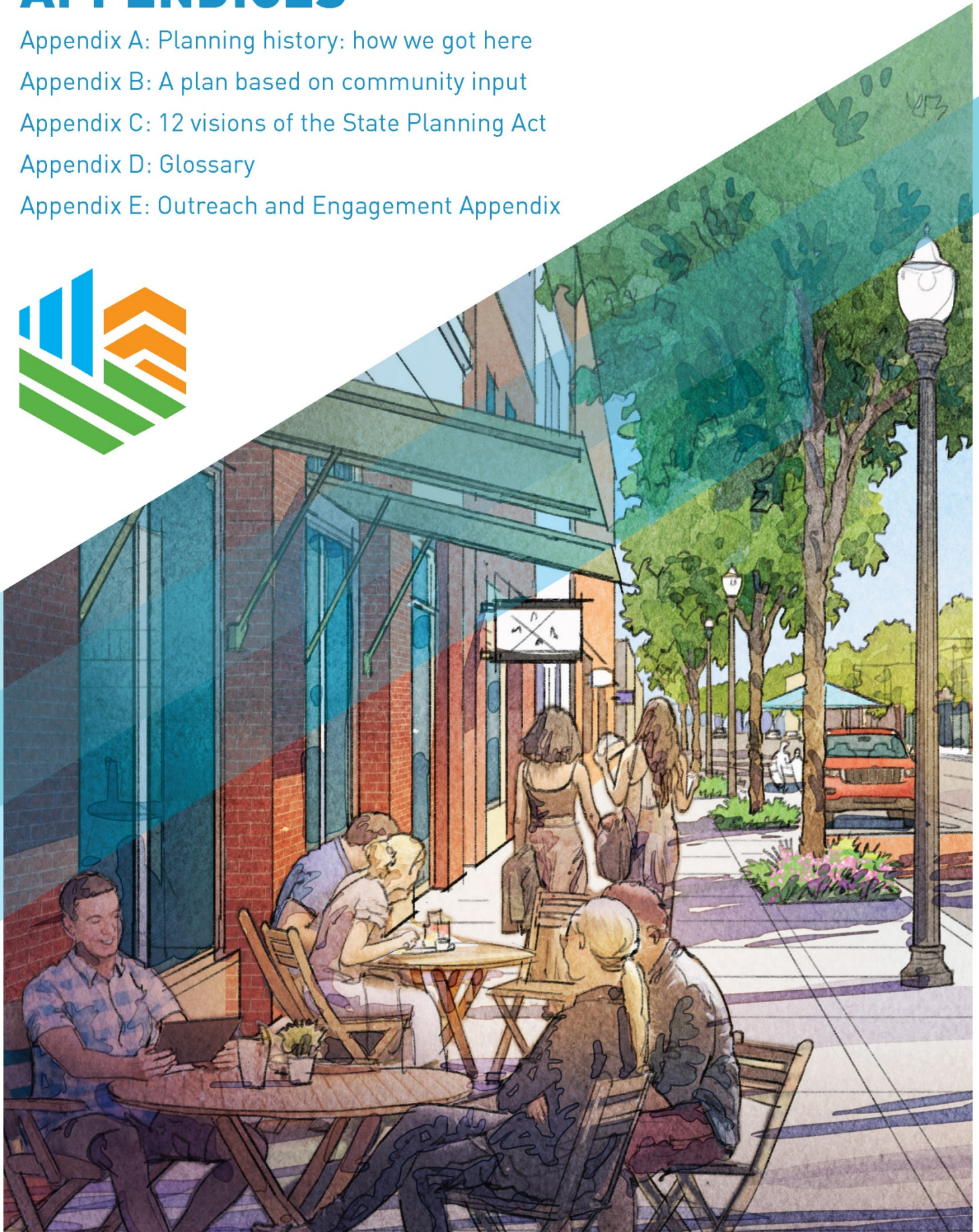
APPENDICES

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Appendix A: Planning history: how we got here

Originally part of Frederick County, Montgomery County became a separate jurisdiction in 1776. It was cultivated as farmland and, despite periods of soil depletion, farming continued to be its main commerce for close to 200 years.

In the 1930s and 1940s, the county attracted a large group of newcomers from across the country to work in the federal government's New Deal programs. They settled in the new housing developments in the downcounty areas close to Washington, DC.

In 1948, Montgomery County was the first county in the State of Maryland to be granted home rule, which shifted the local political power from the Maryland General Assembly to the county.

The first general plan for the Maryland Regional District—the official name of the M-NCPPC's planning jurisdiction, which, at the time, included parts of Montgomery and Prince George's counties—was completed in 1957. The 1964 General Plan on Wedges and Corridors covered the entirety of both counties and set the foundation of land use and

Figure 32: The core of a typical "Corridor City," from the 1964 Plan on Wedges and Corridors

planning in Montgomery County for the next 50 years. Having acquired the legislative authority to approve all master plans in the county in 1966, the Montgomery County Council approved an update to the Wedges and Corridors Plan in 1969. The region's post-World War II employment growth spurred a significant subdivision activity in the county during the 1950s and 1960s.

The 1970s began with the approval of the Metro system; the coordination of planning for Metro; the establishment of Montgomery County's four Central Business Districts (Bethesda, Friendship Heights, Silver Spring, Wheaton); the elimination of several major transportation improvements called for in the 1964 General Plan (the Outer Beltway, the Northern Parkway and the extension of Metrorail along Route I-95); adoption of the Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit (MPDU) law; and the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO). During the 1970s the county's funding priorities went to Metrorail and Metro-related access roads, while numerous other road projects were cancelled or delayed due to two recessions and citizen opposition.

Montgomery County experienced a building boom in the 1980s, beginning with the creation of the Agricultural Reserve, the first of its kind in the country. In this decade, the county saw the first efforts to revive downtown Silver Spring; adoption of the county's Annual Growth Policy (AGP), later called the Subdivision Staging Policy (SSP), to direct the Planning Board's administration of the APFO; and

the first transportation impact tax structure for Germantown and Eastern Montgomery County. The county's biomedical industry also began during this time when the county created a 288-acre park called Shady Grove Life Sciences Center, specifically zoned for bio-medical research and development. Recognizing that academic institutions are integral to successful biotech communities, the county donated land and funds in the Life Sciences Center to Johns Hopkins University and the University of Maryland.

Planning for the revitalization of downtown Silver Spring started in the 1980s but took off in the 1990s and is a great success story of the 2000s, which established Montgomery County as a leader in mixed use, transit-oriented development. The success of Silver Spring in the 2000s was followed by another ambitious public-private partnership to revitalize White Flint in the 2010s. The implementation of Purple Line and a network of bus rapid transit (BRT) corridors starting in the 2020s is another milestone in the county's evolution to becoming a more urban and diverse place.

Figure 33: Montgomery County area master plans and sector plans

Montgomery County has always responded to development pressures by adjusting its land use framework and creating new, and updating its existing, master plans. Today there are more than 60 local area master pans and county-wide functional master plans.
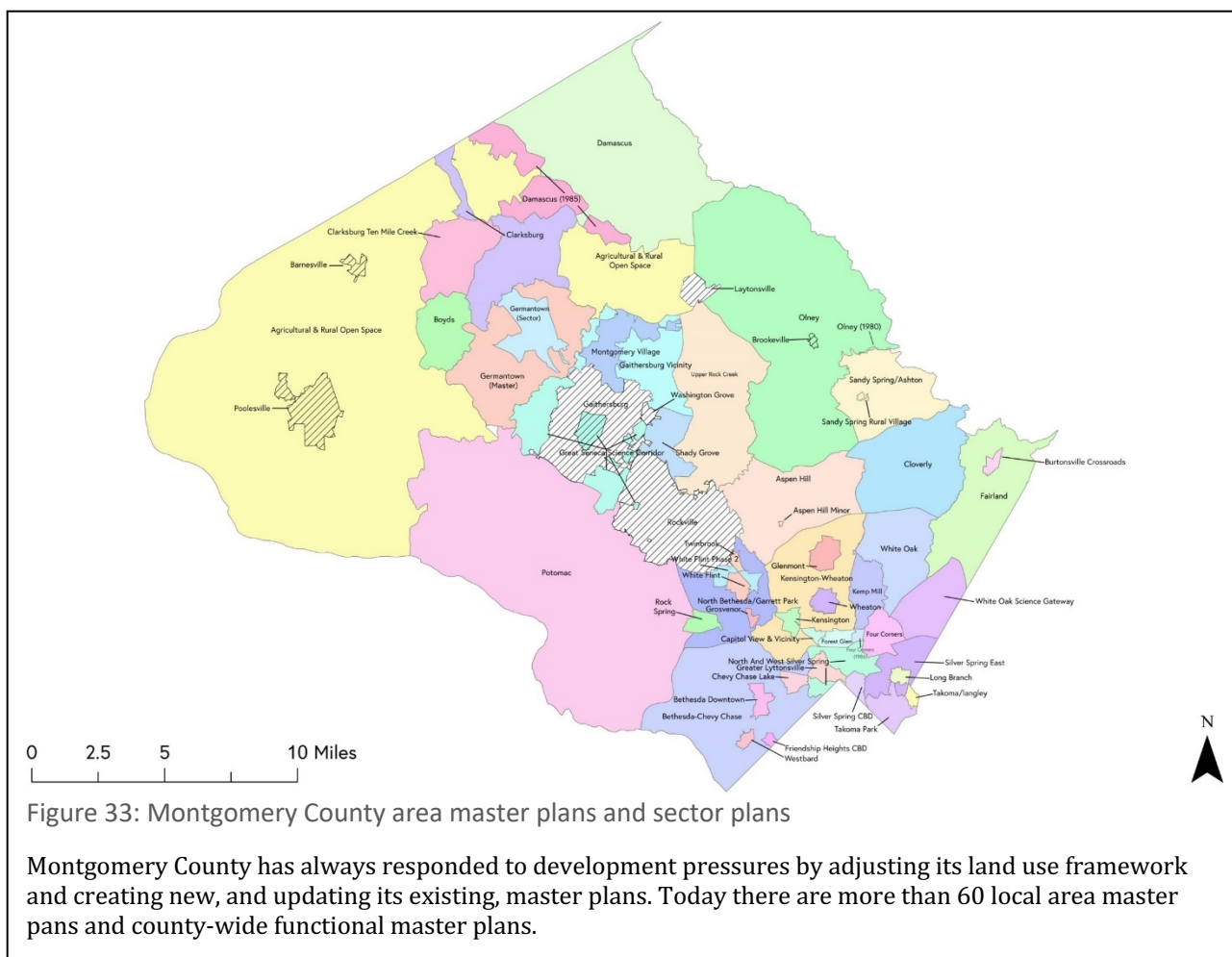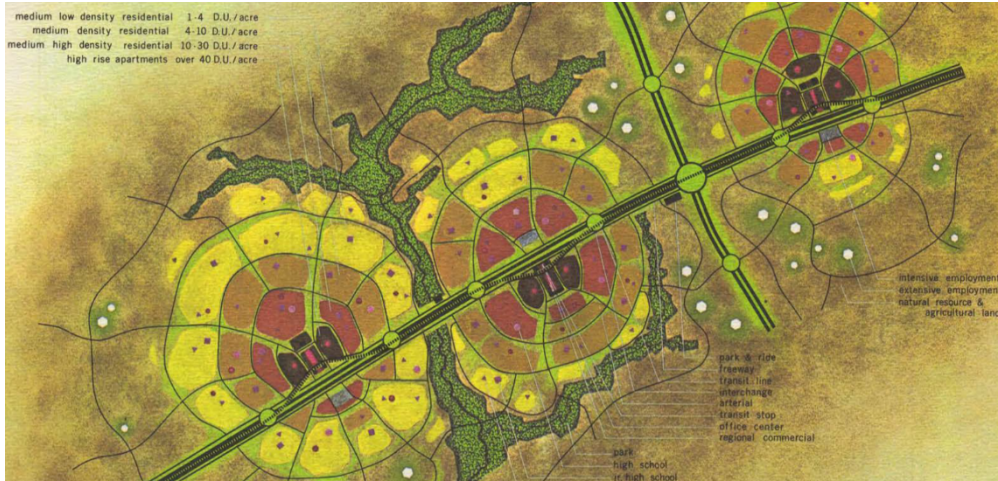
Corridor cities as imagined by the 1964 Plan. In essence, the corridor cities were based on same ideas as the Complete Communities in this Plan.

1927—The Maryland General Assembly established the M-NCPPC

1948--"Council-Manager" form of government, first home-rule county in Maryland

1954—End of legal school segregation in Brown v. Board of Education

1957—First General Plan for Montgomery and Prince George's counties

1964—General Plan on Wedges and Corridors

1964—Federal Civil Rights Act

1966—County Council authorized to approve master plans

1969—General Plan Comprehensive Amendment

1973—Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit law

1973—Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance

1976—Locational Atlas of Historic Places

1979—Historic Preservation Commission established

1980—Agricultural Reserve and the Transfer of Development Rights program

1986—Annual Growth Policy

1992—Forest Conservation Law

1993—Limited General Plan Amendment

1994—Special Protection Areas

2003—First school impact tax law

2009— Climate Protection Plan (Resolution?)

2010—The Purple Line Functional Plan

2013—County-wide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan (Bus Rapid Transit Plan)

2014—Tree Canopy Conservation Law

2014—Comprehensive Zoning Code Update

2017—International Green Construction Code

Appendix B: A Plan based on community input

This Plan is the result of community feedback and collaboration over more than 14 months of extensive outreach by Montgomery Planning, with a particular emphasis on engaging residents who historically have been left out of land use and planning processes.

Staff explored all venues to reach out to a wide spectrum of county population and stakeholders including, middle school, high school, and college students; homeowners and civic associations; and community-based organizations including non-profit advocacy groups and various commissions, county-wide and local chambers of commerce; and small businesses. The plan's outreach and engagement strategy consisted of three phases to coincide with the phases of Plan development.

Robust digital, print, and a bilingual radio and transit advertising campaigns; coverage and advertising in local English, Spanish, Amharic, Persian, and Mandarin media publications; updates though e-newsletters, media relations and social media; and regular contact with community members and community-based organizations and in-person and online meetings accompanied the phases of engagement. Advertising resulted in over a million views and thousands of interactions.

Visioning/Excite

The first phase, which took place between June 2019 and October 2019, used provocative questions to pique interest, engender curiosity and build enthusiasm for Thrive Montgomery 2050 and engage community members in creating a shared vision for the county's future. This phase kicked off with Thrive Week in June from June 26 to June 30, 2019 with five events at farmers markets, recreation areas and cultural events. Throughout the Excite phase, staff participated in more than 70 community events with tailored pop-up style engagement and met with dozens of community-based organizations and special interest groups. These events and meetings, as well as an online quiz and videos, illustrated the importance of planning for the county's future. Thrive Montgomery 2050 was presented as a way to chart the course and as a process to share with Montgomery Planning staff valuable insight into community members' needs, desires, hopes, and fears as they imagined Montgomery County—and themselves—in 2050.

Analysis/Educate

The Analysis/Educate phase, November to March 2020, aimed to leverage the interest and excitement built during the Excite phase to help "make the case" for the utility of the General Plan Update and each participant's engagement and involvement in the process. Outreach efforts shifted to education to engage community members as informed participants and provide meaningful feedback on draft plan recommendations. This phase concentrated on helping all stakeholders to understand why they should care about Thrive Montgomery 2050 and what crucial trends and issues face the county.

Montgomery Planning staff used the department's [Third Place Blog](#)[16] and social media channels including YouTube to highlight trends, explain planning concepts, and discuss issues. Through three moderated panel discussions with well-known experts and community members, Montgomery Planning used its 2020 Winter Speaker Series to explore issues relevant to the General Plan Update:

- the evolving nature of food production and farming,
- the relationship between economic health and multimodal transportation, and
- housing for all.

Additionally, Montgomery Planning invited community members and local groups to use the Thrive Montgomery 2050 Meeting-in-a-Box Toolkit to lead their own discussions about their priorities for the future. During this period, planners incorporated the community's visioning feedback into their work as they started developing draft recommendations for the Plan.

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[16] https://montgomeryplanning.org/blog-design/

Recommend + Review/Engage

The Recommend + Review/Engage phase began with publication of the *Thrive Montgomery 2050--Draft Vision and Goals*[17] in April 2020 and continued with the *Thrive Montgomery 2050--Draft Vision, Goals, Policies, and Actions*[18] in June 2020. Montgomery Planning invited community review of the draft visions, goals, policies, and actions and received feedback from the Planning Board during briefings in March and June. Other briefings took place during spring and summer 2020 for the Thrive Montgomery 2050 Technical Advisory Group, community and advocacy organizations, and the real estate development community. Montgomery Planning staff also received feedback in one-on-one meetings with multiple county and state agencies. During all of these briefings, Montgomery Planning shared the rationale behind the proposed draft goals, policies, and actions, and entered into an iterative conversation about the proposed recommendations and how to best achieve the goal of a thriving county.

As the Engage phase commenced, Montgomery County began to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. In a commitment to safety above all else, Montgomery Planning cancelled all in-person outreach and engagement activities, instead pursuing a virtual strategy to remain connected while physically distant. In May 2020, Planning Director Gwen Wright hosted four Ask Me Anything virtual meetings—three in English with live Spanish translation and one in Spanish with live English translation—which provided a foundation for understanding the draft goals and policies. To enable community members to take a deeper dive into the issues and recommendations addressed in the draft text, between May and June 2020 Montgomery Planning held 10 online Community Chats, two Pints with a Planner digital happy hour events, a Twitter town hall on housing, and three lunch and learn webinar sessions. The targeted subject matter events ranged from housing affordability to LGBTQ history and movements in planning to the future of parks to equity in our communities.

The Thrive Montgomery 2050 engagement approach focused on creating an inclusive and equitable process for the General Plan Update. Historically, people of color, renters, youth, and people from low-income backgrounds are underrepresented in civic engagement processes, often due to the very structure of the engagement process. The audience-centric Thrive Montgomery 2050 engagement strategy was designed to make it easy for all community members to participate by meeting people in their communities, offering various methods and schedules for participation, and providing information in simple, easy to understand terms.

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[17] https://montgomeryplanningboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/item10_staff-memo-for-Draft-Vision-and-Goals-to-PB-on-4-16-20-final-1.pdf
https://montgomeryplanningboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/item10_Attachment-1-Introduction-to-the-Plan-for-PB-on-4-16-20-final.pdf
https://montgomeryplanningboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/item10_Attachment-2-Vision-and-Goals-for-PB-on-4-16-20-final.pdf
[18] https://montgomeryplanningboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Final-staff-report-vision-goals-policies-and-actions-for-6-11-20-PB-.pdf

Appendix C: 12 Visions of the State Planning Act

Maryland's 2009 Planning Visions law created 12 visions that reflect the state's ongoing aspiration to develop and implement sound growth and development policy. The visions address: quality of life and sustainability; public participation; growth areas; and community design, infrastructure, transportation, housing, economic development, environmental protection, resource conservation, stewardship, and implementation approaches.

Thrive Montgomery 2050's (the Plan) goals and policies are consistent with and support these 12 visions as follows:

1. **Quality of Life and Sustainability**
   Thrive Montgomery 2050 makes several recommendations designed to improve the quality of life of the county's diverse population through an equitable distribution of public services and amenities; housing affordability; and better access to economic, educational, social and recreational opportunities. The Plan also puts a great emphasis on sustainability and protection of the county's sensitive natural resources coupled with environmental resilience to fight climate changes.

2. **Public Participation**
   The Plan proposes making the current land use and development decision-making process more accessible and inviting to all residents. It emphasizes collaborating with neighborhood organizations, cultural groups, religious institutions and other organizations with deep roots in the community.

3. **Growth Areas**
   Thrive Montgomery 2050 proposes that all new residential and non-residential growth be located in existing and planned population and business centers near existing and planned transit such as the Metro rail stations and the bus rapid transit (BRT) corridors. All of these places are within the county's Priority Funding Areas.[19]

4. **Community Design**
   The Plan emphasizes the importance of placemaking through good design to create Complete Communities that encourage attractive and lovable places, foster social engagement, build a stronger sense of community, and create social and economic value.

5. **Infrastructure**
   The Plan concentrates all future growth in transit accessible places with adequate infrastructure capacity to support current and planned growth in an efficient, sustainable, and equitable manner. It recommends continuing support of agriculture and retaining and enhancing forests, streams, and other environmental resources in the county's Agricultural Reserve.

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[19] https://planning.maryland.gov/Pages/OurProducts/pfamap.aspx

6. **Transportation**

   A safe, efficient, and multimodal transportation system with transit as the predominant mode of travel is key to creating an economically resilient, equitable, and sustainable place in the next 30 years. The Plan emphasizes walking, biking, and other non-motorized modes of travel with emphasis on moving people rather than vehicles. Reducing the amount of vehicular travel is also a critical strategy toward meeting the county's goal of eliminating greenhouse gas emissions by 2035.

7. **Housing**

   The Plan emphasizes the need to produce more housing of all types and sizes, especially near transit, for a range of incomes to deal with the housing affordability crisis. It recommends a range of mechanisms such as rezoning some single-family areas near transit and innovative financing and construction techniques to increase housing choices for a diverse and aging population.

8. **Economic Development**

   A healthy and resilient economy is one of the three pillars of Thrive Montgomery 2050. The Plan recommends leveraging the county's assets such as our highly educated workforce, health- and research-related educational and federal sector, and Washington, DC region's strength to attract a variety of high paying jobs to the county.

9. **Environmental Protection**

   Environmental resilience is also one of the Plan's three pillars. Continuing to protect the county's natural resources and developing new strategies to increase sustainability and fight climate change is critical to the Plan's vision of a healthy and thriving county.

10. **Resource Conservation**

    A number of the Plan's recommendations--including Complete Communities, compact development, new growth near transit, reduction in vehicular travel, and clean energy-- will help protect and conserve the county's waterways, forests, agricultural areas, open spaces, and other natural resources.

11. **Stewardship**

    Thrive Montgomery 2050 sets a vision and provides big picture policy guidance to be implemented by numerous public and private entities. Successful implementation of the Plan will require sustained support and commitment from government agencies, regional partners, business entities, community-based organizations and residents.

12. **Implementation**

    The Plan provides implementation guidance including a list of short-, medium-, and long-term actions, and which agencies are likely to lead implementing the Plan's recommendations. Many of the Plan's recommendations require further plans and studies to create actionable items in the next five to 10 years. The Plan also provide guidance about developing a set of metrics to assess the Plan's progress in the future.

Appendix D: Glossary

Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU): A residential unit on the same lot as an existing single-family dwelling and used as a complete, independent living facility with provisions for cooking, eating, sanitation, and sleeping. It can be within the main structure of the house, an addition to the main structure, or a separate structure on the same lot.

Access management plan: A comprehensive set of policies and guidelines to define design standards for access onto all county roads including access from residential and commercial driveways, and from residential streets to higher volume arterial streets.

Active transportation: Non-motorized forms of transportation, such as walking, biking and rolling via wheelchair.

Affirmatively Further Fair Housing: Affirmatively Further Fair Housing was the legal requirement (implemented in 2015) that federal agencies and federal grantees further the purposes of the federal Fair Housing Act. Under the rule, any jurisdiction that receives money from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development must analyze its housing occupancy by race, disability, familial status, economic status, English proficiency, and other categories. The jurisdiction must then analyze factors that contribute to any prohibitive barriers in housing and formulate a plan to remedy the impediments. It was suspended in 2018 and disbanded in 2020.

Affordable housing: Housing built under a government regulation or a binding agreement that requires the unit to be affordable to households at or below the required income eligibility. A moderately-priced dwelling unit's (MPDU) income requirements are usually 65% of area median income (AMI) for garden apartments, and 70% (AMI) for high-rise apartments.

Agricultural Reserve: A designated area of Montgomery County planned and zoned primarily for agricultural uses that includes the majority of the county's remaining working farms and certain other non-farm land uses.

Attainable housing: The ability of households of various incomes and sizes to obtain housing suitable for their needs and affordable to them. Implicit in attainability is the idea that a range of housing options (type, size, tenure, cost) exists in the local market.

Area median income (AMI): The midpoint of a region's income distribution – half of households in a region earn more than the median and half earn less than the median. For housing policy, income thresholds set relative to the area median income—such as 50% of the area median income—identify households eligible to live in income-restricted housing units and the affordability of housing units to low-income households.

Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County: A designated 501 (c)3 nonprofit organization and a non-departmental agency of Montgomery County Government. The Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County, in partnership with the community, cultivates and supports excellence in the arts and humanities, expands access to cultural expression, and contributes to economic vitality in the region.

Biophilic design: The practice of designing the built environment with a focus on connecting people with nature. See more on https://www.metropolismag.com/architecture/what-is-and-is-not-biophilic-design/

Boulevard: A multiple lane, divided roadway that carries significant through and local traffic, often classified as a highway or arterial roadway. Direct driveway access to individual businesses is limited. Sidewalks are wide to accommodate significant pedestrian activity. Street trees and medians are planted with tall growing shade trees.

Building Lot Termination (BLT) Program: A farmland preservation tool designed to preserve agricultural land by reducing the fragmentation resulting from residential development in the Agricultural Reserve. A BLT easement restricts residential, commercial, industrial, and other non-agricultural uses on a given property.

Built environment: Any manmade building, structure, or other intervention that alters the natural landscape for the purpose of serving or accommodating human activity or need. It includes cities, buildings, urban spaces, infrastructure, roads, parks, and any ancillary features that serve these structures.

Bus rapid transit (BRT): A fixed-guideway transit system where buses operate in dedicated lanes, either physically or through signing and marking, distinct from general purpose lanes used by automobiles. BRT systems also typically include off-board fare collection systems and advanced transit information systems. The planned BRT routes in Montgomery County include: Corridor Cities Transitway, Georgia Ave, MD 355, New Hampshire Ave, North Bethesda Transitway, Randolph Road, University Boulevard, Route 29, and Veirs Mill Road.

Capital Improvements Program (CIP): A six-year comprehensive statement of the objectives with cost estimates and proposed construction schedules for capital projects and programs for all agencies for which the county sets tax rates or approves budgets or programs. The Capital Budget and CIP cover larger long-term investments in facilities & infrastructure, or Capital Projects. Examples include the construction of public schools, street maintenance, and parks improvements. These investments often take years to build, and their costs may be distributed over time. The proposed Montgomery County CIP is submitted by the County Executive to the County Council every two years and a general amendment is typically submitted in the off-years.

Carbon footprint: The amount of carbon dioxide and other carbon compounds emitted due to the consumption of fossil fuels by a particular person, a population group, a product, or an industry.

Carbon sequestration: A natural or artificial process by which carbon dioxide is removed from the atmosphere and held in solid or liquid form.

Car-oriented development or land uses: Development or land uses designed to attract users arriving by car.

Central Business Districts (CBDs): Montgomery County has four areas designated in the county code as Central Business Districts: Bethesda; Friendship Heights; Silver Spring; and Wheaton. They are also referred to as downtowns or commercial centers.

Civic capacity: The capacity of individuals in a democracy to become active citizens and to work together to solve collective problems and of communities to encourage such a participation in their members.

Climate Action Plan: In July 2019, Montgomery County launched a planning process to develop prioritized actions and strategies to meet the county's greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals. The county intends to finalize a Climate Action and Resilience Plan by early 2021 as a roadmap to achieve zero emissions and recommendations for adapting to a changing climate.

Climate change: A change in global or regional climate patterns. In particular, a change apparent from the mid to late 20th century onwards and attributed largely to the increased levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide produced by the use of fossil fuels.

Climate positive: Climate positive means going beyond achieving net-zero emissions and removing additional carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

Co-housing: Semi-communal housing consisting of a cluster of private homes and a shared community space (such as for cooking or laundry facilities).

Co-location: Locating more than one public facility in one place. For example, locating a library and a park on the same property or next to each other.

Commercial centers: A broad grouping of areas of high commercial activity with a concentration of jobs, retail, housing, transit and other ancillary uses and support services. It includes central business districts, downtowns, and town centers.

Compact form of development: Using a smaller footprint of buildings and placing them close together to reduce walking, biking, or driving distance and to reduce hard impervious surfaces. According to *Growing Cooler, The Evidence on Urban Development and Climate Change*, "The term "compact development" does not imply high-rise or even uniformly high density, but rather higher average "blended" densities. Compact development also features a mix of land uses, development of strong population and employment centers, interconnection of streets, and the design of structures and spaces at a human scale."[20]

Communities of color: Communities that are predominantly composed of non-white people.

Community Equity Emphasis Areas (CEEA): The Montgomery County Planning Department identifies CEEAs as concentrations of low-income households, race and ethnicity, and limited English language skills. Analysis of CEEA's access to opportunities and resources—for example employment,

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[20] Growing Cooler, The Evidence on Urban Development and Climate Change, 2008
By *Reid Ewing*, By *Keith Bartholomew*, By *Steve Winkelman*, By *Jerry Walters*, By *Don Chen*
https://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/app/legacy/documents/growingcoolerCH1.pdf

transportation, education, social determinants of healthy communities, and government services—will inform the way racial equity and social justice issues are addressed when developing master plans and as a guide for the Parks Department to prioritize Capital Improvements Projects.

Community land trust: A homeownership mechanism used to ensure long-term housing affordability. The trust acquires land and maintains ownership of it permanently. The trust enters a long-term, renewable lease with prospective homeowners instead of a traditional sale. When the property is sold, the homeowner earns only a portion of the increased property value. The remainder is kept by the trust, preserving the affordability for future low- to moderate-income families.

Concentration of poverty: Neighborhoods where a high proportion of residents live below the federal poverty threshold.

Conditional use: A conditional use is the grant of a specific use that is not permitted without restriction in the zone where it is located. The application for conditional use is processed by the hearing examiner. Prior to October 2014, these cases were known as special exceptions and are amended by the Board of Appeals.

Congestion pricing: Congestion pricing (also called decongestion pricing) is a mechanism to reduce traffic congestion by charging a fee for vehicles entering a certain area, usually a commercial center, during rush hours. In addition to reducing traffic through shifting some of the traffic to non-rush hours, it also helps improve air quality and other modes of travel such as walking and bicycling.

Connectivity: The number of ways and variety of options to reach multiple destinations. There are many different ways to define connectivity for land use purposes. For example, subdivisions with dead end streets may have poor connectivity with surrounding land uses. A destination may not be that far away by distance, but by travel time. A grid street pattern often provides more options to connect with destinations within or outside a neighborhood or commercial center and therefore, has better connectivity. Connectivity also implies non-physical ways (telephone, internet, social media, etc.) to connect with others.

Cooperative housing (or co-op housing)**:** An alternative to the traditional method of homeownership. In cooperative housing, the residents own a part of a corporation that owns and manages the building.

Constrained Land: Approximately 85% of the county's land area is constrained by environmental and manmade factors leaving only about 15% of land available to accommodate growth. See Issues Report for a full description of environmental and manmade constraints.

Corridor: An uninterrupted area of developed or undeveloped land paralleling a transportation route (such as a street, highway, or rail) or the land within one-quarter mile of both sides of designated high-volume transportation facilities, such as arterial roads. If the designated transportation facility is a limited access highway, the corridor extends one-quarter mile from the interchanges. Bus rapid transit (BRT) corridors include: Corridor Cities Transitway, Georgia Ave, MD 355, New Hampshire Ave, North Bethesda Transitway, Randolph Road, University Boulevard, Route 29, and Veirs Mill Road

Cost burdened household: A household that spends 30% or more of its income on housing costs.

Dark Skies Initiative: A movement started by professional and amateur astronomers to reduce nighttime light pollution, which is associated with impacts on human health and wildlife, wasted energy, contribution to climate changes and limiting our enjoyment of the night sky.

Density: A measure of the amount of development on a property. Density is often expressed as the number of residential units per acre of land (or another unit of measure), or the total amount of residential or commercial square footage on a property. When expressed as the ratio of residential or commercial square footage to square footage of lot area, it is called Floor Area Ratio (FAR).

Design guidelines: A set of guidelines intended to influence the design of buildings, landscapes and other parts of the built environment to achieve a desired level of quality for the physical environment. They typically include statements of intent and objectives supported by graphic illustrations.

Differential or split-rate property tax: A differential or split-rate property tax taxes land at a higher rate than buildings or other improvements on the land.

Digital literacy: The ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information, requiring both cognitive and technical skills.

Disadvantaged communities or populations: Places that are affected most by economic, health and environmental burdens, including low-incomes, poverty, high unemployment, lack of access to jobs and quality education, and increased risk of health problems.

Downtowns: Downtowns are Montgomery County's highest density areas including central business districts and urban centers. They are envisioned to have dense, transit-oriented development and a walkable street grid (existing or planned). These areas are envisioned to share several of the following characteristics: identified as central business districts and/or major employment centers; very high levels of existing or anticipated pedestrian and bicyclist activity ; very high levels of transit service; street grid with high levels of connectivity; continuous building frontage along streets, with minimal curb cuts; and mostly below ground or structured parking**.**

Duplex: A residential structure that typically resembles a single housing unit but contains two dwelling units. It can be arranged as two units next to each other sharing a common wall, or one unit above the other.

Easements: In the State of Maryland, an easement gives its holder a right of use over the land of another and arises by express grant or implication. Easements are granted for a variety of reasons. Examples of common types of easements include right-of-way easements, utility easements, drainage easements, conservation easements, solar easements, sewer easements, and driveway easements.

Most easements are affirmative, meaning the easement holder may use the property of another for a specific purpose. Some easements are negative; negative easements prohibit a landowner from using his/her property for certain purposes or in certain ways. Conservation easements are generally negative easements.

Employment centers: Areas with a high concentration of jobs.

Environmental justice: According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, "Environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. This goal will be achieved when everyone enjoys the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards; and equal access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn, and work."

Equity: Montgomery Planning defines equity as just and fair inclusion into a society where all can participate and prosper. The goal of equity must be to create conditions that allow all to reach their full potential. Equity and equality are often confused, but equality only achieves fairness if everyone starts from the same place and needs the same help. Equality may be defined as treating every individual in the same manner irrespective of needs and requirements. This Plan emphasizes equity over treating everyone the same. (See also: racial equity and social justice.)

Exclusive transit lanes: A portion of the street designated by signs and markings for the preferential or exclusive use of transit vehicles, sometimes permitting limited use by other vehicles.

Fair housing act: The Fair Housing Act protects people from discrimination when they are renting or buying a home, getting a mortgage, seeking housing assistance, or engaging in other housing-related activities. [Additional protections](#) apply to federally assisted housing.
https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/fair_housing_equal_opp/fair_housing_act_overview#_The_Fair_Housing

First mile/last mile: Traveling by public transit, typically done by rail or bus, starts and ends with walking, biking, or getting a ride to the transit station. Lack of easy options to cover this first and last part of the overall trip can discourage people from taking transit. In transportation terms, this is referred to as the first mile/last mile problem.

Floating zone: A zone used for a designated purpose whose location is not fixed by the area master plan that specifies zoning designations to all properties within its boundary. A floating zone is applied to a property as part of a Local Map Amendment process.

Floor Area Ratio (FAR): The ratio of the gross floor area of a building to the area of the lot on which it is located. Parking and non-leasable space of the building are generally excluded from the computation. For example, a building with a gross floor area of 43,560 square feet on a one-acre lot would have a 1.0 FAR.

Functional master plan: A master plan addressing either a county-wide system, such as circulation or green infrastructure, or a policy, such as agricultural preservation or housing. A functional master plan amends the General Plan but does not make land use or zoning recommendations.

General purpose lanes: Traffic lanes that are open to use by all private vehicles as well as public transit vehicles such as buses.

Green infrastructure: The interconnected network of natural areas (forests, 100-year floodplains, wetlands, meadows, streams and their buffers) and conservation parks that conserves natural ecosystems.

Green corridors: Stream valley parks that usually have trails that connect different parts of the county.

Greenfield development: Development on undeveloped land or land previously used for agriculture or left to evolve naturally.

Greenhouse gas emissions (GHG): According to the United State Environmental Protection Agency, greenhouse gases trap heat in the atmosphere. These include:

- "Carbon dioxide, which enters the atmosphere through burning fossil fuels (coal, natural gas, and oil), solid waste, trees, and other biological materials, and also as a result of certain chemical reactions (e.g., manufacture of cement).
- Methane, which is emitted during the production and transport of coal, natural gas, and oil. Methane emissions also result from livestock and other agricultural practices and by the decay of organic waste in municipal solid waste landfills.
- Nitrous oxide, which is emitted during agricultural and industrial activities, combustion of fossil fuels and solid waste, as well as during treatment of wastewater.
- Fluorinated gases, which are synthetic, powerful greenhouse gases that are emitted from a variety of industrial processes. These gases are typically emitted in smaller quantities, but because they are potent greenhouse gases, they are sometimes referred to as High Global Warming Potential gases."

Growth Policy: A set of rules and guidelines to manage growth while coordinating the timing of private development with the availability of public services and infrastructure. In Montgomery County it is called Subdivision Staging Policy. Adopted by the Montgomery County Council annually, it implements the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance through criteria and guidance to establish development capacity for each policy area of the county.

Health in All Policies (HiAP): A collaborative approach that integrates and articulates health considerations into policymaking across county agencies to improve the health of all communities and people. HiAP recognizes that health is created by a multitude of factors beyond healthcare and, in many cases, beyond the scope of traditional public health activities.

Housing Choice Voucher Program: The federal Housing Choice Voucher Program, formerly known as "Section 8," provides assistance for very low-income households (single or family), the elderly and the disabled to afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing in the private market.

Housing First Initiative: A national program that offers permanent, affordable housing as quickly as possible for individuals and families experiencing homelessness, then provides the supportive services and connections to the community-based supports people need to keep their housing and avoid returning to homelessness.

Housing Initiative Fund (HIF): Administered by Montgomery County's Department of Housing and Community Affairs, the fund provides loans to the Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC), nonprofit developers, experienced rental property owners and for-profit developers to build new housing units, renovate deteriorated multi-family housing developments, preserve existing affordable housing and provide housing for people with disabilities. The fund receives revenue from a variety of sources including loan repayments and property tax revenue.

Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC): HOC of Montgomery County is the county's housing authority. HOC is authorized to acquire, own, lease, and operate housing; to provide for the construction or renovation of house; obtain financial assistance from any public or private source to assist in housing activities; and arrange for social services, resident services, and day care.

Impervious surfaces: Any surface that prevents or significantly impedes the infiltration of water into the underlying soil, including any structure, building, patio, road, sidewalk, driveway, parking surface, compacted gravel, pavement, asphalt, concrete, stone, brick, tile, swimming pool, or artificial turf.

Income averaging: Income averaging allows property owners to elect to serve households with varied incomes so long as the average income/rent level in the project remains at or under a set Area Median Income limit.

Infrastructure: The built facilities, generally publicly funded, required to serve a community's development and operational needs. Infrastructure includes roads, water supply and sewer systems, schools, healthcare facilities, libraries, parks and recreation, and other public services.

International retail: International retail refers to stores and restaurants that provide traditional products and services generally associated with countries outside of the United States, often catering to immigrant communities.

Land use: The use of any pieces of land through buildings or open land for activities including housing; retail; commerce; manufacturing; roads; parking; parks and recreation; and institutional uses such as schools, healthcare and all other human activities.

Land use plan: The land use element of an approved and adopted general, master, sector, or functional plan.

Land value capture (LVC): A method of funding infrastructure improvements based on recovering all or some of the increase in property value generated by public infrastructure investment. LVC can help mitigate the challenges cities face in obtaining public funding, while also providing benefits to private sector partners.

Land value tax (LVT): A method of assessing property taxes that only considers the value of the land itself and related improvements, and not the structures built on the land.

Local map amendment (LMA): A Local Map Amendment is a rezoning requested for a particular parcel of land by the property owner or a contract purchaser.

Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC): A federal program created by the Tax Reform Act of 1986 that subsidizes the acquisition, construction, and rehabilitation of affordable rental housing for low- and moderate-income tenants.

Mandatory Referral: The Maryland State law and review process that requires all county, state and federal agencies and public utilities to refer any land use changes/improvements and infrastructure projects in Montgomery and Prince George's counties to the M-NCPPC for advisory review and approval.

Master plans: Master plans (or area master plans, or sector plans) are long-term planning documents that provide detailed and specific land use and zoning recommendations for a specific place or geography of the county. They also address transportation, the natural environment, urban design, historic resources, public facilities, and implementation techniques. All master plans are amendments to the General Plan.

Mass timber: Specialized wood building construction using engineered wood products created through lamination and compression of multiple layers to create solid panels of wood that are used as structural elements to frame a building's walls, floors, and roofs.

Metropolitan-Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG): The regional planning organization of the Washington, DC, area composed of local governments and their governing officials. MWCOG serves as the regional planning organization for the Washington Metropolitan area, working toward solutions to regional problems such as growth, transportation, housing, air pollution, water supply, water quality, economic development, and noise.

Micromobility: Personal vehicles that can carry one or two passengers such as bicycles, electric bicycles, and a variety of scooters.

Microtransit: A privately or publicly operated, technology-enabled transit service that typically uses multi-passenger/pooled shuttles or vans to provide on-demand or fixed-schedule services with either dynamic or fixed routing.

Missing middle housing: The term missing middle housing encompasses a variety of housing types that range from low- to medium densities such as duplexes; triplexes; quadplexes, live-work units; and clustered housing such as townhouses, courtyard dwellings and smaller apartment buildings. These building types were common during the pre-World War II era but largely disappeared in recent decades as single-family homes and large, multi-family residential developments became the norm.

Mixed-income housing: Housing units affordable to a broad range of income levels.

Mixed-use development: A development that typically contains residential and commercial uses in the same building or within a small area. For example, a residential building with ground floor retail is a typical mixed-use development.

Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit (MPDU): Montgomery County's inclusionary zoning program that requires a minimum of 12.5-15% of new units in a development to be affordable to households

earning up to 65% of area median income for garden-style apartments and up to 70% for high-rise apartments

Modular construction: A construction method that involves constructing sections away from the building site, then delivering them to the intended site to be assembled.

Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance: Chapter 59 of the Montgomery County code, which contains the zoning controls to regulate the use and development of all private property in the county. It generally defines the permitted uses, maximum building floor area or the maximum number of units permissible on each property, and maximum building heights, minimum setbacks, open space and other requirements to shape all buildings and related improvements.

Multimodal transportation: Various modes of transportation including walking, cycling, wheelchair, automobile, public transit, and micromobility.

Multifamily housing: A building containing three or more dwelling units on a single lot.

Multigenerational housing: Housing units with more than two generations living under the same roof. Many researchers also include households with a grandparent and at least one other generation.

National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC): The federal government's central planning agency for the National Capital Region. Through planning, policymaking, and project review, NCPC protects and advances the federal government's interest in the region's development.

Naturally occurring cultural districts (NOCD): "A NOCD (for lack of a better term) supports existing neighborhood cultural assets rather than imposing arts institutions somewhere new. Traditional cultural districts are often used as a promotional tool to import visitors to a downtown shopping or commercial district and are generally centered on large institutions."

Nodes: Places where people and transportation routes congregate.

Non-auto travel modes/transportation options: Walking, biking, wheelchair, and e-scooters.

Production, distribution, and repair (PDR): Business involved in manufacture, distribution, and repair of products.

Public open space: Open land that is accessible for public use and enjoyment usually as parks, plazas, landscape areas, and recreational amenities. Public open space includes:
- private open space set aside for general public use as a result of zoning and subdivision regulations or owned by homeowner associations for use of residents in a subdivision or
- publicly owned land dedicated to public use.

Park classification system: For budgeting and planning purposes, M-NCPPC parks are categorized into different types based, in part, on the service area of each park, its physical size, natural features, and the kind of facilities it contains. Montgomery County Parks are classified into two broad

categories: county-wide parks and community use parks. There are several park types in each category.

Parking Lot Districts (PLD): Designated areas in Bethesda, Silver Spring, Wheaton, and Montgomery Hills where businesses have the option to pay a fee in lieu of providing the Zoning Ordinance's minimum required off-street parking on their property. The funds are administered by Montgomery County Department of Transportation and used to provide public parking facilities.

Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT): PILOTs allow local governments, when authorized by state law, to receive negotiated payments instead of applicable real estate and special district taxes for a certain period of time. The intent is to help lower the cost of development in return for a commitment from a developer to provide a public benefit such as affordable housing to low-income residents. https://www3.montgomerycountymd.gov/311/Solutions.aspx?SolutionId=1-5JQAZZ

Prefabricated homes: Dwelling units that are wholly or partly manufactured off site and then shipped and assembled on site.

Public space: Open area or building space available for use and enjoyment by the public.

Public realm: Any open space or built environment that is open to the public for access and enjoyment. Typically, the public realm includes roads, sidewalks, streetscapes, and public spaces. An expanded definition of public realm includes all that is visible from a public space. For example, building facades of private buildings as they line the streets or surround a public plaza are part of the experience of walking through the street or the plaza. A neon sign on a private building becomes part of the perception of the overall space.

Public-private partnership: A cooperative arrangement between at least one public and one private sector entity to carry out a project or initiative.

Purple Line: A 16-mile rapid transit line extending from Bethesda, MD, (Montgomery County) to New Carrolton, MD, (Prince George's County). The Purple Line will connect directly to the Metrorail Red, Green, and Orange Lines.

Quadruplex: Also called quadplex or fourplex, is a residential structure that contains four dwelling units.

Race: A social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance (including color), ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation, cultural history, ethnic classification, and the social, economic and political needs of a society at a given period. This definition is cited directly from Montgomery County Bill 27-19 (lines 49-53).

Racial equity and social justice: Changes in policy, practice, and allocation of County resources so that race or social justice constructs do not predict one's success, while also improving opportunities and outcomes for all people. This definition is cited directly from Montgomery County Bill 27-19 (lines 58-61).

Rail or Rail transit: In Montgomery County rail transit includes Metrorail, the Purple Line, and Maryland Area Regional Commuter (MARC) train service.

Recordation tax: An excise tax imposed by the State of Maryland for the privilege of recording an instrument in Land Records.

Regenerative agriculture: Regenerative Agriculture is a system of farming principles and practices that increases biodiversity, enriches soils, improves watersheds, and enhances ecosystem services. Regenerative Agriculture aims to capture carbon in soil and aboveground biomass, reversing current global trends of atmospheric accumulation. (Source: www.regenerativeagriculturedefinition.com)

Rental agreement: An agreement between multi-family property owners and the county or existing tenants to assist in the preservation of affordable housing units in the county. In many cases, existing tenants and property owners enter into such agreement voluntarily to address the specifics of future rent increases. They are also used by multi-family housing developers to address future rent increases through a Rent Regulatory Agreement.
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Right of first refusal: The county and/or the Housing Opportunities Commission have the right to match any signed bona fide third-party sales contract for an existing rental building in the county.

Right-of-way: The legal right, established by usage or grant, to pass along a specific route through grounds or property belonging to another. In this document, this term generally describes the land, usually controlled by Montgomery County or the State of Maryland, for roads and highways.

Risk mitigation fund: Risk mitigation funds provide financial assurances to landlords to address specific concerns and risks such as damage to property, nonpayment of rent, or eviction costs.

Shared housing: A rental housing unit where two or more people live and share rent, utilities, and other housing related costs.

Single-family neighborhoods: Neighborhoods that predominately include single-family detached and/or attached homes. These neighborhoods are typically in zones that restrict other types of housing or development.

Single-occupancy car or vehicle: A privately owned vehicle that is transporting only the driver of the vehicle, without passengers.

Single room occupancy (SRO): A residential building designed for residents with low or minimal incomes who rent small, furnished single rooms in the building.

Smart electric grids: An electricity network enabling a two-way flow of electricity and data with digital communications technology enabling the grid operators to detect, react to, and pro-actively respond to changes in usage and other multiple issues. Smart grids have self-healing capabilities and enable electricity customers to become active participants.

Smart growth: Smart growth refers to a planning philosophy emphasizing a compact pattern of development that avoids sprawl by concentrating residential, commercial, and others uses and public services in transit accessible centers to minimize auto travel and encourage walking, bicycling, and transit.

Social capital: Social capital refers to the effective functioning of social groups through strong interpersonal relationships, a sense of belonging, shared norms and values, diversity, trust, participation, and reciprocity.

Social justice: Equal access to wealth, opportunity, and privileges. It encompasses the idea that no individual and group should have a disproportionately higher share of political and economic power than all other individuals and groups leading to a fair and equal society.

Sprawl: A pattern of low-density suburban development that is highly dependent upon the automobile as the main form of travel and is considered the source of today's traffic congestion, environmental degradation and other issues associated with the growth of suburbs since at least World War II.

Stormwater management: The collection, conveyance, storage, treatment, and disposal of stormwater runoff to prevent accelerated channel erosion, increased flood damage, and degradation of water quality.

Streetscape: The improvements within and adjoining a street right-of-way that influence our perception of streets. It includes the width of the roadway, street trees and landscaping, sidewalk/pavement, street lighting, and other street furniture.

Subdivision staging policy: See growth policy.

Sustainability: According to the United Nations, sustainability is "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." In its discussion of sustainable development, the United Nations notes: "For sustainable development to be achieved, it is crucial to harmonize three core elements: economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection. These elements are interconnected, and all are crucial for the well-being of individuals and societies."

Tax increment financing (TIF): A tool that subsidizes new development by refunding or diverting a portion of the tax increase resulting from redevelopment of a property to help finance development in an area or (less frequently) on a project site.

Town centers: Town centers are similar to downtowns but generally feature less intense development and cover a smaller geographic area. They typically have high- to moderate-intensity residential development, including multi-family buildings and townhouses, and retail (existing or planned). Town centers share the following characteristics: a regional or neighborhood-serving retail node with housing and other uses; medium to high levels of pedestrian and bicyclist activity; medium levels of existing or planned transit service; a street grid that ties into the surrounding streets;

continuous building frontage along streets, with some curb cuts; a mix of structured and underground parking as well as surface parking lots.

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR): A zoning mechanism that, in Montgomery County, grants property owners in the Agricultural Reserve one development right for each five acres of land. These development rights can be sold (transferred) to landowners or developers who can use them to develop at a higher density in designated areas elsewhere in the county.

Transit-oriented Development (TOD): A mixed-use development within walking distance (up to one-half mile) of a transit stop. TODs typically have sufficient development density to support frequent transit service and a mix of residential, retail, office, and public uses in a walkable environment, making it convenient for residents and employees to travel by transit, bicycle, or foot.

Transportation networks: A set of transportation facilities including highways and roads, rail lines, transit facilities, trails, and bike paths that together form the transportation system of a jurisdiction or a region.

Tree canopy: The layer of leaves, branches, and stems of trees that cover the ground when viewed from above and that can be measured as a percentage of a land area shaded by trees.

Triplex: A residential structure that contains three units.

Underutilized properties: A vacant property or one that is developed at an amount less than permitted by the applicable zoning controls.

Urbanism: The best characteristics of cities and centers of human settlements including a compact building form; shorter distances between destinations; a mix of uses such as a mix of living and work places in a variety of buildings in one place; and streets that are safe for walking, biking and other forms
of travel without being dominated by vehicles.

Urban design: The process of giving form, shape, and character to the arrangement of buildings on specific sites, in whole neighborhoods, or throughout a community. Urban design blends architecture, landscaping, and city planning concepts to make an urban area accessible, attractive, and functional.

Urban heat island effect: Concentrated areas of high-density developments that experience higher temperatures than their surroundings. Heat islands can affect communities by increasing summertime peak energy demand, air conditioning costs, air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, heat-related illness and mortality, and water pollution.

Universal design: Design of the built environment that can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, and ability or disability.

Vision Zero: A strategy to eliminate all transportation-related fatalities and severe injuries. Vision Zero starts with the ethical belief that everyone has the right to move safely in their communities, and that system designers and policy makers share the responsibility to ensure safe systems for travel.

Vehicle miles traveled (VMT): The amount of travel for all vehicles in a geographic region over a given period of time.

Voluntary Rent Guidelines: Established annually by the Montgomery County Executive, these are suggested rent increase guidelines based on the rental component of the Consumer Price Index for the Baltimore-Washington Metropolitan Area.
https://montgomerycountymd.gov/DHCA/housing/landlordtenant/voluntary_rent_guideline.html

Vulnerable users: According to the National Institute of Health's Library of Medicine, these are road users most at risk in traffic, i.e. those unprotected by an outside shield. Pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists, and wheelchair users are considered vulnerable since they have little or no external protective devices that would absorb energy in a collision.

Vulnerable population, marginalized communities or population, disadvantaged population, disenfranchised communities or populations: See disadvantaged communities.

Wedges and Corridors: The planning framework underlying the 1964 General Plan[21] for Montgomery and Prince George's counties. The concept was created in 1960 for the entire Washington, DC, region. The corridors were the major interstate highways radiating out of Washington, DC, which was envisioned to be the major employment center of the region. Each corridor was meant to have a string of cities (corridor cities) designed to accommodate most future residential. The wedges were the triangular-shaped pieces of land between the corridors.

Wraparound Services: The practice of providing, or making available, all the various services that a person might need on the homelessness spectrum.

Zero emission vehicle: A vehicle that never emits exhaust gas from the onboard source of power.

Zone: A land classification under the Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance intended to regulate the land uses and buildings permitted in each zone. Certain uses are permitted by right and others as conditional uses. Any use not expressly permitted is prohibited. A zone also regulates building height, setback open space and other requirements.

Zoning: The practice of classifying different areas and properties in a jurisdiction into zones for the purpose of regulating the use and development of private land. In Montgomery County, zoning is administered through the Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance. The Zoning Ordinance text specifies the permitted uses within each zone, the maximum size and bulk of buildings, the minimum required front, side and back yards, the minimum off-street parking, and other prerequisites to obtaining permission to build on a property.

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The Plan process

The WORKING DRAFT PLAN is prepared by the Montgomery County Planning Department for presentation to the Montgomery County Planning Board. The Planning Board reviews the Working Draft Plan, makes preliminary changes as appropriate, and approves the Plan for public hearing. After the Planning Board's changes are made, the document becomes the Public Hearing Draft Plan.

The PUBLIC HEARING DRAFT PLAN is the formal proposal to amend the current General Plan. Its recommendations are not necessarily those of the Planning Board; it is prepared for the purpose of receiving public testimony. The Planning Board holds a public hearing and receives testimony, after which it holds public work sessions to review testimony and revise the Public Hearing Draft Plan as appropriate. When the Planning Board's changes are made, the document becomes the Planning Board Draft Plan.

The PLANNING BOARD DRAFT PLAN is the Planning Board's recommended Plan and reflects their revisions to the Public Hearing Draft Plan. The Regional District Act requires the Planning Board to transmit a master plan (or a General Plan) to the County Council with copies to the County Executive who must, within 60 days, prepare and transmit a fiscal impact analysis of the Planning Board Draft Plan to the County Council. The County Executive may also forward other comments and recommendations to the County Council.

After receiving the County Executive's comments, the County Council holds a public hearing to receive public testimony. After the hearing record is closed, the relevant Council committee holds public work sessions to review testimony, then makes recommendations to the County Council. The Council holds work sessions, then adopts a resolution approving the Planning Board Draft, as revised.

After County Council approval, the plan is forwarded to The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission for adoption. Once adopted by the Commission, the plan officially amends the master plans, functional plans, and sector plans cited in the Commission's adoption resolution.

Thrive Montgomery 2050
Public Hearing Draft Plan