

Item 3 Correspondence

From: [Christina Micek](#)
To: [Thrive2050](#)
Cc: [MCP-Chair](#); Councilmember.Friedson@montgomerycountymd.gov
Subject: Ideas and Questions regarding Thrive 2050 Policies and Actions
Date: Friday, May 22, 2020 6:10:23 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Dear Montgomery Planning and the Planning Board,

First, let me commend you on the 3 (soon to be 4) Ask Me Anything's you have been hosting with Gwen Wright. They are thoughtful, and Gwen is a wonderful representative for your department- delivering clear, concise, attentive and realistic on point messaging. Thrive 2050 is an exciting wave for the future.

I had a few ideas and questions regarding the Thrive 2050 plan, and I am unclear is there is still time to incorporate new ideas before the June 11th presentation?

Environmental Control

Is it possible to require all new building to meet minimum Leed Standards for energy and environmentally sustainable practices? In my dream for the county, all new buildings would include these standards as a baseline. Green and solar roofs, efficient use of water and energy, retrofitting or reuse of materials where possible, extensive plantings, etc. What are the challenges in creating a program like? Is this something the Montgomery County Planning Board along with our Council and Executive might be able to implement?

Affordable Housing

What are the barriers for new housing built in the county to be required to include a certain percentage of units (if for example a high-rise) that meet certain low-income requirements? Boston has had great success in these types of public/private partnerships to be able to meet and maintain affordable housing in their city. It might be something we could add to the Thrive 2050 plan.

Infill Issues

We are talking about infill projects, which is wonderful, but if a school is created using an existing building for example, what outdoor space would the children be able to enjoy? How would sporting teams and other extracurricular activities many of enjoyed as children be accommodated for?

If one is creating spaces out of impervious parking lots for example, and a new parking structure is built to accommodate those cars in others ways- ie the garage at pike and rose, these parking structures should be greenified in the South Korean manner by building terraced green spaces and walls along the up down axis of the building. Even better would be to force all parking underground....

Amenities

One amenity that I never hear about in this plan is dog parks. In a county as dog friendly as ours, yet also with strict leash laws, there is a surprising dearth of dog parks. Dog Parks are proven community builders.

Thank you so much for your hard work on this exciting plan, and I look forward to following it as we move through the various phases as a county.

In Kind Regards,
Christina

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PLEASE NOTE: We are currently working from home as National Geographic has closed its DC headquarters for coronavirus mitigation. This means we will not have access to physical items at HQs until further notice, which might delay hard drive return.

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From: [Scott Plumer](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Item 3 Thrive Montgomery 2050 - Vision, Goals, Policies and Actions Briefing June 11, 2020 - Darnestown Civic Association
Date: Wednesday, June 10, 2020 11:15:47 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[dca thrive testimony 200611.pdf](#)

Attached is the written testimony from the Darnestown Civic Association. We have registered to speak.

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Darnestown Civic Association

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Hello everyone. The Darnestown Civic Association wishes to thank Chair Anderson, Vice Chair Fani-Gonzalez, and the rest of the board for allowing us to testify today. We also wish to thank Director Wright and the entire Montgomery Planning staff for their exceptional work which we enjoy every day as we live our lives in Montgomery County.

Select Overall Observations

Schools are a vital and central part of our communities yet their inclusion in Thrive seems tangential and strained at best. We hope current governance and planning structures are able to overcome obstacles so our schools can be an integral part of Thrive.

We are surprised about the lack of points around watersheds and other fragile ecological resources as they are the backbone of green corridors and require more protection than ever as we increase the human activity in green corridors.

We were a bit A bit startled by:

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 urban surroundings.

We are perplexed and concerned about the Universities at Shady Grove being seen as having urban surroundings. We fear solving sprawl and corridor bloat by making urban areas larger could be an unintended and undesirable consequence of Thrive.

We are encouraged by:

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.

and

Policy 6.1.3: Support the concepts of compact form of development and complete communities to avoid sprawl. Limit expansion of new roads and of the sewer and water system to direct new development to areas served by existing infrastructure.

We think it important to address all basic needs as done for food specifically in:

Action 7.4.1.a: Develop a food security plan with the Montgomery County Food Council and county agencies to include urban, suburban and rural farming that expands access to local foods.

Policy 7.4.8: 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.

We believe delivery services should have mandatory training, certification and licensing around safe driving practices, package handling and where food safety is involved the level of care should be equal to other food services. Thrive recognizes the growing role of delivery in our society and can prepare legislators for pre-cursor elements of public policy around emerging trends embraced by Thrive.

Lastly, we think agile, multi-dimensional statements of approach are more effective than monolithic aspirational statements and myopic single solutions looking for problems to solve. The statement in Theme 7 Diverse and Adaptable Growth is an example of a statement of approach we think works well.

“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 so we can change quickly and adapt to new conditions and still be able to keep our focus on achieving the desired outcomes no matter what challenges and disruptions we will face. Today, technological innovations such as wayfinding apps can give us real time information expanding our ability to manage traffic in a whole different way. Increases in the number of people working remotely, as well as demand for office space, and could change the 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.”

We believe Diverse and Adaptable Growth is best served with diverse and adaptable solutions.

Rural Design

While initially appealing, it now seems odd to have Design principles combined in Theme 8 with Arts and Culture.

Statements in Theme 7 Diverse and Adaptable Growth are concerning. For example, the following paragraph about the applicability of urbanism and compact development:

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 a ULI paper, 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.”⁵¹

We are open minded but wary and doubt the recursive nature of compaction and believe at its core it the belies the most desirable features of each form type. As stated earlier we prefer a broader solution set of design principles. We envision a dynamic and broad range of Complete Communities across a wide spectrum of densities each with their own interpretive application of design principles befitting their defining aspects.

We are similarly concerned about the following statement in the Theme 8 Design, Arts, and Culture Vision section:

A comprehensive urban design vision strengthens and creates a collection of great towns, cities and rural villages, each with neighborhoods built around a walkable center.

We are not sure we share the concept or agree about what those neighborhood centers would look like in a rural setting.

We want to be clear we do not view compact urban form design elements as compatible with rural villages. For example, while the design work was comprehensive and well done, the Sandy Spring Rural Village Plan strikes us as particularly not rural.

We welcome the opportunity to continue to explore these design and form gradient elements with you, the staff, and our community.

Thank you for your time and attention.