

ATTACHMENT 2

Thrive Montgomery 2050 Draft Vision and Goals

Thrive Montgomery 2050 Vision

In 2050, Montgomery County is a vibrant, verdant and welcoming place where all people thrive with equitable access to affordable housing, healthy food, parks and open space, employment, education, services and a variety of travel options. Defined by the diversity of our population, of living and working experiences, of modes of travel, and of natural and built resources, people from all over the world choose to live, work, grow and age in the county's variety of cities, towns, villages, suburban neighborhoods, farms and open spaces.

Specifically, Montgomery County in 2050 is made up of a web of complete communities connected by vibrant corridors. Individual and unique neighborhood activity centers with a variety of housing types and price points are located close to workplaces, needed goods and services, public amenities and open spaces. These complete communities and other important parts of the county are connected by two types of corridors: comfortable, safe corridors of multimodal transportation and services; and corridors of green parks, stream valleys and trails.

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

- **Convenient.** 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.
- **Affordable.** Access to affordable housing that aligns with every stage of life is a right for all people, not a luxury. Increased housing density along connected corridors provides for more diverse and affordable housing types. Households have fewer or no cars and reduce their miles driven, thereby cutting expenses. Housing closer to workplaces and safe, affordable transit options save time and money.
- **Social.** Everyone feels welcome in public places to meet neighbors or spend time with family and friends. More gathering places and connections to nearby communities reduce social isolation and form stronger communities. Less time commuting and traveling for basic necessities provides more time for connecting with family and community.
- **Safe.** More options for walking and biking reduce the need for a car. Pedestrian lives are prioritized over speed, which increases safety for those who walk, bike and take public transportation. Neighbors know each other and look out for each other, increasing safety.
- **Inclusive.** Residents have a say in how their neighborhoods look and feel. Planning policies protect vulnerable communities against gentrification and displacement, and planners engage everyone in decision-making about the future of communities. Various housing types at a mix of price points in complete communities and along corridors accommodate diverse populations and help achieve diversity and integration on a neighborhood scale.
- **Flexible.** Montgomery County offers diverse places to live, work, play and interact. Residents

have a variety of choices when selecting their preferred community setting and housing type. The bulk of new residents live in complete communities and along corridors. Concentrating new growth in already developed areas makes the best use of the county's available land and helps to preserve resources like the Agricultural Reserve, parks, open spaces, streams and trails. Flexible regulations and zoning controls result in a vibrant mix of residential and commercial uses throughout the county.

- **Healthy.** County residents enjoy an active, healthy lifestyle and feel connected to nature and their neighbors, boosting their physical and mental health. Every resident lives within a 15-minute walk to a park. The county's built and natural resources—including the Agricultural Reserve, parkland, trails, streams, sensitive environmental areas and wildlife habitats—are protected for the continued enjoyment of current and future generations. Air and water pollution are greatly reduced, and community members have easy access to healthy, locally grown food. Residents can equitably access quality healthcare facilities and other services.
- **Resilient.** Montgomery County models resilience in its environmental, infrastructure, economic and social systems. We lead the national fight against climate change through the expansion of our natural areas, parks and transit services and investment in green policies and technologies. Our actions and efficient use of land reduce greenhouse gas emissions, air pollution and water pollution. Our parks provide and enable essential environmental benefits including tree canopy and shade and further contribute to reducing carbon dioxide and other pollution in our water, air and wildlife habitats. A strong neighborhood culture makes us more resilient in the face of crises, disruption and change. In addition, 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, creating a culture of innovation, learning and celebration of talent that leads to shared prosperity. Montgomery County's forward-looking economy is strong and competitive, with 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.** A strong emphasis on design, arts and culture in Montgomery County makes our communities inspiring, connected and fun, attracting community members, visitors and workers and thereby supporting economic development. Our parks, trails and open spaces are focal points for community placemaking and cultural identity and allow for contemplative experiences.

Additional elements of the vision for Thrive Montgomery 2050 are identified in the narrative below.

Issue Area Draft Vision and Goals

The change outlined in the Thrive Montgomery 2050 Draft Vision and Goals is not immediate. This is a generational shift to be achieved incrementally over the next few decades. This shift requires that we plan sustainably for ourselves, for the 200,000 additional people who will make Montgomery County their home by 2050, and for our children and grandchildren. We need to start putting the tools in place now to realize our vision. The goals below will help us set the path and stay on course.

1. Complete Communities

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 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 public transportation. Complete communities are equitable, anchor a strong economy and function sustainably to mitigate the impacts of climate change. Complete communities are loved by all residents and are places where the people of Montgomery County can thrive for generations to come.

Goals: Complete Communities

1. Provide people-oriented communities and neighborhoods where people can live, work, play, shop, learn and enjoy public amenities and services in neighborhoods of all densities, including urban, suburban and rural communities.
2. Orient neighborhoods around a local gathering place such as a park, a school, a library, a recreation center, retail stores, historical and cultural sites, or other amenities. These central features of the community's social life are accessible to neighborhood residents via walkable and bikeable streets and/or trails.
3. Make Montgomery County's parks and public open spaces the focus of surrounding neighborhoods in order to offer opportunities for people of all ages and socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds to enjoy nature, recreate, exercise and gather.
4. Ensure that all communities are treated equitably, and no community is disadvantaged by a disproportionate share of adverse impacts from future county policies and capital investments. Equitably distribute the benefits of public improvement projects, planning decisions and investments throughout the county.

2. Connectedness

Vision for Connectedness

Montgomery County is a place where every resident feels a sense of belonging—a place where people of all backgrounds, cultures, ages, abilities, incomes and interests easily cross paths, exchange ideas and work alongside each other to improve their communities. Montgomery County builds on the importance of people, places and communities by strengthening the role of 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 can interact, enjoy each other's company, exchange ideas and collaborate to improve the community with a strengthened sense of connectedness and social

capital¹. Our communities have a sense of safety and inclusion that empowers 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. 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 the planning and policy processes and in decisions to create an equitable future.

Goals: Connectedness

1. Strengthen and create strong neighborhoods and communities that promote communication and interaction among residents and that support high levels of satisfaction through all stages of life.
2. Make government planning and decision-making processes accessible, transparent, and easy for all stakeholders to understand and participate in.
3. Provide equitable access for all Montgomery County residents to housing, jobs, services, educational opportunities, and parks and open spaces at the local, countywide and regional level.
4. Increase community resilience through technological innovation and better physical connectedness for residents.

3. Diverse Economies

Vision for Diverse Economies

In 2050, Montgomery County's economy is robust, adaptable and resilient. These capabilities are propelled and sustained by a diverse base of industries and workers. This force enables the County to absorb and adjust to the 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. Montgomery County's businesses and workers are leaders in creating the technologies to drive the U.S. and global economy forward in uncertain times. Entrepreneurship and the sharing economy offer new opportunities for economic prosperity for residents.

A key ingredient of resilience is a strong economic ecosystem, which requires connections between businesses, workers and related public and private support agencies. These connections are encouraged physically through bustling, walkable and transit-rich central business districts, as well as "virtually" through world-class communications infrastructure to link businesses to each other and to the rest of the world and to accommodate different working arrangements. Montgomery County plays a lead role in creating robust connections between firms and municipalities throughout

¹ Social capital refers to the institutions and mechanisms whereby residents relate to and interact with each other to solve problems for the common good, and have a feeling of safety and well-being supported by ample opportunities for social interactions.

<https://ageconsearch.umn.edu/bitstream/159102/2/s474%20Social%20Capital%20Debertin%20complete.pdf>

the Washington, D.C. region because a strong and cooperative region is more innovative and grows more efficiently.

Montgomery County grows equitably. All residents share in its economic prosperity. No matter where they live in the county, residents have equal access through physical and virtual connections to economic opportunities and better quality of life.

Goals: Diverse Economies

1. Sustain a globally recognized and innovative economy supported by private and non-profit 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, including high skill, knowledge-based occupations.
2. Grow vibrant employment centers that are attractive as headquarters locations for large, multinational corporations; major regional businesses; federal agencies; and small and locally owned businesses. These centers are 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 parks and open spaces.
3. Have well-paying jobs for all education and skill levels. Encourage the expansion of job training and other professional development opportunities to encourage economic mobility.
4. Lead nationally in innovation and entrepreneurship.
5. Identify and remove regulatory and other barriers to small business establishment and expansion.
6. Develop Montgomery County into a national leader in the field of innovative food production, culinary arts and food-related sciences.
7. Play a prominent role in creating a culture of regionalism and make the Baltimore-Washington region a global leader in economic innovation and sustainable development practices.

4. Safe and Efficient Travel

Vision for Safe and Efficient Travel

In 2050, Montgomery County's high-quality transportation system plays a critical role in supporting its economic health, environmental resilience and community equity. It is shifting from heavy reliance on private vehicles to public transit as the backbone of its transportation network. A safe, reliable and efficient transit network is composed of Metrorail, commuter rail, bus rapid transit (BRT) and regional and local buses. The system connects a large majority of people 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 high-capacity public transit. High-speed arterial roadways are transformed into safe and attractive boulevards with reduced speeds, trees and dedicated lanes for transit. Walkable and bikeable paths and crosswalks safe enough to allow children to walk to nearby schools. In Central Business Districts (CBDs) and town centers, a dense mix of land uses and high-quality walkways and bikeways make walking, bicycling, rolling and micromobility the preferred modes of travel. The significant reduction in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and the conversion of all motorized vehicles to renewable energy eliminates all greenhouse

gas (GHG) emissions from the transportation system.

Goals: Safe and Efficient Travel

1. Transform Montgomery County into a community where public transit, walking and bicycling account for the majority of daily trips.
2. Provide a transportation system that is safe for everyone. Eliminate all traffic-related fatalities and severe injuries.
3. Eradicate greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation system.
4. Create an equitable transportation system that provides multiple travel choices and improves access to jobs, education and services.
5. Transform corridors that were developed to prioritize fast-moving vehicles into safe, people-centric multimodal boulevards.
6. Revamp downtowns, town centers and rural villages to be safe, people-centric places.
7. Create a seamlessly integrated transportation system by coordinating transportation planning within the region and between neighboring jurisdictions.
8. Build resilience and redundancy into the transportation system to manage environmental and man-made hazards.

5. Affordability and Attainability

Vision for Affordability and Attainability

In 2050, All Montgomery County residents have access to affordable and attainable housing. Providing housing is seen not only as a right but as a value added and a means to meet our economic development, environmental resilience and community equity goals. Partnerships with neighboring jurisdictions continue to be employed and strengthened to identify and consider regional solutions to housing challenges. Housing diverse in type, size and affordability is key to making our neighborhoods complete communities. People with disabilities and seniors have options to stay in their neighborhoods through integrated housing with supportive services and accessible design. Innovative building and construction techniques reduce construction costs. Affordable housing is fully integrated into our communities and indistinguishable from market-rate housing, including quality of design, sustainability features and community amenities. The county grows and strengthens the capacity of its existing affordable housing programs. Publicly owned land is used to create mixed-income housing. New and innovative ways to finance and build housing affordable for low- and middle-income families are pursued. Special attention is placed on those at risk of displacement from their homes due to rising rents and market pressure.

Goals: Affordability and Attainability

1. Provide and produce housing units that meet the needs of all current and future Montgomery County residents in terms of type, size, affordability and locations.
2. Ensure that most new housing is located in places in the county that are near transit and near high-capacity transit corridors. These locations are mixed-use areas that provide services and amenities for the residents.
3. Continue a robust program to provide committed affordable housing and to address homelessness.
4. Minimize displacement of people, especially among low-income residents, people of color, people with disabilities and older adults.

6. Healthy and Sustainable Environment

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. This improves health for all residents. Climate change is factored into all land use and planning initiatives resulting in a highly resilient and adaptive built environment. The county pursues best practices and innovative technologies to absorb more greenhouse gases than it generates. Virtually all of the vehicles owned and operated in the county are zero-emission vehicles. Biking, walking, and public transit are common modes of travel. Redevelopment of strip shopping centers and parking lots into complete communities reduces the amount of impervious surfaces. A tree canopy and green areas exist in places where none did before. Most buildings are net-zero energy buildings. All energy used in the county is 100 percent clean energy. Re-use, recycling, and composting of food and yard waste results in very little municipal solid waste generation.

Montgomery County is a healthy and sustainable place providing both humans and wildlife with thriving, livable and healthy habitats. Green resources and the many benefits they provide are distributed equitably throughout the county. Creative programs and public investments ensure that communities that once had 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; carbon dioxide pollution reduction; and, clean water, air and wildlife habitat. Comprehensive watershed management and park stewardship efforts safeguard the health of our natural areas and improved water quality.

Goals: Healthy and Sustainable Environment

1. Improve health for all residents by incorporating a "Health in all Policies" approach into policies, programs and practices affecting all aspects of the built environment, which integrates health impacts into policymaking across all sectors to improve the health of all communities.
2. Protect and enhance the county's natural resources to have a healthy, beautiful and sustainable environment for current and future generations.
3. Meet the challenges of mitigating, reducing and adapting to climate change and its impacts by transforming to resilient land use and infrastructure and moving the county to a climate-positive future.

7. Diverse and Adaptable Growth

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 transit—including rail station areas and transit corridors—that leads to improved human and environmental health. Focused growth and development along transit corridors transform 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. Growth and development are served by adequate, timely and equitable public facilities and

infrastructure. The regulatory mechanisms to support this development are nimble, focused on design excellence, and achieve measurable, equitable outcomes.

Goals: Diverse and Adaptable Growth

1. Focus growth on infill redevelopment and redevelopment concentrated around existing and planned transit, employment centers and key corridors. Concentrated future growth and development in the county increase the diversity of housing types, stimulates economic development and increases connectivity between different locations in the county.
2. Redevelop key corridors across the county to accommodate future population growth in attractive, walkable, mixed-use communities around transit stations with a mix of housing, commercial uses and public amenities.
3. Adopt new growth management policies reflective of Montgomery County's status as a mature, built-out county and look for innovative and cost-effective ways of providing public facilities and infrastructure by leveraging existing assets.
4. Maximize the economic, social and environmental benefits of all public assets and investments.
5. Prioritize agriculture and balance advancements in industry practices to enhance the Agricultural Reserve; preserve farmland, rural open space and environmental resources; and ensure the prosperity of the Agricultural Reserve.

8. Culture and Design

Vision for Culture and Design

In 2050, Montgomery County is home to diverse cultures and is a thriving center for new ideas and emerging trends in culture, arts and entertainment. A comprehensive urban design vision strengthens and creates a collection of great towns, cities, urban and suburban neighborhoods, and rural villages. These areas are all linked by a web of transportation options, parks and natural areas.

Montgomery County's buildings, public spaces, streets and infrastructure are designed to create a resilient foundation that combats climate change and disruption. Buildings contribute positively to the environment and improve the physical and mental health of their occupants by encouraging an active lifestyle and exposure to nature at various scales. Neighborhoods house people of varying backgrounds, ages and abilities with public spaces designed to engage residents in activities that build relationships. 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 feel and benefit equally from good design. Opportunities to experience art and culture as a part of daily life are equitably distributed. The county celebrates its heritage while welcoming newcomers.

Urban design and planning policies protect vulnerable communities against gentrification and displacement and the planning process engages all residents in decision making about the future of their communities. Architecture is 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 welcoming, inspiring, connected and fun. Residents, visitors and workers attracted to the area support economic development.

Goals: Culture and Design

1. Become nationally recognized as a home to diverse cultures and as a leader in new ideas and emerging trends in arts and entertainment.
2. Create and preserve great places with a vital public realm, inspired urban design and high-quality architecture that delivers lasting beauty.
3. Shape Montgomery County as a collection of distinct downtowns, cities, towns, urban and suburban neighborhoods, and rural villages, each with their own identity that celebrates their history, geography and culture.
4. Use quality of design to measure equity across various communities, regardless of their location or demographics.