



Thrive Montgomery 2050 – Working Draft Plan

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Staff Recommendation:

Review and approve Thrive Montgomery 2050–Working Draft Plan as the Public Hearing Draft Plan and set the public hearing date for November 19, 2020.

Summary

Staff presented the draft Thrive Montgomery 2050 Vision, Goals, Policies and Actions, organized into eight Plan chapters, to the Planning Board on June 11, 2020. This was a preliminary set of recommendations for Thrive Montgomery 2050. The June staff report also provided an introduction to Thrive Montgomery 2050, described the context and background for where we are today, and stated why the changes proposed in the draft Plan are the right approaches for the county over the next 30 years. .

The Planning Board supported the main concepts behind the preliminary recommendations and provided some detailed comments for the next version of the draft plan. The Planning Board's guidance included: increased emphasis on transit; extending transit to new places; focus on urbanism, compact development, mix of uses, and less reliance on cars; regional solutions; the need for a greater variety of housing types; more housing options near transit; more affordable housing; incorporation of sustainable building techniques in our development practices; innovative implementation techniques; and making a stronger argument as to why the Plan was proposing what it was proposing.

Since June 11, 2020, staff has continued to pursue a robust online outreach strategy to get feedback from the community, the Technical Advisory Group, the county agencies, and all other stakeholders. Staff conducted a Housing Day on Twitter; held online Community Chats on each of the main chapter/topic areas of the Plan; organized two lunch-and-learn events during the June Pride Month to explore LGBTQ+ history, communities and action in historic preservation and planning; and made virtual presentations to the county's five Citizen Advisory Boards, homeowners and civic associations, and other public and private partners and interested parties, as well as a briefing to the PHED Committee of the County Council. (for more details, please see Appendix B of the Working Draft Plan). Correspondence that has been received over the summer is attached to this staff report.

The attached Working Draft Plan is the first full draft of the General Plan Update. It retains the overall concepts presented in the June 11, 2020 report, but incorporates many refinements as a

result of the Planning Board guidance and the community and stakeholders' feedback since June 11, 2020. Major modifications include reorganization of the front part of the Plan (INTRODUCTION and A PLAN TO THRIVE) with a new section, "Rationale and Context", that consolidates and expands the rationale for the key concepts of urbanism, Complete Communities, transit, and equity. It includes a new Implementation chapter, which details the key implementation tools and inter-agency and cross-sector partnerships needed to achieve implementation of Thrive Montgomery 2050 and highlights examples of short-term actions from the draft Plan to jumpstart implementation. A companion to the Implementation chapter is a separate document that organizes the Working Draft Plan's actions by anticipated implementation timeframes and lists recommended lead and support agencies. This document is attached to this staff report. The Working Draft Plan also includes a new appendix on the community outreach conducted for the Plan with a detailed list of events, meetings and other mechanisms used at various stages of the plan development.

Thrive Montgomery 2050-Working Draft Plan organizes the overall document into the following parts:

- INTRODUCTION sets the stage and context for Thrive Montgomery 2050. It describes the reasons for conducting an update of the General Plan; details trends and challenges we are facing as we plan for the county's future; and offers a brief discussion of equity and social justice challenges in Montgomery County and the impact of COVID-19 on the Plan development.
- A PLAN TO THRIVE provides a rationale and context for the Plan's key concepts and explains the three overarching outcomes of the Plan, followed by the Plan's major themes and overall vision for Montgomery County in 2050.
- PLAN ELEMENTS section contains the Plan's eight policy chapters and an Implementation chapter. Each policy chapter includes a summary of issues and challenges; the Plan's vision for the element, and a draft list of goals, policies and actions.
- APPENDICES include a brief description and major milestones of the county's planning history; a summary of Montgomery Planning's outreach and communications efforts for the Plan; a description of how the Plan conforms to the 12 Visions of the State Planning Act; and a glossary defining terms used in the draft Plan. The Appendices section also contains a list of References and related studies published by Montgomery Planning as part of the Plan development process.

Major changes to the goals, policies and actions contained in the eight policy chapters in the PLAN ELEMENTS section of the Working Draft Plan were primarily a result of the feedback from individuals and community groups such as the Montgomery County Food Council, the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County, Montgomery County Office of Agricultural Services, Montgomery Countryside Alliance, Audubon Naturalist Society, and Darnestown Civic Association, among others. These changes ranged from small edits to rewrites of some of the recommendations. Also, in some cases, various policies and actions with redundant language in different chapters or in the same chapter were condensed or consolidated into fewer recommendations. In others, the language was edited to be clearer and to better reflect the true intention of the recommendation.

Next Steps

After the Planning Board's review and approval of the revised Working Draft Plan as the Public

Hearing Draft, Staff will publish the Public Hearing Draft no later than October 12, 2020 and set the public hearing for November 19, 2020. That will start the next phase of the Planning Board's review of the draft Plan as follows:

- **November 19, 2020:** Planning Board holds Thrive Montgomery 2050 Public Hearing. (Public comment period is requested to remain open until December 10, 2020).
- **December 17, 2020 through January 28, 2021:** Planning Board holds work sessions.
- **February 11, 2021:** Planning Board provides final comments for Thrive Montgomery 2050.
- **March 2021:** Planning Board approves Thrive Montgomery 2050--Planning Board Draft for transmittal to the County Council and County Executive.

Attachments:

ATTACHMENT 1: Thrive Montgomery 2050 – Working Draft Plan
(with APPENDIX E as a separate document)

ATTACHMENT 2: Implementation Guide: Actions Listed by Timeframe

ATTACHMENT 3: Comments Received Since June 11, 2020