

## Item 7 - Correspondence

**From:** [Bruce Shulman](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Thrive Montgomery 2050 Public Comments  
**Date:** Wednesday, October 21, 2020 2:15:40 PM

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To whom it may concern:

Thank you for sending me a post card advising that the Planning Board is soliciting comments concerning Thrive Montgomery 2050.

I believe that further development in Montgomery County to supply jobs, housing, shopping, restaurants and other commercial establishments is necessary to ensure that the County has sufficient resources to fund the government and for other purposes. However, the manner in which growth is being handled is clearly unsustainable because there is little or no room left to build additional roads for increased traffic. I believe that truly “smart growth” can limit or slow increases in the volume of automobile and truck traffic on our roads, which is the key issue in ensuring that Montgomery County is able to grow and prosper in the future.

### 1. **GROWTH AROUND METRO STATIONS AND MASS-TRANSIT FACILITIES**

The most natural areas for high-density growth in Montgomery County are those close to Metro stations and other mass-transit facilities. However, the growth in these areas has been uneven, sporadic and anything other than “smart” in several respects. For example, growth in Bethesda for jobs, retail and housing has progressed remarkably and fairly evenly while, in other areas, such as where I live in Wheaton, growth has been mainly limited to housing. If the County is to grow and traffic to be limited, the areas around Metro stations and other mass-transit facilities must be built up in a manner that encourages people to live, work, shop and entertain themselves within walking distance.

The above idea can be implemented by limiting the number of parking spaces in building garages. Wheaton has experienced a large increase in apartment and condominium housing built very close to the Metro station on Georgia Avenue. The very first thing which the developers of these multi-unit buildings erect are immense indoor parking garages. I find this to be ridiculous in areas adjacent to Metro stations. The residents in these buildings should be encouraged to take the subway to work or, even better, to find jobs within walking distance of their residences. Building additional parking garages does just the opposite. While I am not a traffic engineer, my experience is that traffic in Wheaton (and other areas in Montgomery County) has increased to the point where at certain times, such as at rush hour, I refrain from shopping or going anywhere else in my car because traffic is so bad.

The second key improvement is to construct multi-purpose buildings containing retail on the

lower floors, offices in the middle and housing at the upper levels. Such buildings have the advantage of encouraging residents to live, work, shop and entertain themselves within reasonable walking distance, thereby lessening traffic. Some of these types of buildings have been built in downtown Rockville and increasingly along Rockville Pike. However, there are not many which have been built elsewhere.

Note also that my proposal is limited to areas adjacent to Metro stations and to other mass-transit facilities such as the Purple Line and major bus facilities. It is not intended, for example, to apply to less urban locations such as Damascus.

Second, the land around Metro stations is likely to be the most expensive in the County to purchase and to build on. If this land is the most desirable, developers must be encouraged through changes in the law to build differently around mass-transit centers by implementing the above two suggestions.

## 2. COOPERATION AND PLANNING AMONG GOVERNMENTS

Growth in the metropolitan D.C. area has also been sporadic and uneven due to the multiplicity of governments competing for growth. Nowhere has this been worse than in the Virginia suburbs, most notably in Fairfax and Arlington Counties. This has resulted in a great daily westward exodus of traffic from Montgomery County to job centers such as Tysons Corner and a daily eastward commute from Fairfax County to Montgomery and Prince Georges County after work in the afternoon. That is the major reason why the Capital Beltway is now so clogged that Maryland is considering widening both it and Interstate 270, neither of which should be necessary.

Perhaps the major reasons for this uneven growth in jobs in Fairfax and Arlington is the availability of large pieces of undeveloped land, a large well-educated workforce, the absence of areas which some people consider as less desirable to develop and the existence of governments which strongly favor increased growth. Notwithstanding the above, it has resulted in the worst traffic in the area being in Virginia and less land being available for growth. I recall an occasion on a Friday afternoon when it took me and my wife over five hours to get home from Dulles Airport after returning from vacation. Preference for large job centers should be placed elsewhere. There are nearby areas in Prince Georges, Howard and even Anne Arundel Counties which contain large areas which can and should be developed instead of concentrating growth in Fairfax and Arlington. Increased cooperation among the various government units in the D.C. area is absolutely necessary to prevent this situation from getting worse or occurring in different parts of the metropolitan area.

Thank you for soliciting my comments.

Sincerely,

Bruce Shulman  
1146 Kersey Road

Silver Spring, Maryland 20902

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

**From:** [schoapm@aol.com](mailto:schoapm@aol.com)  
**To:** [Anderson, Casey](#); [MCP-Chair](#); [Wright, Gwen](#)  
**Subject:** Follow-up on our phone call yesterday - ref: Thrive 2050 & TAME letter  
**Date:** Thursday, November 5, 2020 8:33:01 AM

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL]** Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Hello Casey and Gwen,

Thank you for the phone call and your time yesterday, Casey and Gwen. It was good to talk with you about the TAME Coalition's letter sent to you on November 4, 2020.

This morning for the past several hours, I've been reviewing the PB sessions on Thrive 2050 recorded from this summer into October, and re-reading its content. In the recording sessions, there were comments by PB Commissioners suggesting delays of moving the public hearing two months from November 2020 to January 2021, which I also mentioned on our phone call yesterday. Your repetitive push-back, Casey, is to keep on the current timeline; and your strongest reasoning, voiced to me yesterday, was to work with this current Council and to not push the Thrive plan into the next Council cycle. This red-flags questions for me of not delaying two months.

The current County Council could still finish their worksessions and public hearing(s) on Thrive 2050 before the election in 2022. It would mean a vigorous work schedule for them, though would cut into their campaigning for re-election. To take on the job as elected government official means to serve the people first; and the Thrive 2050 work schedule you are repeatedly pushing benefits current Council members to not have this enormous project on their shoulders going into the election year. This is not serving the people first, but second.

Gwen stated on the PB sessions' recordings the enormous outreach efforts to County citizens, and the reasons for using the current data collected. That makes total sense. Delaying a public hearing two months is not going to make the data obsolete. If the November 19th PB public hearing stays as scheduled, there should also be a second PB public hearing in January. Thrive 2050 is a huge and County-transforming plan, and the PB should and could hold another public hearing in January 2021 because of the plan's magnitude and ramifications for the future. Yes, human nature always waits till the last minute to read reports and plans, so give those most concerned with any of the plan's content an additional two month window to make comments and share their voice.

I'll be talking to Diane Cameron about our conversation later this afternoon, passing on the generous offering from Gwen of meeting (on zoom or in-person social distance) together weekly with the the signers of the TAME Coalition letter.

Respectfully,

Margaret Schoap  
240-5871-0518