

STRATEGIC PLAN

Priorities, Strategies, and Actions

PRIORITY 1: EMPLOYEES	
1.1	Foster a sense of belonging and joy in the workplace
1.1.1	Create employee resource groups to provide similarly situated employees with a natural support structure
1.1.2	Organize team, division, and department teambuilding activities
1.1.3	Recognize and celebrate individual and team accomplishments
1.1.4	Hold regularly scheduled staff meetings to keep staff informed and engaged in Department efforts
1.2	Increase staff capacity through training
1.2.1	Hire one FTE HR professional to manage training and learning
1.2.2	Complete a comprehensive audit and assessment of all ongoing training
1.2.3	Revamp core competency video series
1.2.4	Develop annual calendar of trainings that includes internal and external trainings and conferences
1.3	Create and promote pathways for professional growth, career advancement, and succession planning
1.3.1	Stay connected to former interns and employees to support recruitment efforts as a source of referrals and returning employees
1.3.2	Standardize an approach to performance evaluations across the Department to make them more efficient, impactful, and useful as an ongoing professional development tool
1.3.3	Identify pathways for career advancement
1.3.4	Transfer institutional knowledge by documenting key processes and creating redundancies through job sharing
1.3.5	Revamp and launch mentoring program that engages staff at all levels
1.3.6	Create a staff exchange program to cross train staff in different planning functions

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1.4	Build a diverse workforce at all levels of the Department
1.4.1	Promote the Department's work and job opportunities at minority-serving institutions
1.4.2	Proactively source diverse talent from across the country by using a variety of recruitment tools
1.4.3	Develop a formalized graduate assistant program with minority-serving institutions in the area
1.4.4	Develop relationships with professional planning organization affinity groups that focus on diverse representation in the field
1.4.5	Develop partnerships with local middle and high schools to educate students about the planning field
1.4.6	Strengthen, raise the profile of, and expand the reach of the Department's internship program
1.5	Promote pride in public service
1.5.1	Commemorate employee service milestones
1.5.2	Raise awareness among staff of the Department's mission and other elements of the Strategic Plan
1.5.3	Celebrate the positive impacts our work has in the community
1.5.4	Strengthen relationships and coordination across the Commission, especially with Prince George's Planning

PRIORITY 2: COMMUNITIES & PARTNERS	
2.1	Increase transparency with residents throughout the planning process
2.1.1	Hire FTE for Communications Division to increase engagement, comms, marketing support to the planning divisions
2.1.2	Dedicate a point person within each applicable division to focus on community building and resident engagement
2.1.3	Collect baseline data through a survey on perceptions of county residents about planning, development, and engagement preferences
2.1.4	Refresh the Department's branding (messaging, creative, promotion)
2.1.5	Revamp communications materials and methods (e.g., postage, mailers, online advertising)
2.1.6	Leverage and maintain Planning staff relationships built through masterplan efforts
2.1.7	Prioritize strategic communications planning for every plan, project, and policy initiative
2.1.8	Remove barriers to participation by non-English speakers
2.2	Intentionally engage residents in all planning efforts, with a focus on people who are underrepresented
2.2.1	Support and strengthen resident participation in planning efforts
2.2.2	Assess and revamp noticing system and procedures
2.2.3	Dedicate position to manage data for noticing system
2.2.4	Employ and enhance the Equitable Engagement Guide to integrate social equity and cultural diversity through master planning and placemaking practices
2.2.5	Advance and fund the Department's Placemaking Strategic Plan
2.3	Prioritize corridor-focused planning efforts
2.3.1	Develop and promote internal and external messaging about prioritizing corridor planning efforts
2.3.2	Finalize an approach to corridor planning that identifies the role of a corridor, the relationships between neighborhoods along or adjacent to it, appropriate engagement tools, zoning considerations, etc.
2.3.3	Develop form-based zones for corridor planning
2.3.4	Identify next corridors to be master-planned and create plan teams accordingly

Priorities, Strategies, and Actions, cont.

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2.4	Focus on historically underinvested regions and vulnerable communities
2.4.1	Identify and track areas that have had an underinvestment of CIP spending
2.4.2	Conduct study to identify boundaries, players, and issues of East County
2.4.3	Study of real estate market conditions and how that has influenced Master Plan outcomes
2.4.4	Study the disproportionate distribution of land uses from a racial equity and social justice perspective
2.4.5	Conduct a study on the economic impacts of Affordable Housing
2.4.6	Complete Mapping Segregation Phase 2
2.4.7	Conduct a study to identify and assess potential opportunities, strategies, and funding mechanisms to increase, preserve, restore, and manage forest and non-forest tree canopy in the county, with a focus on historically disadvantaged communities
2.4.8	Integrate CEI throughout the Department's planning efforts
2.4.9	Create a comprehensive and context sensitive strategy and policy for preserving affordability of housing with expiring subsidies or potential loss of NOAH that allows for the enhancement and preservation of long-term housing affordability through the provision of additional density and zoning changes
2.5	Strengthen collaboration with partner agencies
2.5.1	Establish quarterly meetings with major partner agencies to align efforts and share project updates
2.5.2	Strengthen relationships with partner agencies at various levels of the Department
2.5.3	Build relationships with nonprofits to better engage them in Planning efforts
2.5.4	Convene partner agencies to explore colocation opportunities
2.5.5	Increase awareness about how the Department collaborates with partners
2.5.6	Engage agencies that have been less active in the planning and development review process
2.6	Foster community capacity to participate in planning processes
2.6.1	Develop and launch customer relationship management tool to document staff relationships with community-based organizations
2.6.2	Crowdsource ideas/conduct competitions for community members to submit ideas
2.6.3	Identify neighborhood liaisons within each planning division to serve as a points of contact with local civic associations and other neighborhood organizations
2.6.4	Launch and sustain the Planning Academy

PRIORITY 3: EFFICIENCY	
3.1	Adapt Department structure and Strategic Plan as needed to ensure performance and efficiency
3.1.1	Assess current structure's ability to address strategic priorities
3.1.2	Pursue structural changes to increase flexibility, responsiveness, productivity, and efficiency, and best address priorities and achieve the Department's mission
3.1.3	Create an ombudsman role for small and/or affordable housing developers to assist them through the development process with an emphasis on agency coordination
3.1.4	Conduct annual check-ins on the Strategic Plan performance metrics and make adjustments as needed
3.2	Streamline and improve internal and core function processes
3.2.1	Review processes that require multiple approvals and identify opportunities for efficiency
3.2.2	Increase communication and collaboration with Central Administrative Services to improve internal processes under their oversight
3.2.3	Strategize on potential improvements to Department processes during leadership meetings and semi-annual retreats
3.2.4	Conduct post project reviews to identify lessons learned and opportunities to improve methods and processes
3.3	Work with the development community, government agency partners, and other stakeholders to implement clear, efficient, and consistent processes for planning
3.3.1	Update Green Streets Guidelines to advance corridor planning and climate action goals
3.3.2	Evaluate and implement strategies to streamline the administrative approval processes
3.3.3	Complete comprehensive studies of redevelopment tools and infrastructure funding strategies to incentivize infill development and achieve density goals
3.3.4	Study and recommend mandatory referral updates to state code to require public facilities to conform to the county's master and functional plans
3.3.5	Identify zoning modifications and incentives to facilitate the conversion of planned and existing office and retail sites to residential uses
3.3.6	Identify updates to the Historic Preservation Ordinance and Historic Resources Preservation Tax Credit program to incentivize and facilitate adaptive reuse and/or repurposing of existing buildings
3.3.7	Update and enforce the Lead Agency MOU to facilitate review of development applications
3.3.8	Enforce the Planning Process MOU with MCPS to ensure early coordination on each agency's planning efforts

PRIORITY 4: INNOVATION	
4.1	Advance use of cutting-edge technology to push and stay ahead of the industry
4.1.1	Enhance cyber security posture and improve cyber resilience
4.1.2	Invest in technologies that improve efficiency and resilience, and allow the Department to employ cutting edge approaches to our work
4.1.3	Develop and launch AI guidance for staff
4.1.4	Increase ADA compliance to WCAG 2.1 across all internal and external platforms
4.1.5	Develop internal communications and training protocols for dissemination of new technology and tools
4.2	Support opportunities for staff to propose, pilot, and evaluate creative solutions to address critical issues
4.2.1	Improve communications across the Department to promote innovation topic areas that different Divisions are focused on
4.2.2	Create opportunities for staff to propose study and project ideas
4.2.3	Designate portion of job function to spend time on innovation
4.2.4	Dedicate funding to advance innovative staff-driven planning initiatives
4.2.5	Create an ongoing internal staff group to identify creative County Code solutions to critical county issues
4.3	Share and exchange information and best practices within the agency, regionally, and nationally
4.3.1	Increase capacity to improve communications within the Department and Commission
4.3.2	Actively participate in MWCOC efforts, workgroups, and committees
4.3.3	Broaden and expand staff participation in industry and other relevant conferences as attendees and presenters
4.3.4	Host lectures, workshops, and design/development competitions on relevant planning topics
4.3.5	Identify opportunities to increase collaboration and knowledge sharing with regional peers

PRIORITY 5: LEADERSHIP	
5.1	Convene residents and government partners to support communities
5.1.1	Organize annual regional community updates and listening sessions
5.1.2	Organize topical community walks along with elected officials, other agencies, and community stakeholders
5.2	Serve as an independent advisor on land use decisions and policies to implement <i>Thrive Montgomery 2050</i>
5.2.1	Update and advance the Equity Agenda for Planning
5.2.2	Build and strengthen relationships with all members of the County Council and their staff
5.2.3	Update studies on demographic, economic, housing, and real estate trends
5.2.4	Identify strategies to increase the economic competitiveness of the county's downtowns
5.2.5	Conduct a post-COVID Retail Market Strategy update
5.2.6	Identify strategies to plan for complete communities in different land use contexts
5.2.7	Analyze and assess the Transfer of Development Rights and Building Lot Termination programs and prepare recommendations on the future preservation of contiguous farmland
5.2.8	Resurvey sites and districts identified on the Locational Atlas and prepare updates to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation
5.2.9	Complete the development of indicators and metrics to monitor progress with <i>Thrive</i> implementation
5.3	Pursue transformative change through legislation
5.3.1	Revamp the incentive density public benefits program to better align with <i>Thrive</i> principles and county priorities
5.3.2	Review county code to identify updates needed to better achieve <i>Thrive</i> and other county goals
5.3.3	Update the Zoning Code to increase flexibility to accommodate industries and services that support agriculture, including urban farming, food processing, distribution, sale, consumption, and waste management
5.3.4	Update County Code to support neighborhood serving uses such as small-scale retail, live-work spaces, home studios, galleries, and other small-scale art-making and creative businesses
5.3.5	Reassess (1) the applicability/maximum density of floating zones and (2) optional method MPDU/cluster development standards
5.3.6	Adjust parking standards (minimums or set maximums) to free up space for other design elements
5.3.7	Facilitate the creation of permanent supportive housing units like Single-Room Occupancy or Personal Living Quarter units in all residential and mixed-use zones

Priorities, Strategies, and Actions, cont.

5.4	Advance the recommendations of the county’s Climate Action Plan and environmental recommendations in <i>Thrive</i>
5.4.1	Fund a new FTE focused on climate initiatives
5.4.2	Identify incentives to prioritize high-performance buildings, nature-based design elements, and stream restoration and daylighting
5.4.3	Pursue an update to development standards for areas outside growth corridors and complete communities to limit the impacts of climate change and increase the resiliency of existing neighborhoods
5.4.4	Update the 2010 Water Resources Functional Master Plan
5.4.5	Develop environmental design guidelines to incorporate nature-based design solutions that will mitigate climate impacts, increase climate-resiliency and adaptation, and support biodiversity
5.4.6	Identify strategies for incorporating more clean/renewable energy generation in different parts of the county, with a focus on developed areas
5.4.7	Identify incentives to increase the production of table food for local distribution and consumption
5.4.8	Incorporate sustainable development standards into planning efforts
5.4.9	Study the impacts of climate change on farming and the environmental resources in the Ag Reserve; develop recommendations and identify best practices to address these impacts
5.4.10	Develop countywide streetscape standards to preserve and plant large canopy shade trees to mitigate heat island effects within public rights-of-way
5.5	Advance the housing recommendations in <i>Thrive</i>
5.5.1	Enable options for more diverse, attainable housing types in the county's single-family zones and along growth corridors
5.5.2	Prepare an updated Housing Needs Assessment
5.5.3	Conduct a housing preferences survey
5.5.4	Inventory affordable housing properties at risk of redevelopment
5.5.5	Create and analyze an inventory of available surplus, vacant and underutilized private and public lands for public and private partners to acquire for housing, with special attention to assembling land
5.5.6	Create and maintain a Housing Functional Master Plan to provide measurable housing goals, create an inventory of at-risk properties by type, and identify a housing affordability strategy
5.5.7	Monitor and track housing production and identify potential programs and policy changes to ensure production meets housing targets

Priorities, Strategies, and Actions, cont.

5.6	Advance the recommendations of the county's Vision Zero Action Plan and the transportation recommendations in <i>Thrive</i>
5.6.1	Review and update the Complete Streets Design Guide for consistency with <i>Thrive</i> concepts
5.6.2	Prepare a curbside management plan
5.6.3	Studying and reconsider transportation policies based on the impacts of remote work
5.6.4	Identify updates to the Subdivision Code to support street grids, safety goals, and other transportation policy goals
5.6.5	Revise County Code and policies to use vehicle miles traveled as the measure of transportation impact
5.6.6	Create and maintain a consolidated transportation functional plan that combines and reconciles the Master Plan of Highways and Transitways, the Bicycle Master Plan, the Pedestrian Master Plan, and Complete Streets Design Guide standards
5.6.7	Update the Master Plan of Highways and Transitways to remove master-planned but unbuilt highways and road widenings that are not consistent with <i>Thrive</i>
5.6.8	Develop comprehensive transportation development review procedures that provide guidelines for street layout, site access/frontage improvements and offsite improvements
5.6.9	Assess transit station areas and ways to ensure there is sufficient ridership to support desired transit service
5.7	Advance design excellence and the place-based planning recommendations in <i>Thrive</i>
5.7.1	Implement engagement strategy leading up to and after Design Excellence Awards Ceremony to keep people engaged
5.7.2	Provide internal and external education on design excellence
5.7.3	Establish design excellence criteria for new Montgomery County Public School facilities
5.7.4	Create guidelines for cost-effective design strategies for projects with high levels of affordable housing
5.8	Communicate the Department's unique role and impact throughout the county and region
5.8.1	Launch education campaign to raise awareness of the Department's role and branding
5.8.2	Build relationships and provide expertise to Maryland General Assembly elected officials and staff
5.8.3	Strengthen relationships with media, bloggers and influencers focused on the work of the Department
5.9	Elevate staff as recognized experts regionally and nationally
5.9.1	Ensure funding is available for staff to participate in conferences
5.9.2	Increase staff participation in developing content for the Third Place blog
5.9.3	Create and implement a system for tracking award submissions for regional and national planning awards