Thrive Montgomery 2050
Advocacy Packet

Spring 2021

What is Thrive Montgomery 2050?

Thrive Montgomery 2050 (or "Thrive" for short) is Montgomery County's general plan update. It is the blueprint for how and where the county will grow over the next 30+ years. Thrive touches issues of housing, land use, transportation, the environment, and more. On its own, it doesn't change any laws, but Thrive will set the policy agenda for the County Council, influence the Planning Department's work program, and impact all future master plans.

You can learn more about Thrive here and read the most up-to-date version of Thrive here.

What is in this advocacy packet?

- Thrive 2050 Fact Sheet
- How to sign up to testify
- What to expect at the public hearing
- How to write testimony
- Talking points
- Sample testimony

Who is Montgomery for All?

Montgomery for All is a grassroots, community-led group advocating for sustainable and inclusive land use, housing, and transit policies in Montgomery County, Maryland. Montgomery for All is organized by the Coalition for Smarter Growth.

Our mission is to create a more affordable, equitable, environmentally sustainable, prosperous county through better land use, housing, and transit decisions. We first came together to advocate around the update of Montgomery County's general plan, Thrive Montgomery 2050. You can read our platform here (also available in Spanish here!).

After winning our vision in Thrive 2050, our advocacy will ensure that the general plan is implemented as rapidly, effectively, and equitably as possible. We seek to have the county's diversity reflected in community planning processes, including a diversity of ages, races, ethnicities, religions, abilities, incomes, and geography.

Reach out!

Don't be afraid to reach out to our Maryland Advocacy Manager and Montgomery for All organizer Jane Lyons at jane@smartergrowth.net. She is happy to help you write your testimony, review your testimony, or answer any questions you might have!

Thrive 2050 Fact Sheet

Available in [English](#), [Spanish](#), [Chinese](#), [Persian](#), [French](#), [Greek](#), and [Korean](#) from MC Planning

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

HOW TO KEEP MONTGOMERY COUNTY THRIVING FOR THE NEXT 30 YEARS

Montgomery County's General Plan is the blueprint and guiding policy document for its future growth and development. The Montgomery County Planning Department is currently updating the General Plan, called Thrive Montgomery 2050. The updated plan will include community-informed and data-driven recommendations and actions for land use, housing, transportation, environment, equity, design, arts and culture, parks and open spaces and the economy. The Thrive Montgomery 2050 Working Draft Plan will be released for public review on September 24th. This document provides a brief overview of Montgomery Planning's proposal to keep Montgomery County thriving for the next 30 years.

Thrive Montgomery 2050 Vision

In 2050, Montgomery County is a vibrant and welcoming place where all people thrive with equitable access to attainable housing, healthy food, opportunities for physical activity, parks and open spaces, employment, education, services and a variety of travel options. No longer a suburban bedroom community, Montgomery County has diversity in population, in living and working experiences, in modes of travel, and in natural and built resources. People from all over the world choose to live, work, grow and age here.

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

- Urban
- Attainable, affordable and suitable
- Socially connected
- Active
- Safe
- Inclusive
- Flexible
- Resilient
- Competitive
- Inspiring

The Target — Three Major Outcomes

Economic Health

We want to ensure a vibrant, strong and competitive economy by attracting and maintaining major employers, continuing to enhance our federal campuses, supporting small businesses and innovation, and attracting and retaining a high-quality, diverse workforce.

Equity

We want to create a place where all residents have equal access to attainable housing, healthy foods, employment, transportation, education and more.

Environmental Resilience

We must use the best strategies to fight climate change and mitigate the impact of both planned changes and unexpected events and continue to preserve our natural resources.

ThriveMontgomery.com   MontgomeryPlanning.org

Core Themes

Based on community conversations, expert interviews, analysis and research, the Thrive Montgomery 2050 Plan recommends addressing the challenges Montgomery County faces and planning for growth through a series of goals, policies and actions related to these core themes:

- Compact form of development/urbanism.
- Corridors are the place for new growth.
- Stop planning for cars.
- Eradicate greenhouse gas emissions.
- Attainable housing for all income levels.

- Evolution of single-family neighborhoods near transit.
- A diverse county.
- Champion the importance of place.
- Regional solutions and strategies.

Thrive Montgomery 2050 contains eight chapters that all relate to the three outcomes.
Visit **ThriveMontgomery.com** to review in further detail.

Design, Arts and Culture

Complete Communities

Diverse and Adaptable Growth

Connectedness

ECONOMIC HEALTH COMMUNITY EQUITY ENVIRONMENTAL RESILIENCE

Healthy and Sustainable Environment

Resilient Economy

Affordability and Attainability

Safe and Efficient Travel

Get Involved With Your Future

Visit **ThriveMontgomery.com** for more information on how you can give feedback on the Thrive Montgomery 2050 recommendations via email or virtual testimony at the Montgomery Planning Board public hearing in November 2020. Speak with Montgomery Planning staff about Thrive Montgomery 2050: 301.495.4650.

ThriveMontgomery.com

MontgomeryPlanning.org

How to sign up to testify

The public hearings will be before the Montgomery County Council, the nine-person legislative body of Montgomery County. You can learn more about the County Council in the Coalition for Smarter Growth's [Montgomery County Smart Growth Advocacy Manual](#).

Step 1: Go to https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/calendar.html

Step 2: Click on the sign up button for "Thrive Montgomery 2050" on either June 17, 2021 at 7:00pm or June 29, 2021 at 7:00pm. If there is a waitlist, we encourage you to still sign up!

Step 3: Provide your information.
- Attendee name
- Attendee email address
- Attendee's first name
- Attendee's last name
- Phonetic spelling of name (optional)
  - *If your name is difficult for some people to pronounce, you can write out the way it is pronounced.*
- Street
- City
- Zip Code
- Telephone number used to join conference
  - *If you are joining via Video (a later question), then this won't really matter. If you will need to call in, write down the phone number you will use.*
- Contact Number
  - *This can be the same as the number you listed above*
- Are you representing yourself?
  - *Yes*
- How would you like to participate?
  - *If you select "Video," you will receive an email with a Zoom link one day prior to the public hearing.*
  - *If you select "Audio," you will receive a phone number to call into one day prior to the public hearing.*
- What is your position on the item?
  - *Support! Even if there are a few things that you'd like to see them tweak or improve, I recommend selecting support.*
- Nature of your interest in item
  - *Probably either resident, K-12 student, or college student*
- Please describe the nature of your interest in a short sentence

- - *Don't sweat this part too much. You can say something like "I am supportive of the Planning Board draft and Montgomery for All's platform. I'd like to see more housing opportunities, better transit, and more equitable land use policies."*
- If translation services are needed, please select language

Step 4: Select "OK." You're done!

Step 5: You will receive a registration email confirmation.

What to expect at the public hearing

Hooray, you're on the speakers list for the Thrive 2050 public hearing!

The day before the public hearing: One day ahead of time, you'll receive an email with information about how and when to join. The email will ask for you to reply in order to confirm that you have received it.

You should also submit the written version of your testimony to county.council@montgomerycountymd.gov or via online portal at https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/COUNCIL/PHSignUp.html. This ensures that it will be kept in the written public record for the public hearing. We also recommend copying your councilmembers so that they're sure to see your thoughts!

> At-Large (everyone's councilmembers!):
> - Gabe Albornoz - councilmember.albornoz@montgomerycountymd.gov
> - Evan Glass - councilmember.glass@montgomerycountymd.gov
> - Will Jawando - councilmember.jawando@montgomerycountymd.gov
> - Hans Riemer - councilmember.riemer@montgomerycountymd.gov
>
> District (you only have one - find out who it is here):
> - Andrew Friedson (District 1) - councilmember.friedson@montgomerycountymd.gov
> - Craig Rice (District 2) - councilmember.rice@montgomerycountymd.gov
> - Sidney Katz (District 3) - councilmember.katz@montgomerycountymd.gov
> - Nancy Navarro (District 4) - councilmember.navarro@montgomerycountymd.gov
> - Tom Hucker (District 5) - councilmember.hucker@montgomerycountymd.gov

During the public hearing:
- Around 11am the day of the public hearing, the speakers list will be available here. You can look at it to know when you will be up to testify.
- You will be asked to join/call-in a little bit ahead of time. There will not be anyone there to welcome you or check you in, so just sit back and relax! Be sure to go on mute and turn your camera off.
- Listen to the other speakers' testimony and have your ready to go. Join the Montgomery for All Slack party, if there is one!
- When it is your turn, your name will be called. Take yourself off mute, turn your camera on (not required), and begin!
- If you go over two minutes, you *will* be cut off, so be sure to practice ahead of time.
- You did it! Congrats!

How to write testimony

You will only have two minutes to speak during the public hearing! For this reason, you might want to write two versions of your testimony: one version to be spoken out loud at the public hearing and a longer version with all your thoughts that can be submitted electronically. Two minutes of testimony equals about half a page of single spaced text.

- **Introduction**
    - Say thank you
    - State your name and where you live (just the city, not your address!)
    - You can also include other things that are important to your identity, such as whether you are a renter or homeowner, how long you've lived in the county, your age, your race/ethnicity, or your gender identity/sexual orientation.
    - Make the main point you want decision makers to hear: *"I support the Planning Board draft of Thrive 2050 and urge you to maintain its bold vision for a sustainable, inclusive county."*
- **Body Paragraphs**
    - Strike a balance between real-life data, evidence, and examples, as well as your own personal experiences and stories.
    - Because you only have 2 minutes to give in-person testimony, carefully choose the most relevant evidence and experiences to support your stance.
    - When writing, consider guiding questions like:
        - What are you excited about in the plan? What would you like to see changed or included? (see Talking Points section for ideas!)
        - What do you care about?
        - What do you want your neighborhood to look like in 30 years?
        - What are you worried about?
        - What challenges have you, your loved ones, or your neighbors faced?
- **Conclusion**
    - Summarize your main points
    - Restate your position
    - Say thank you again
    - Example: *"Therefore, I urge you to support the Planning Board draft of Thrive while thinking even more boldly about ways to make Montgomery County more affordable and sustainable for everyone. Thank you."*

Don't forget to submit the written version of your testimony so that it will be included in the public record! You can do this before the public hearing or up to a few days after.

Talking points

When writing your testimony, you don't have to cover everything — you only have two minutes! So focus on the issues you care about the most.

<u>**General Comments**</u>
- **Excited about:**
    - Embracing sustainable, inclusive urbanism
    - Creating more diverse, mixed-income communities
    - Evolving single-family neighborhoods near transit
    - Planning for people instead of cars
    - Making the county more affordable
- **Would like to see:**
    - More discussion about eliminating racial and economic segregation
    - A better map of centers and corridors where future growth should go
    - The environment chapter added back in
    - More integration with the county's climate action plan
    - A clear plan for how the county will evaluate the plan's implementation and success

<u>**Compact growth: corridor-focus development**</u>
- **Excited about:**
    - Encouraging infill development to prevent sprawl
    - Preserving the Agricultural Reserve and improving access for the public
    - Investing in traditionally undervalued communities
    - Exploring land value capture policies
    - Evolving the Agricultural Reserve to meet our 21st century needs
- **Would like to see:**
    - Growth along corridors is important, but so is growth in centers of activity
    - A more clear map showing which corridors and centers should be prioritized for more compact growth

<u>**Complete communities: mix of uses and forms**</u>
- **Excited about:**
    - Being able to easily walk or bike to meet most daily needs, or "15-minute living"
    - Vibrant centers with a mix of shops, homes, restaurants, offices, and more
    - Co-locating public facilities with other amenities and housing
- **Would like to see:**
    - A guide for some of the things that a community needs in order to be considered "complete"

- ○ Including economic diversity as a core component of a complete community

Design, arts and culture: investing and building community
- **Excited about:**
  - ○ Creating attractive places that encourage social interaction
  - ○ Making design reviews less subjective by introducing form-based standards
  - ○ Encouraging net-zero/carbon-positive buildings
  - ○ More public art
- **Would like to see:**
  - ○ Better signage and wayfinding in multiple languages to help visitors and create a sense of place

Transportation and communication networks: connecting people, places, and ideas
- **Excited about:**
  - ○ No longer planning or constructing new highways
  - ○ Making the transportation system more equitable
  - ○ Achieving Vision Zero (no traffic fatalities or serious injuries on our roadways)
  - ○ Developing a safe, comfortable, and irresistible network for walking, biking, and rolling
  - ○ Building a world-class transit system
  - ○ Charging market rates for parking and reducing the oversupply of parking
  - ○ Converting existing general purpose travel lanes to dedicated transit lanes
- **Would like to see:**
  - ○ Mention transportation demand management
  - ○ Say that parking minimums are an unproductive policy
  - ○ More about the importance of frequent transit
  - ○ Mention the importance of reducing vehicle miles traveled to fight climate change
  - ○ Include jobs accessible by transit and commute times as metrics

Affordable and attainable housing: more of everything
- **Excited about:**
  - ○ Building more income-restricted affordable housing units, deeply affordable housing, and permanent supportive housing
  - ○ Adding more homes of all types in major centers, corridors, and complete communities
  - ○ Planning for a wide range of housing types to meet diverse needs and foster a diverse population
  - ○ Minimizing displacement while promoting integration
  - ○ Expanding opportunities for homeownership

- **Would like to see:**
    - Socioeconomic integration more explicitly included in the vision
    - More on how to create housing affordable to the lowest incomes
    - Housing talked about as a human right, as it was in previous drafts
    - Consider rent stabilization or anti-rent gouging policies, and community land trusts
    - All tenants should have a right to legal counsel in eviction cases

Parks and recreation: for an increasingly urban and diverse community: active and social
- **Excited about:**
    - Improving access to parks
    - Creating more high-quality urban parks
    - Thinking about parks as gathering spaces for social connection
    - Ensuring that parks and recreation opportunities are accessible and equitably distributed
- **Would like to see:**
    - More about creating a tree canopy and other strategies to mitigate heat and flooding
    - More discussion on the natural environment outside of parks, including stormwater management and flood protection

Sample testimony

These sample testimonies were taken from the public record available on the Montgomery Planning and Montgomery County Council websites regarding the [Silver Spring Downtown Plan](#), [Thrive 2050](#), and [ZTA 20-07](#).

- Thrive 2050
  - [Brian Ditzler](#)
  - [Mark Pierzchala](#)
  - [Katie Nolan](#)
  - [Beth Merlo](#)
  - [Sanjida Rangwala](#)
  - [Don Slater](#)
  - [Alison Gillespie](#)

- Silver Spring Downtown Plan:
  - [Gretchen Goldman](#)
  - [Mark Clements](#)
  - [Michael Knaapen](#)
  - [Amina Ahmad](#)

- ZTA 20-07 (Missing Middle Housing)
  - [Amy Bernath](#)
  - [Berk Ehrmantraut](#)
  - [Rebecca Mann](#)
  - [Rosie Alger](#)