

MEMORANDUM

February 7, 2022

TO: Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee

FROM: Gene Smith, Legislative Analyst

SUBJECT: Draft Economic Development Strategic Plan

PURPOSE: Briefing and discussion, no votes expected

Those expected for this worksession:

Jake Weissmann, Office of the County Executive (CEX)
Ben Wu, Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation (MCEDC)
Bill Tompkins, MCEDC
Brad Stewart, MCEDC
Christy Blake, MCEDC
Phil Singerman, MCEDC

MCEDC will brief the PHED Committee on the approach and process to complete the draft Economic Development Strategic Plan (the “Plan”) (see ©3-65). Section 15A-4A of the County Code, as amended by [Council Bill 10-21](#), shifted the responsibility of drafting the Plan from the Executive to MCEDC. The PHED Committee has tentatively scheduled worksessions to consider amendments to the Plan on March 7 and March 14.

The committee should indicate the broad areas of the Plan that MCEDC and County staff should update for its review at the March worksessions. Possible broad areas for consideration are included on page 3-5.

I. Background

The Council enacted [Bill 14-12](#) on September 18, 2012. This bill made several amendments to the County’s Economic Development Fund (EDF), including a requirement that

the Executive propose and update the Plan for the County through a Method 1 regulation. The Council adopted [Executive Regulation 10-16 – the County’s Comprehensive Economic Strategy](#) on October 18, 2016. County code allowed the Executive to update the Plan every four years, with the first update expected by July 1, 2019. The Council did not receive an update to the Plan in 2019.

Council Bill 10-21, sponsored by Councilmember Friedson and cosponsored by Councilmembers Riemer, Navarro, Albornoz, and Katz, shifted the responsibility of drafting the Plan from the Executive to MCEDC. The bill retained some of the original guidelines for the Plan and added new elements. Per §15A-4A of the County Code, the Plan must include the items below (see ©66-67).

The Plan must:

- 1) Include relevant economic development measures and input from partner agencies and organizations.
- 2) Be consistent with the Economic Development Platform adopted in [Council Resolution No. 19-300](#).
- 3) Include metrics to assess the County and its partners ability to address relevant economic measures, including
 - Creating jobs;
 - Growing wages;
 - Identifying and supporting strategic industries;
 - Retaining and attracting new companies and employers;
 - Growing the tax base;
 - Supporting and increasing entrepreneurial activity; and
 - Other actions necessary to promote economic development in the County.
- 4) Include outcomes that focus on:
 - A thriving and diversified economy;
 - Racial equity and social justice;
 - Greater innovation; and
 - Environmental sustainability, including a reduction in climate change.

Bill 10-21 created a timeline for the adoption of the initial plan drafted by MCEDC. The timeline is noted below. In addition, the Council is required to hold a public hearing about the draft Plan. The Council scheduled and held a public hearing on February 8, 2022.

The Plan’s timeline for 2022

- **December 31, 2021** – MCEDC is required to submit a draft Plan. The Council received an initial version of the Plan on December 31, 2021, and MCEDC provided an updated version on January 10, 2022 (see ©5-65).
- **January 31, 2022** – the Executive is required to submit recommended amendments to the Council. The Executive provided comments on January 31, 2022.
- **April 15, 2022** – the Council is required to adopt the Plan by resolution (see ©1-2). The proposed resolution adopts the Plan as an attachment.

II. MCEDC's Draft Economic Development Strategic Plan

Below is a summary of the high-level structure of the draft Plan as submitted by MCEDC. MCEDC will provide additional information during its briefing today about its outreach, approach, and recommendations within the Plan.

- 1) **Introduction** – Highlights the vision and goals of the plan and lists eight overriding principals.
- 2) **SWOT analysis** – Lists an inventory of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) of the County.
- 3) **Strategic priorities** – Details four priorities with recommended actions for each.
- 4) **Recommended key metrics** – Lists possible metrics related to each strategic priority.
- 5) **Recommended key stakeholders** – Lists possible stakeholders and responsibilities for each of the recommended actions for the strategic priorities.
- 6) **Appendices** – Six appendices were included with the draft Plan.

A. County Executive Recommended Amendments

See the Executive's comments about the draft Plan on ©68-77. Below is a summary of the bolded comments provided by the Executive in the attached memorandum. The Council will consider these comments as it reviews the Plan in March and April 2022.

- 1) **The draft Plan is a good start, but it requires more details and action items.** The Executive's memorandum lists several areas that the draft Plan could be improved to add these details.
- 2) **The draft Plan is well thought out and sets a strong vision for the County.**
- 3) **The draft Plan utilizes varied sources, but it is missing several recent reports.** In addition, the Executive noted that the Plan should include key elements from these sources within the final document. The Executive's memorandum provides several areas that the draft Plan could be improved to connect the original sources to the recommendations within the Plan.
- 4) **The draft Plan does not integrate concerns of equity and workforce throughout the document; rather, it highlights them in separate sections.**
- 5) The Executive also included a bulleted list of recommendations for the Council to consider as it reviews the document.

B. Public hearing

The Council held a public hearing on February 8, 2022. The Council did not receive any public comments about the draft Plan.

III. Broad areas to update for consideration at future worksessions

The PHED Committee's discussion is expected to focus on high-level comments about the Plan today. The committee's comments will help identify potential areas of the Plan it wants to focus potential amendments. Council staff lists below some potential broad areas based on the

Executive's comments and review of the draft Plan. **The committee should indicate the broad areas of the Plan that MCEDC and County staff should update for its review at the March worksessions.**

- 1) Including salient information from reference materials within the document. The Plan includes an appendix that lists all the source materials that MCEDC considered when drafting the Plan. The Plan, however, does not include direct references within the text for the priority areas and recommended actions. The Executive also noted this as an area of potential improvement for the Plan in his comments (see ©71).

The Plan should include salient information from these references, so that anyone reading it can easily understand justification for the priorities and recommended actions. This step also reduces the need for interested parties, including implementing staff, to read the reference reports to understand the context and recommendations. The Executive also noted that additional references should be included in the Plan on ©71.

The committee should consider requesting that MCEDC update the Plan to include additional details and data from the source materials within the strategic priorities section.

- 2) Integrating key metrics and stakeholders within the priority areas. The Plan divides information about the four priorities throughout the document. In one section, the document details the priorities and recommended actions, but later in the document, a list of key metrics is provided followed by key stakeholders for each priority. This structure makes it difficult to determine who is responsible for each recommended action and the appropriate metric(s) that will measure success. In addition, many of the key metrics are the most basic measurements of economic development. More robust metrics will ensure future accountability when evaluating the Plan's implementation.

The Executive noted these concerns on ©69. Council staff agrees that the Plan could be strengthened by identifying the appropriate metrics and responsible stakeholders within each recommended action to evaluate and measure success.

The committee should consider requesting that MCEDC update the Plan to include the appropriate stakeholders and metrics within each priority and recommended actions to increase future accountability.

- 3) Creating context for the SWOT analysis. The SWOT analysis is a standalone section of the Plan. This section, however, does not include any description about how MCEDC collected input about these factors and how MCEDC determined what was included and was not included for this list. This section could be strengthened with additional supporting data and description of the process MCEDC used to create this list.

The committee should consider requesting that MCEDC update the Plan to include additional references and a brief description of the process for the creation of this analysis.

- 4) Integrating equity and inclusion throughout the Plan. The Plan includes one priority to support equity and inclusion for small, women, and minority-owned businesses. Given that racial equity and social justice is one of the four outcomes included in the County Code for the Plan, all priorities should include actions and metrics to ensure equity and inclusion.

The committee should consider requesting MCEDC update the Plan to include actions and metrics in all priorities to measure the County’s efforts to support equity and inclusion in the Plan.

This packet contains:

	<u>Circle #</u>
Proposed resolution	1
MCEDC transmittal email on December 31, 2021	3
MCEDC transmittal email on January 10, 2022	4
Updated draft Plan from January 10, 2022	5
Section 15A-4A of the County Code	66
Executive recommended amendments	68

Resolution No.: _____
Introduced: _____
Adopted: _____

**COUNTY COUNCIL
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND**

By: County Council

SUBJECT: Economic Development Strategic Plan

Background

1. Section 15A-4A of the County Code details the responsibilities and requirements for the County's Economic Development Strategic Plan.
2. The Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation (MCEDC) must submit a draft Economic Development Strategic Plan (the "Plan") to the Executive and the Council by December 31, 2021. The draft Plan should include relevant economic development measures and input from partner agencies and organizations.
3. On December 31, 2021, MCEDC provided the draft Plan to the County Executive and the County Council. MCEDC provided a reformatted version of the draft Plan on January 10, 2021.
4. The County Executive must submit to the County Council any recommended revisions to the draft Plan as submitted by MCEDC by January 31, 2021.
5. The Council must hold a public hearing on the draft Plan and adopt, by resolution, the Plan by April 15, 2021.
6. Notice of a public hearing was given and a public hearing was held on the draft Plan.

Action

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland approves the following resolution:

The County Council approves the FY 2022 – FY2025 Economic Development Strategic Plan as attached.

This is a correct copy of Council action.

Selena Mendy Singleton, Esq.
Clerk of the Council

From: [Ben Wu](#)
To: [Albornoz, Gabriel](#); [Nurmi, Joy](#); [Smith, Gene](#)
Cc: [Bill Tompkins](#)
Subject: Montgomery County Economic Development Strategic Plan
Date: Friday, December 31, 2021 6:50:59 PM
Attachments: [Draft Economic Development Strategic Plan -12312021.pdf](#)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Council President Albornoz, please find attached the Montgomery County Economic Development Strategic Plan draft that we shared with the County Executive today.

It is not the final document. The attached version is a pdf of the Word document. Since the statute provides time for the County Executive to give input to the Council by the end of January, we did not want to shortchange his time allocation to review.

We will be creating a more stylistic layout of the plan with graphics next week when staff returns from the holidays. We will distribute that version to you and the Council staff when it is completed, on or around January 10.

Please let me know if you should have any questions.

Gabe, Happy New Year! Looking forward to working with you and the Council in 2022!

Ben

From: [Ben Wu](#)
To: [Albornoz, Gabriel](#); [Nurmi, Joy](#); [Smith, Gene](#)
Cc: [Bill Tompkins](#)
Subject: RE: Montgomery County Economic Development Strategic Plan
Date: Monday, January 10, 2022 6:32:34 PM
Attachments: [MCEDC_CES_011021.pdf](#)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Council President Albornoz, please find attached the formatted and laid-out Montgomery County Economic Development Strategic Plan for your reference. The attached mirrors the document that was transmitted to you on December 31. Gene Smith of the Council staff is copied in this message. This version has also been provided to the County Executive for his review. We look forward to discussing this document with you and the Council. If you should have any questions, please let me know. Thanks, Ben

From: Ben Wu
Sent: Friday, December 31, 2021 6:51 PM
To: Albornoz, Gabriel <Gabriel.Albornoz@montgomerycountymd.gov>; Joy Nurmi <Joy.Nurmi@montgomerycountymd.gov>; Gene Smith <Gene.Smith@montgomerycountymd.gov>
Cc: Bill Tompkins <bill@thinkmoco.com>
Subject: Montgomery County Economic Development Strategic Plan

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Please let me know if you should have any questions.

Gabe, Happy New Year! Looking forward to working with you and the Council in 2022!

Ben

DRAFT DOCUMENT

*Submitted to the County Executive
and the County Council
December 31, 2021*



MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

Strategic Priorities for a Unified Approach to Economic Development in Montgomery County, MD

**Montgomery County Economic Development Strategic Plan
2021-2025**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
Imagining Tomorrow’s Montgomery County	4
Vision And Values: Moving Forward Together	6
How To Approach This Plan	7
Referenced Reports	8
MONTGOMERY COUNTY SWOT ANALYSIS: STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS	9
STRATEGIC PRIORITIES: THE PATH TO MOVE FORWARD TOGETHER	11
PRIORITY A. Accelerate Innovation Economic Drivers And Entrepreneurship	12
PRIORITY B. Provide Greater Workforce And Educational Opportunities	20
PRIORITY C. Build Livable Communities That Connect Residents To Jobs	23
PRIORITY D. Create An Inclusive Economy For Shared Prosperity	27
RECOMMENDED KEY METRICS	30
RECOMMENDED KEY STAKEHOLDERS	32
APPENDICES	37
APPENDIX 1 - Montgomery County At A Glance	38
APPENDIX 2 - COVID-19 Pandemic Impact On Montgomery County	44
APPENDIX 3 - Economic Development Strategic Plan: Source Guide	45
APPENDIX 4 - Economic Development Strategic Plan: Legislative History And Statutory Requirements	47
APPENDIX 5 - Economic Development Strategic Plan: County Council Bill 10-21	48
APPENDIX 6 - County Council Resolution 19-300 Four Pillar Platform of Economic Development	56
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	59



INTRODUCTION

- ▶ Xometry is proud to be an industry leader in manufacturing on demand and proud to call Montgomery County our home. We will continue to invest in the technology and talent we need to realize our vision of democratizing manufacturing.

— RANDY ALTSCHULER, CEO AND CO-FOUNDER, XOMETRY

INTRODUCTION

IMAGINING TOMORROW'S MONTGOMERY COUNTY

The Economic Development Strategic Plan imagines a future Montgomery County with a revitalized and reformed economic ecosystem that supports a growing and healthy local economy for residents to achieve their full potential and is the foundation of a livable Montgomery County. The plan foresees a stronger Montgomery County economy forged in equity and filled with growth opportunities.

Tomorrow's local economy recognizes fundamental elements of this healthy ecosystem. Below are the overriding principles that should guide the outcomes and development of new County economic development actions.

GROWTH IN INNOVATION. Montgomery County's innovation clusters must be nurtured for expansion. These industry sectors allow the County to press its strong competitive advantages. They drive the economy's dynamism, innovation and attractiveness to investors. They are the strategic targets of business formation, growth and retention. Coordinated efforts to bolster these sectors can nurture an environment for the creation and retention of quality jobs in the County.

HEALTHY LOCAL BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT. Thriving local enterprises, from retail to restaurants to farms, are crucial components to the quality of life for County residents, workers and businesses. Supporting the growth and stability of local small businesses will contribute to the vibrancy of commercial corridors, strengthen the supply chain and provide jobs and entrepreneurship opportunities to the County's diverse communities. Support for these enterprises includes public efforts to streamline regulatory processes that impact business operations.

ADVANCEMENT PATHWAYS AND TALENT PIPELINES. For the County to attract new residents and equitably distribute the fruits of economic development, educational career pathways must be accessible for workers from a variety of occupational backgrounds. Inclusive access to these education pathways that can provide degree credentials or certifications in the County is essential. In addition, growth-stage companies must be able to readily access a talent pool that meets immediate and future industry needs.


HIGH QUALITY OF PLACE. In today's marketplace, businesses are increasingly choosing to locate and expand in locations where large numbers of potential workers

want and can afford to live. To remain competitive, the County will need to continue creating attractive amenities, which include thriving local commercial corridors, affordable housing, robust public infrastructure and less congested transportation modes to appeal to residents, workers and businesses.

CAPACITY FOR SHARED ACTION. Intentional collaboration and relationship-building can nurture effective public-private partnerships and build civic and social capital in key areas. Resilient and agile communities have an overarching sense that everyone is “in it together” with a shared vision and a stake in the progress. Strong partnerships, communication channels and knowledge transfer allow the County’s public and private sectors to mobilize in response to challenges and emergencies; these include infrastructure development, climate action, racial equity and public health.

DIVERSIFIED ECONOMY. The County economy has experienced comparative stability due in part to the strong presence of the federal government. Although federal expenditures have helped to stabilize the economy in times of economic volatility, it can also act as a constraint on the County’s ability to capture a greater share of private sector growth during periods of economic boom. Nurturing a healthy and diverse mix of industry clusters can bolster the County’s economic health and help to weather external shocks like a global pandemic or recession.

INCLUSIVITY AND RACIAL EQUITY. Montgomery County has fully embraced the desire for an inclusive and more equitable economy, especially in under-represented and underserved communities. Racial justice and shared prosperity in economic development actions should not just be the absence of discrimination and inequities, but also the presence of deliberate systems to achieve and sustain equity.

There is  tremendous growth and immediate opportunities for many companies here... The reality of the pandemic is it has brought tremendous focus to Montgomery County as the Global Immunology Capital in life sciences.

— DOUGLAS FIRSTENBERG,
PRINCIPAL, STONEBRIDGE

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY. A healthy economy is resilient to climate hazards such as supply chain and energy disruptions. The implementation of measures to mitigate climate change can provide economic opportunities locally, including new jobs in clean energy, vehicle electrification, infrastructure resilience and natural solutions. Climate solutions should be executed in a manner that provides access to opportunities for residents and businesses, harnesses the potential of the County’s diverse entrepreneurs and recognizes the economic potential of addressing climate change.

VISION AND VALUES: MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

The Economic Development Strategic Plan provides direction and guidance on the vision and priorities that Montgomery County intends to pursue in expanding its economy, consistent with its values. The goal for the County’s economic prosperity is to attract, retain and expand businesses that will create jobs and make it regionally, nationally and globally competitive.

The vision for Montgomery County’s prosperity is a healthy economy that is diversified, thriving, equitable and innovative with sustainable job growth and advancement opportunities for all. To maximize the power of the County’s economy in ways that would create growth opportunities for its residents requires the collective strength of the community—from elected officials, government entities, industry, academic institutions, chambers of commerce, nonprofit organizations and community stakeholders. **It requires the Montgomery County community to *move forward together*.**

When the last countywide Economic Development Strategic Plan was adopted in November 2016¹, Montgomery County was described as “one of the most prosperous and successful communities in the United States... boasting world-class research institutions, globally recognizable brands, a highly educated and diverse populace, and attractive neighborhoods.” Five years later, despite today’s changed economic conditions resulting from the catastrophic impact of the COVID-19 global pandemic, that description still holds true.

The COVID-19 economic crisis also revealed stark truths about the greater need for an inclusive economy and the need to bridge Montgomery County’s income divide. By addressing the structural economic inequities that were further exposed during the pandemic, Montgomery County can be a regional and national leader in creating an inclusive economy—one that envisions broad economic prosperity, especially for populations that have faced systemic barriers.

1 [Montgomery County Comprehensive Economic Strategy: A Plan for Economic Prosperity](#)

By moving forward together, Montgomery County can expect to make significant post-pandemic economic progress. The expectation is that in the next four years, by the time of the next major strategic plan review, unemployment will be further reduced and leveled to the County's historic average, an increase in workforce development and educational attainment programs will sustain a robust talent pipeline, job growth in the well-paying targeted industries will rise, a focus on greater shared economic prosperity will combat the issues of income inequality and solutions for more affordable housing and less transportation congestion will better connect workers to their jobs.

HOW TO APPROACH THIS PLAN

There is no single ownership of Montgomery County's economic future. It is acknowledged that economic development has many collective components. To fully prosper, Montgomery County's economy requires a team approach from all members of the community championing synchronous and continued action.

The Economic Development Strategic Plan is neither a detailed work plan nor a binding document for stakeholders. Instead, it serves as a call to action on the overarching economic priorities needed to propel Montgomery County forward. It is designed to create outcomes that spur collaboration, point key stakeholders toward a direction forward and drive a unified focus on desired near and long-term results.

While this plan identifies critically important goals to strengthen Montgomery County's economy and create new opportunities for residents and businesses, it is not designed to be exhaustive. An industry sector that is not expressly referenced does not mean it has lesser significance or priority. For example, the travel and tourism industry is an important local sector but is not highlighted in the plan because the separate parallel activities and programs tied to it are more focused and comprehensive in nature. The same applies for other important sectors such as restaurants, retail and the service industry which complete a full 360-degree view of the County's economy.

The plan focuses on certain holistic components to strengthen Montgomery County's economic development, including: key targeted industries; workforce development; educational attainment; housing; transportation; environmental sustainability; and equity. These components are priorities because they have a significant impact on the ultimate success of whether a company will move to or stay in Montgomery County and whether they are willing to make the necessary investments needed to grow their business.

The plan is also designed to align with the County Council's four-pillars Economic Development Platform adopted in November 2019². The four pillars are: business development, workforce development, housing and transportation. Together, they would support the following desired outcomes: (1) a business-friendly, thriving and diversified economy; (2) greater innovation; (3) racial equity and social justice; and (4) environmental sustainability.

Additionally, the plan includes key metrics to assess Montgomery County's ability to address relevant economic development measures including creating jobs, growing wages, identifying and supporting strategic industries, retaining and attracting new companies and employers, growing the tax base, supporting and increasing entrepreneurial activity as well as other actions necessary to promote economic development.

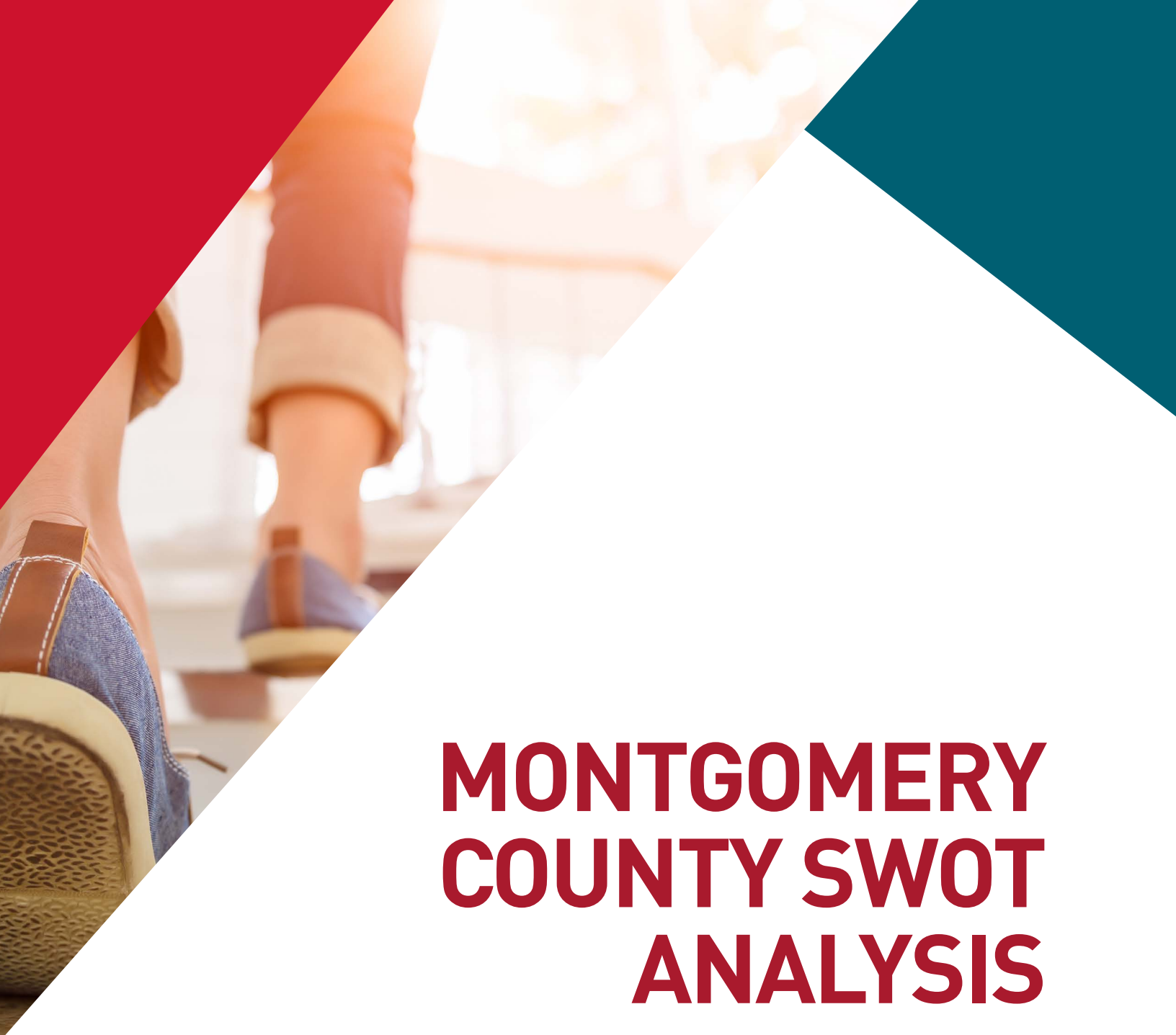
The plan recognizes that economic development success benefits the entire Montgomery County population and will lead to the creation of more jobs for its residents. This provides increased tax revenues for the County that will in turn lead to the services and enhancement of the local quality of life that is enjoyed by all.

REFERENCED REPORTS

Significant input was solicited in the drafting of the Economic Development Strategic Plan. Contributions were made from executive branch agencies and partner organizations such as the Montgomery Planning Board and WorkSource Montgomery, as well as leading economic development stakeholders from post-secondary academic institutions to chambers of commerce to other key community members.

The plan was also informed and guided by several significant recently released reports that contain numerous recommendations and action items in the strategic priority areas to retain existing businesses, attract new companies and improve the employment opportunities available to Montgomery County residents. While the plan captures certain themes and recommendations, those reports can also be referenced independently for a full review. Some of those reports are listed and can be accessed through weblinks found in [Appendix 3: Source Guide](#).

2 [Economic Development Platform for Montgomery County](#)



MONTGOMERY COUNTY SWOT ANALYSIS

MONTGOMERY COUNTY SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<p>Connected to two major Metropolitan Statistical Areas</p> <p>Highly educated workforce</p> <p>Home to 18 federal agency headquarters</p> <p>Presence of a multitude of global brands</p> <p>Large foreign-born population with international connections</p> <p>Master planned, transit-oriented developments around Metro stations and planned bus rapid transit</p> <p>Open space and agricultural lands</p> <p>Strong arts and non-profit sectors</p> <p>High level of disposable consumer income</p> <p>Strong K-12 educational system</p> <p>Lower cost of commercial real estate than major urban competitors (Boston, NY, CA)</p>	<p>Limited affordable/mid-tier housing</p> <p>Slow planning and permitting process</p> <p>Complicated land-use and zoning policies</p> <p>Limited industrial real estate product</p> <p>Unfavorable perception of the business climate; overall high cost of doing business</p> <p>Inconsistent engagement and partnership between the government, the business community and municipalities</p> <p>Complex economic development structure</p> <p>Flat employment growth</p> <p>Weak entrepreneurial culture and lack of risk capital</p> <p>Complicated State and local incentive programs</p> <p>Limited existence of industry clusters outside of biohealth</p> <p>Global brands that are here are not associated with the County</p>	<p>Economic diversification beyond federal economy and biotechnology</p> <p>Political climate that favors aggressive entrepreneurship support</p> <p>Regional coordinated talent attraction</p> <p>Leveraging federal, academic and private R&D assets to stimulate private investment</p> <p>Proximity to foreign embassies and consulates to recruit FDI and international startups</p> <p>Collaboration with EDOs in Suburban MD, D.C. and Northern Virginia to sell Metro D.C. brand to targeted markets</p> <p>Strong political support for environmental initiatives may serve as a base to launch clean tech sector</p> <p>Better partnerships with the State for economic growth opportunities</p> <p>390 schools within 250-mile radius offering 2-year, 4-year, and graduate-level degrees</p>	<p>Slowing regional growth</p> <p>Federal budget uncertainty</p> <p>Declining middle skill/middle income jobs</p> <p>Aging workforce</p> <p>Local competition for younger workforce</p> <p>Preference among younger workers for urban centers in D.C. and Northern Virginia</p> <p>Increasing cost to provide government services</p> <p>Contraction of corporate leased space due to remote work and the resulting reduction of tax base</p> <p>Regional transportation infrastructure in dire need of funding and upgrades</p> <p>Limited affordable housing stock in the pipeline in the County and the Metro D.C.</p> <p>Tightening labor markets</p> <p>The “Great Resignation”</p>



**Strengths, Weaknesses,
 Opportunities and
 Threats**



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES: THE PATH TO MOVE FORWARD TOGETHER

To achieve the goals set forth in the Economic Development Strategic Plan, the following four strategic priorities are identified with specific objectives and actionable items. With all stakeholders working together, the objectives can become outcomes that further equitable economic prosperity for the County.

PRIORITY A. ACCELERATE INNOVATION ECONOMIC DRIVERS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

OBJECTIVE: Grow key innovation clusters from life sciences to advanced technologies. Promote entrepreneurship by nurturing private industry innovators and enhancing commercialization opportunities.

To re-position Montgomery County to better capture sustained long-term economic growth, the plan identifies the need to diversify the local economy away from being federal government reliant by nurturing a vibrant mix of private industry clusters that are deeply rooted in the County. Industry clusters evolve over time as geographic concentrations are made up of interconnected companies, specialized suppliers, service providers and associated institutions.

Companies prefer to be in an industry cluster because the density of resources increases business productivity and competitiveness. The presence of multiple industry clusters in key sectors can bolster the County's economic health. They help to weather external shocks such as a recession, pandemic, the exit of a major employer or industry and other market disruptions.

There are multiple industry sectors which are important to Montgomery County's economy. This plan addresses some specific opportunities that will help the County's economy thrive. For those industries not specifically listed below but which are also part of the fabric of the local economy, there will still be continued attention given to develop other initiatives to support their important economic role in the County.

INNOVATION ECONOMIC DRIVER: LIFE SCIENCES

In certain national rankings, Montgomery County is among the top national biotechnology clusters behind Boston, San Francisco, San Diego and North Carolina's Research Triangle³. Montgomery County has the potential to elevate as a top-three

3 [JLL Research Report: Life Sciences Outlook 2019](#)

biotechnology cluster based on recent momentum in attracting venture capital, private investment and infrastructure development as well as the maturation of local early-stage companies.

Recommendations

Strategies to raise the County's prominence in the national market to a top-three position include:

- Aggressively recruit life sciences companies to Montgomery County to increase the density of its biohealth establishments
 - Create bold and consistent marketing campaigns that clarify the County's strengths and opportunities for business attraction
 - Partner to launch a regional brand that highlights the Greater Washington D.C. metropolitan area tech talent
- Work to retain and support existing growth-stage life science companies
 - Establish an agile business retention and expansion program that resolves local challenges and service gaps to help anchor successful existing companies locally
 - Support minority-owned businesses by highlighting success stories and helping to ensure equitable access to ecosystem resources
- Develop public-private partnerships that stimulate applied research with commercialization potential in the County
 - Create a pandemic-preparedness research center that leverages the County's commercial advantage in vaccine development
 - Facilitate collaboration between research institutions and local industry to advance research at the intersection of biohealth and adjacent technologies
- Promote public resources for entrepreneurs seeking to commercialize new life sciences products in the County
 - Launch marketing campaigns focused on unique resources such as the NIH Applicant Assistance program, TEDCO Proposal Lab and County SBIR match to attract and support serial entrepreneurs
 - Evaluate and restructure the County SBIR match program and life sciences incubator in Germantown to enhance the launch and graduation of new companies

- Implement innovative workforce development solutions to resolve the most pressing talent needs of local companies
 - Facilitate collaboration between local academic institutions and County life sciences companies to implement large-scale training programs. Programs should be held at multiple locations and include wrap-around services to facilitate equitable access
- Prioritize neighborhood-level land use planning to enhance infrastructure and locations that appeal to life sciences companies
 - Invest to make parts of the County that have already been developed or planned for life sciences growth more attractive to residents and workers
 - Explore innovative ways to facilitate adaptive reuse of real estate to meet industry demand for small-scale lab and manufacturing space and ensure a continuum of affordable suburban and urban lab supply
- Simplify development processes to meet the needs of growing life sciences companies
 - Streamline development project approval process and expand inter-agency coordination and cooperation
- Engage the life sciences community to advance the County’s climate action goals
 - Given the sector’s significant energy needs, establish partnerships with County government, research institutions and businesses to test and showcase resiliency and energy innovation utilizing County assets and infrastructure
 - Engage biotechnology firms that wish to pursue import substitution strategies and small-scale manufacturing to minimize supply chain disruptions, thereby creating greater self-sufficiency and reducing transportation emissions

INNOVATION ECONOMIC DRIVER: ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY

In Montgomery County’s innovation-led economy, the retention and growth of the prominent life sciences industry is critical; however, businesses in other advanced technology industries are also a high priority.

Today’s small and emerging businesses are the innovators and job generators of tomorrow. These growing businesses are more likely to stay in a community that has

nurtured their growth and to which they are well connected. Programs to support these industries can play a critical role in encouraging successful local startups to remain in the County and continue to expand their business. Identifying the hurdles and addressing the challenges facing these sectors can help maintain competitiveness in the wider marketplace and prevent businesses from moving out of the County.

Three advanced technology sectors that hold substantial promise for industry growth in Montgomery County include the following opportunities: Hospitality Technology; Quantum Computing Technology; and Cybersecurity.

Innovation Economic Driver: Hospitality Technology

Montgomery County's hospitality industry is distinctive from many other jurisdictions. The County has hotels, caterers and restaurants, just as other communities, however, it is also home to some of the largest hospitality headquarters, hotel management companies, real estate investment trusts and has an emerging hospitality tech sector.

Marriott International, the world's largest hotel chain, has been headquartered in Montgomery County for more than 60 years. Choice Hotels, one of the world's largest hotel franchisers, has also been headquartered in the County for more than 70 years. Both companies are building new, state-of-the-art global headquarters in the County to continue their substantial global growth.

Hospitality management companies often oversee the day-to-day operations at individual hotels and several of the largest in the industry are headquartered in the County. For example, Sodexo, a French-based food services and facilities management company, has its North American headquarters in the County. HMSHost is another example.

Besides management operations, real estate investment trusts (REITs) are a key component of the hospitality industry, especially in the financing and development of hotels. REITs are companies that own, operate or finance income-producing real estate. In addition to others, Host Hotels & Resorts, the world's largest REIT, is headquartered in the County.

Given the density of the hospitality sector, Montgomery County can nurture innovation in hospitality technology companies that build upon existing corporate headquarters. Hospitality tech companies are focused on industry-specific digital solutions in the hospitality industry. Some companies within this space are already located in the County and have raised more than \$40 million in venture capital since 2016⁴.

4 Pitchbook.com, 2019

Recommendations

Strategies to elevate the emergence of the hospitality technology sector include:

- Expand relationships with existing hospitality anchor institutions and startups to inform economic development efforts within this industry
- Target growth stage hospitality technology and headquarters companies for relocation efforts
- Establish an incubator or accelerator for hospitality tech startups to expand and support the connected networks of local national hospitality headquarters
- Create workforce training initiatives with industry to meet hospitality tech talent demand
- Plan showcase summits to spark business growth in emerging industry sectors including hospitality technology

Innovation Economic Driver: Quantum Computing Technology

Although quantum computing is still a nascent technology, it will be transformative and dramatically increase capabilities beyond what is currently possible. It can both enhance and disrupt life as we know it, with future quantum computers having high-value applications in life sciences, drug development, national security, cryptography, energy and many more critical industry sectors.

Rapid quantum technology development and commercialization is expected globally in the next decade. The opportunity is now for Montgomery County to leverage its unique federal, academic and industry assets and seize a competitive advantage as a quantum leader, especially to attract national and international business investment locally. The Greater Washington region also has a wealth of quantum assets clustered across industry, academia, government and nonprofits that complement the County's assets.

Regional collaboration will support quantum growth that can make the Greater Washington region a major quantum hub by market size and talent pool, which will in turn allow Montgomery County to press its competitive advantages to be a national quantum leader. These aggregated assets include leading corporations and employers engaged in innovative quantum research, application development and product commercialization; one of the nation's largest, most diverse clustering of higher education and research institution centers dedicated to quantum research; and the federal government presence of agencies and laboratories focused on developing quantum computing and commercialization.

Recommendations

To be a national quantum leader, Montgomery County will need to develop a foundation and bring together these building blocks. Strategies include:

- Advance local research and development collaboration through scientific disciplines and industry sectors, as well as facilitate technology transfer from laboratories to the private sector, federal agencies and others
- Create a quantum technology workforce through educational programs that provide students and personnel with the training, qualifications and skills to work in quantum tech across the private and public sectors and academia
- Support the growth of emerging quantum companies, private sector investment and the attraction of national and international businesses to locate in Montgomery County for their quantum research and development
- Concurrently develop local and regional partnerships with regional entities for federal government grants and research funding
- Pursue collaborations with neighboring University of Maryland, a leading quantum hub with 200 scientists and researchers in the field, along with partnerships with multiple federal research labs driving quantum

Innovation Economic Driver: Cybersecurity

Maryland has one of the largest concentrations of university-trained cyber engineering graduates in the world, as well as one of the largest concentrations of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) professionals in the U.S.⁵ With 16 National Centers of Academic Excellence sponsored by the National Security Agency (NSA) and Department of Homeland Security, Maryland has more nationally recognized colleges designated as Cyber Centers of Excellence than any other State.

In Montgomery County, the academic and federal presence of the cybersecurity industry provides several workforce opportunities for private cybersecurity companies to establish and expand. The existence of large pools of cybersecurity professionals within the federal government looking to enter private employment also provides opportunities for local companies to be established and grow. Several cybersecurity innovations and the serial entrepreneurs behind those large and small enterprises have come out of government agencies such as the National Security Agency (NSA).

5 MD Department of Commerce: [Rankings & Statistics](#)

Locally, the Rockville-based National Cybersecurity Center of Excellence (NCCoE) is a part of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). The NCCoE is a collaborative hub for industry, government and academia to address the most pressing cyber needs of businesses. The NCCoE provides the County's cyber companies a unique opportunity for local collaboration with a federal laboratory.

Recommendations

Strategies to elevate the emergence of the cybersecurity sector include:

- Leverage existing workforce strengths to lure cybersecurity investment to Montgomery County while also fostering cyber security entrepreneurship
- Market the cybersecurity industry as a regional asset and attract company headquarters relocations in Montgomery County due to its presence in the Greater Washington area
- Create a consulting team of cybersecurity experts who can assist companies in evaluating and purchasing new, local cybersecurity technologies to expand the cyber security industry ecosystem
- Create networking opportunities for existing cybersecurity companies to access potential customers including reverse pitch events

ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM BUILDING

A nurturing entrepreneurial ecosystem allows for the fast flow of talent, information and resources that help entrepreneurs quickly find what they need at each stage of growth. A thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem has many components. Montgomery County has the elements for a more nurturing ecosystem, but needs to advance the elements that remain under-developed or disconnected and in need of a strong ecosystem catalyst.

Recommendations

The primary focus of an entrepreneurial ecosystem is to move knowledge and resources from the people who have it to the entrepreneurs who need it. The following programs can assist in these efforts:

- Montgomery County Business Incubator Network

Business incubation is an effective and proven tool to support the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Changes in communications technology, the utilization of physical space, and the development of new business incubation/acceleration models, require a reimagining and reinvigoration of the County's current business incubation support program. Montgomery County's incubator system should have the following major components:

- A focused high-value use of existing incubator facilities that will require reinforcing successful models and reimagining others
- A more inclusive concept of business incubation, supporting a more diverse set of incubation organizations and models, through coordination, best practice sharing and sustained but competitive funding
- A sophisticated County-wide entrepreneurial and innovation support program encompassing women owned enterprises and economically and socially disadvantaged individuals
- Adequate funding to support the necessary internal and external resources to execute these components
- Robust staffing to provide oversight to these expanded programs
- Access to capital resources including the Maryland Tech Council's Venture Mentoring Program which prepares early-stage technology companies for venture capital fundraising

- Montgomery County Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) Program

After having launched the Montgomery County SBIR/STTR matching program in 2018, the country's first County-based match program, it is appropriate to review the metrics of the program to determine whether reforms and greater impact can be achieved with the funds provided by the County.

- Evaluate and redesign, if necessary, the County SBIR/STTR program to better leverage the accompanying federal SBIR/STTR R&D funding with a complementary structured effort to help companies secure outside financial investment
- Better leverage any available county, state and federal funds to provide County SBIR/STTR recipients with more useful technical assistance resources that will:
 - Increase the number of SBIR/STTR grants received and outside capital invested

- Move companies further towards commercialization
- Continue the successful record of supporting women-owned small businesses and economically disadvantaged and distressed individual-led companies

- Federal Technology Licensing and Commercialization

A strategy to maximize Montgomery County's federal agency presence should be further developed to help support an agency's critical national mission while also spurring local economic development. This unique local federal capacity would support new business creation, facilitate technology transfer, commercialize innovation and create partnerships to target the following priorities:

- Supporting entrepreneurial success and early career professionals
- Leveraging laboratory proximity and engagement
- Creating access to early-stage capital
- Initiating and matching federal funding opportunities
- Strengthening partnerships and collaboration

PRIORITY B. PROVIDE GREATER WORKFORCE AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

OBJECTIVE: Create a robust talent pipeline within target sectors that supports industry growth and diversification. Invest in an educational system that prepares residents and workers with the skills and mindset needed to meet the industry needs of tomorrow.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Job growth and access to talent are two key components that support a healthy economy. Montgomery County's human capital is a strength. The County has Maryland's largest employer base with over 576,000 jobs or about 17% of the State's total. The professional services sector is the County's largest, employing nearly one in four workers.

While recent regional comparative job growth has been sluggish, Montgomery County continues to be an employment powerhouse. The County holds 24%, or one in five jobs, in the Greater Washington Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA).⁶

6 Bureau of Labor Statistics

To stimulate greater job growth and help companies access the talent that they require to expand, the County should address existing local talent gaps. The County will need to focus short-term efforts on helping to align the skills of the available workforce with the demand for talent in key industries. This can be achieved through a prioritized and coordinated focus on marketing, training, sector strategies and academic curriculum development for degree credentialing and certifications.

Expanding a demand-based talent pipeline will support the County's workforce needs for business retention and attraction. Most job growth generally comes from retaining employers and helping them grow locally. The County needs to also continue aggressively seek attraction opportunities to expand the local job base. Accordingly, County workforce resources should concentrate as listed below.

- Supporting accelerated job growth and retention in key industry sectors by working closely with the business community and educational institutions to address skills gaps
- Creating more equity and opportunity for the County's growing and diverse population
- Increasing the earning capacity of the County's workforce to meet the lifestyle to which residents have become accustomed
- Generating a talent management system which supports households and wage earners at all income levels including targeting small and minority owned businesses

Recommendations

The County can support a stronger talent pipeline in the following ways:

- Incentivize employers to retain jobs in Montgomery County
- Incentivize workers to stay in the County by improving quality of life amenities
- Provide more affordable housing options
- Work with employers in key industry sectors to aggressively market to employee bases in target geographies of the country and the Greater Washington region
- Apply more dedicated resources and support centers to small/local businesses to strengthen opportunities for sustainable job growth
- Align the County's educational ecosystem using a pathway model to support private sector demand including building flexibility into the system and using community partners to better connect the educational system to the workforce system
- Focus on systems building and job quality to ensure an equitable work system
- Recreate an Early Care and Education (ECE) initiative to support a strong future workforce and to allow parents with childcare needs to focus on more active participation in the workforce

- Support a strong entrepreneurial ecosystem to encourage the growth of new businesses
- Provide training and support programs to individuals with barriers to employment, including veterans, speakers of non-English languages, individuals with disabilities, ex-offenders, low-income individuals and their families and homeless individuals and their families

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OPPORTUNITIES

A high performing educational system in Montgomery County serves as an asset that encourages residents to stay, attracts new residents and provides the backbone for talent for companies for years to come.

It is critical to align education, workforce development and economic development to ensure that there is a 360-degree view of how we manage our talent pipeline by creating an educational ecosystem. There is also a high demand for workers in priority industries and the Montgomery County educational system, from the public schools to the post-secondary academic institutions, to link long term workforce needs to skills demands.

Since Montgomery County's high-potential target sectors drive its economic growth and require a highly skilled and trained workforce, the County must be equipped to generate and compete nationally for this talent. At the same time, the desired expansion of economic opportunities must be available to County residents, and this can often be achieved through educational degree credentials or certifications.

Yet, there are concerns of a growing educational disparity between Montgomery County's more prosperous residents and the faster growing households with residents at mid-to-lower income levels. For the economy to be most competitive, larger segments of the County's population need to be trained and educated to help support a growing and thriving economy. When residents are not creating business opportunities or finding jobs at the same pace as others, there is a gap in the full economic growth potential for the County.

The County's academic system, beginning with Early Care and Education (ECE), going through the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), and including the local post-secondary academic institutions such as Montgomery College (MC) and the Universities at Shady Grove (USG), should take a holistic and integrated approach to education as part of a priority mission to support economic development. At a time when the projected rate of skilled labor shortages continues to increase, there is a clear advantage to having home grown talent that remains in the County.

Recommendations

- Develop a workforce education and skills development program to prepare residents for entry-level jobs in specific industry sectors with academic institution partners and WorkSource Montgomery
- Collaborate with County educational institutions to develop training and placement programming for high-need occupations, such as computer sciences and engineering, life sciences, healthcare and general startup business leadership
- Engage academic institutions as economic drivers to develop innovation and workforce linkages to encourage greater interaction between the education, innovation and entrepreneurial sectors
- Support a comprehensive approach to early care and education to allow for:
 - Readiness across diverse residents to enter the K-12 system fully prepared to learn and advance
 - Provide residents with the necessary support resources to allow them to be fully engaged in the workforce
- Support and expand early exposure to advanced educational trends such as computer coding, app and software development, as these skills provide students with a future advantage in being hired and creates an added investment in the County's future workforce
- Provide pathways to success beyond a focus on STEM programs and provide training for entrepreneurship at an early stage
- Better align educational pathway models with the needs of the business community by expanding and strengthening partnerships and working in a more collaborative way

PRIORITY C. BUILD LIVABLE COMMUNITIES THAT CONNECT RESIDENTS TO JOBS

OBJECTIVE: Build more housing stock that residents can afford and that supports the growing population of households. Provide multi-modal transportation infrastructure which supports an economical, safe and environmentally sustainable way for people to conveniently move throughout the County based on the places where they live, work and play.

HOUSING TO SUPPORT A DIVERSE WORKFORCE

Housing costs factor significantly into employer decisions about where to locate. When housing is available at costs people can afford, it makes it easier for employers to attract and retain employees across all levels.

The Greater Washington region added about 25,000 housing units annually in the 1990s and about 30,000 a year in the 2000s, mainly single unit homes in the outer suburbs. The economic crash of the 2008 Great Recession, however, caused that number to plummet to about 10,000, which has since increased to 21,000 in 2018.⁷

There is a need for greater housing stock to meet the Greater Washington region's anticipated demand. A 2019 Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) report⁸ analyzed regional employment forecasts and projected housing growth. The report indicated that the region would require about 75,000 housing units more than currently planned by 2030, and about 100,000 more than planned by 2045.

By 2030, regional employment forecasts show 413,000 additional jobs with about 245,000 planned housing units, or annual housing production of about 25,000 units per year. 320,000 additional housing units are forecast to be needed by 2030, which would result in an annual increase in the 2020s of 32,000 a year.

Therefore, the region is expected to need about 7,000 additional housing units annually above current planned levels. 75% of housing should be geared to the lower to middle monthly cost range, and that 75% should be targeted to “activity centers” and/or higher capacity transit systems.

Addressing housing needs to match household growth over the next 20 years is complex and challenging. Montgomery County is projected to grow by 60,000 households between now and 2040, according to the 2020 Montgomery County Housing Needs Assessment⁹. The goal is to provide housing options for all which includes affordable housing within multiple household income ranges: (1) \$25,000; (2) \$26,000–\$125,000; and (3) greater than \$125,000.

Montgomery Planning projects that over the next 20 years, 26.6% of new households will have income levels between \$25,000 and \$49,000, while 23.9% of new households will have income levels above \$125,000.¹⁰ There is currently a gap in available housing supplies for both lower-income and middle-income households, and the gap is projected to grow each year unless an innovative approach to managing housing stock availability is created.

7 Metropolitan Washington Council of Government report: The Future of Housing in Greater Washington

8 Metropolitan Washington Council of Government report: [The Future of Housing in Greater Washington](#)

9 Montgomery Planning: [Montgomery County Housing Needs Assessment, July 2020](#)

10 Montgomery Planning: [Montgomery County Housing Needs Assessment, July 2020](#)

To eliminate the current gap, new housing must address household growth and the housing will need to grow at the following rate:

2020-2025

OWNER/RENTER	PERCENTAGE
Single-Family Owner	13.9
Multifamily Owner	27.5
Single-Family Renter	4.4
Multifamily Renter*	54.2

*Multifamily includes townhomes, duplexes, apartments and condominiums

Recommendations

Montgomery County should coordinate public sector efforts with the private sector to address short-term housing needs and increase the supply for all income levels in the following ways:

- Amend zoning policy to facilitate more compact high-density housing where appropriate
- Provide enhanced access to capital programs through direct subsidies and partnerships with financial institutions to allow for more robust and fair lending, especially to communities of color
- Incentivize the repurposing of non-residential structures into residential structures, especially as businesses rethink their office needs based on a more flexible post-pandemic schedule
- Develop public/private partnerships with developers to create diverse housing stock in part or in whole using County-owned land
- Partner with the County’s largest employers to assist in sourcing housing for new employees
- Work with partner jurisdictions in the Greater Washington region to help balance the supply/demand housing gap regionally
- Continue to tightly coordinate housing and transportation programs with employment centers and County amenities to assure travel time efficiency and workforce quality of work/life balance for both residents and commuters

TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

A healthy transportation plan builds the infrastructure to facilitate ease of movement through and across the County and can be a key tool in assuring equity for all residents by providing efficient and affordable access to key employment centers and County amenities regardless of location. A healthy plan can also support a sustainable energy program which could help reduce greenhouse gas emissions in our transportation systems. Currently, carbon emissions from the transportation sector account for 42% of all such emissions in the County.

The Montgomery County Department of Transportation has developed a long-term plan for the role of transportation in our community¹¹. With its stated conclusion that transportation allows for inclusion, connectiveness and advancement, three transportation priority areas are recommended:

- Supporting the County's Safety and Vision Zero¹² plans to eliminate severe injuries and death along roadways
- Supporting environmental sustainability through the implementation of the County's climate action plans for transportation
- Helping the County achieve its economic growth and development goals in an equitable way

Recommendations

Montgomery County's transportation network and infrastructure should facilitate connectiveness to all communities to ensure that access to jobs in both existing and new employment centers be prioritized, using multiple modes of transportation to accommodate these needs. To further this goal, the following actions should be considered:

- Accelerate delivery of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) to enhance transportation options
- Identify workarounds to support construction interruptions as the light-rail Purple Line is being built to help local businesses and communities
- Cooperate with state and federal resources to facilitate the expedient expansion of the American Legion Bridge, the Capital Beltway (Interstate 495) and Interstate 270; this allows for better access to jobs in Montgomery County's high growth Life Sciences and Technology corridors and provides better access for workers who commute in both directions to and from Northern Virginia

11 [Connecting Our Communities: MCDOT's Vision for Transportation in Montgomery County, MD; November 2021](#)

12 [Vision Zero Fiscal Years 2022-2023 Work Plan](#)

- Continue to provide east-west connections in both MidCounty and UpCounty areas for better access to jobs
- Focus on improvements in areas that facilitate walkability and placemaking
- Reduce the reliance on carbon-based gas emitting vehicles
- Support greater electric vehicle (EV) charging stations throughout the County to promote greater access and ease of use
- Make EV options a mainstay for all vehicles in the County
- Build and enhance walkability options as an alternative to moving vehicles within the County

PRIORITY D. CREATE AN INCLUSIVE ECONOMY FOR SHARED PROSPERITY

OBJECTIVE: Create business opportunities and build a local community ecosystem which supports a more inclusive economy addressing racial equity issues.

COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING

Community wealth building helps to ensure that a broader array of residents participate in and benefit from an expanded economy. It can help to reduce the racial wealth gap and other economic disparities by supporting a comprehensive web of local businesses within communities and creating sustainable assets for wealth creation at the local level.

The disparity between Montgomery County's more prosperous residents and those who are not thriving continues to grow. Overall growth, as measured in the County's GDP, has not ensured shared prosperity, especially for communities of color. The County's entire population must be able to contribute to Montgomery County's economic well-being if it is to be competitive. An inclusive economy, including racial, gender and geographic equity is a keystone for all economic development initiatives.¹³

To be truly impactful with diversity, equity and inclusionary initiatives, the County needs to think very differently about the structure of future assistance programs and community interactions. The County should initiate strategies that focus on the wealth expansion of low-income and non-white residents. These efforts could include debt reduction help, shifting from renting to homeownership and transforming workers to entrepreneurs. This plan focuses on concerted efforts to support entrepreneurial education, mentors and incubators targeted to low-income and non-white entrepreneurs.

¹³ [Connecting the Dots, Accelerating Economic Growth in Montgomery County, MD; Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation Economic Advisory Panel, October 2021](#)

Recommendations

Actions to support greater entrepreneur and innovator diversity should include the expansion of robust entrepreneurship innovation hubs networked throughout the County with:

- Networking opportunities with successful entrepreneurs
- Training and development tools geared for business startups
- Expanded mentoring opportunities
- Access to talent to assist with business plan execution
- Broader access to purveyors of capital
- Promote and cultivate an entrepreneurship culture within the entire County and people of all ages, beginning with an expanded curriculum in the public school system

SMALL, WOMEN AND MINORITY OWNED BUSINESS GROWTH

Investments in the success of small and minority businesses help expand community wealth building, leading to better racial equity and social justice outcomes in the economic ecosystem. These businesses are typically underrepresented when participating at a sustainable level within the local economy.

Recommendations

As with entrepreneurs and innovators, additional tools and targeted efforts should be directed to small and minority businesses and others who have felt disenfranchised. A successful focus will include:

- Access to Capital: Creating program partnerships with financial and capital resources in the region for businesses including financial institutions, banks, credit unions lending programs and government supported financial programs, in combination with facilitating access to capital through investors, grants and angel networks
- Training: Including mentorship and professional training in areas such as accounting, legal, marketing and operations management to give businesses resources required to operate efficiently; for non-native English speakers, programs such as English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) offer courses and translation services oriented towards immigrant communities that could be helpful in this training

- Networking: Connecting and referring business owners to Chambers of Commerce and business associations that include ethnic and geographical-focused groups; assist with the maintenance and public awareness of such networks
- Messaging: Developing customized messaging tools for small and minority businesses to better communicate business opportunities, access to business resources and business support activities such as training; use targeted media and translation services extensively
- Management Expertise: Providing access to senior level managers who serve as loaned executives to businesses to teach, mentor and assist with business oversight as small businesses implement their operating plans and business models
- Public/Private Sector Partner Support: Allocating public and private sector resources to strengthen business trade associations that provide services to minority and small businesses
- “No Wrong Door” for Small Businesses to Access Montgomery County Government Services: Ensuring easy access to government resources and services regardless of which agency or entity a business initially contacts; this can be accomplished by educating all County employees who interact with businesses (including those in licensing, permitting, planning, procurement, among others) to know about available small business resources so they can make appropriate referrals or suggestions



RECOMMENDED KEY METRICS

RECOMMENDED KEY METRICS

Measuring economic development success goes well beyond looking at the retention and creation of jobs in a community. Metrics should be tied to the specific goals of the economic development strategy.

PRIORITY A. ACCELERATE INNOVATION ECONOMIC DRIVERS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

- Percent of companies developing new products or services
 - Number of SBIR/STTR grants
 - Seed funding, angel and venture capital investments
- Growth of clusters compared to State growth of same cluster
 - Industry location quotient
- Job growth in identified clusters
 - Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics (CES), nonfarm payroll employment

PRIORITY B. PROVIDE GREATER WORKFORCE AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Net job growth
 - Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics (CES), nonfarm payroll employment
- Percent of jobs created/retained above County average wage
 - Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics

PRIORITY C. BUILD LIVABLE COMMUNITIES THAT CONNECT RESIDENTS TO JOBS

- Annual capital dollars invested in municipal infrastructure
 - CIP budget and planned capital projects
- Number of projects meeting objectives by percentage

PRIORITY D. CREATE AN INCLUSIVE ECONOMY FOR SHARED PROSPERITY

- Percent of agency investment in distressed areas
 - CIP budget and planned capital projects
- Percent of small businesses assisted
 - MCEDC and County reported data
- Percent of minority and women owned businesses assisted
 - MCEDC and County reported data



RECOMMENDED KEY STAKEHOLDERS

ACTIVITY	R (RESPONSIBLE) A (ACCOUNTABLE) C (CONSULTED) I (INFORMED)	TIMETABLE IMMEDIATE AS OF 12/31/21	TIMETABLE FUTURE	
PLAN SUBMISSION	MCEDC	Dec. 31, 2021	Bi-Annually	
PLAN REVIEW / CEX	County Executive	Jan. 1 - 31, 2022	Bi-Annually	
PLAN REVIEW / APPROVAL	County Council	Feb. 1 – Apr. 15, 2022	Bi-Annually	
PRIORITY A. ACCELERATE INNOVATION ECONOMIC DRIVERS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP				
INNOVATION ECONOMIC DRIVER: LIFE SCIENCES				
Courting Biohealth Companies to Relocate	MCEDC	R	Active	Ongoing
	BHI	C		
Retain Existing Growth-Stage Biohealth Companies	MCEDC	R	Active	Ongoing
	Industry Partners	C		
	Montgomery Co. Govt.	C		
Public/Private Partnerships: Stimulating Applied Research Commercialization	Montgomery Co. Govt.	R,A	Jan. 1, 2022	Ongoing
	MCEDC	C,I		
	Industry Partners	R		
Promoting Public Resources for Entrepreneurs: Marketing	MCEDC	R	July 1, 2022	Ongoing
	Industry Partners	R		
	Montgomery Co. Govt.	A		
Workforce Development Solutions	Academic Institutions	R,A	July 1, 2022	Ongoing
	Industry Partners	R,A		
Prioritizing Neighborhood-Level Land Use	Montgomery Co. Planning	R	July 1, 2022	Ongoing
Streamlined Permitting and Development Process	Montgomery Co. Govt. – Permitting	R,A	Active	Completed: July 1, 2022
	Commerce Cabinet	A,C,I		
Energy Resilience	Montgomery Co. Govt.	R,A	July 1, 2022	Ongoing
INNOVATION ECONOMIC DRIVER: HOSPITALITY TECHNOLOGY				
Match Anchor Institutions with Startups	Industry Partners	C,I,A	July 1, 2022	Ongoing
	MCEDC	R		
	Startups	I,C,A		
Target Growth Stage Companies for Relocation	MCEDC	R	July 1, 2022	Ongoing
Hospitality Incubator	Montgomery Co. Govt.	R,A	July 1, 2022	Ongoing
	MCEDC	R		
	Private Industry	R,A		
Workforce Training Initiatives	WSM	R,A	Sep. 1, 2022	Ongoing
	Private Industry	R,A		
	MCEDC	I		
Showcase Summits	MCEDC	R	July 1, 2022	Ongoing
	Industry Partners	R,A		

INNOVATION ECONOMIC DRIVER: QUANTUM COMPUTING TECHNOLOGY				
Local Research and Development Collaboration	Academic Institutions	R,A	Active	Ongoing
	Connected DMV	C,I		
Quantum Technology Workforce Creation	Academic Institutions	C,I,A	July 1, 2023	Ongoing
	WSM	A		
	Industry Partners	R,A		
	MCEDC	C,I		
Support Emerging Quantum Companies	Industry Partners	A,C,I	July 1, 2022	Ongoing
	Montgomery Co. Govt.	C,I		
	MCEDC	R		
Local/Regional Strategies for Grants/Funding	Montgomery Co. Govt.	R,A	July 1, 2022	Ongoing
	Industry Partners	R,A		
	MCEDC	I,C		
INNOVATION ECONOMIC DRIVER: CYBERSECURITY				
Industry Buildout	Industry Partners	R,A	Active	Ongoing
Cybersecurity Marketing	MCEDC	R,A	Active	Ongoing
	Industry Partners	C,I		
Cybersecurity Experts Consulting Team	MCEDC	R,A	July 1, 2022	Ongoing
	Target Companies	C,I		
	Industry Partners	R,A		
ENTREPRENEURSHIP ECOSYSTEM BUILDING				
Ecosystem/Incubator Expansion	Montgomery Co. Govt.	R,A	July 1, 2022	Completed: Dec. 2022
	MCEDC	R,A		
	Industry Partners	C,I		
Ecosystem/SBIT/STTR Expansion	Montgomery Co. Govt.	C,I	Active	Ongoing
	MCEDC	R		
	Industry Partners	R,A		
Ecosystem/Federal Engagement Strategy	MCEDC	R,A	Active	Ongoing
	Industry Partners	R,A		
PRIORITY B. PROVIDE GREATER WORKFORCE & EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES				
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES				
Workforce Development/Entry Level Jobs	Industry Partners	R,C,I	July 1, 2022	Ongoing
	MCEDC	C,I		
	WSM	C,I		
Workforce Development/Strengthening the Pipeline in High Need Occupations	Industry Partners	R,C,I	July 1, 2022	Ongoing
	Academic Institutions	R,A		
	Montgomery Co. Govt.	C,I		

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OPPORTUNITIES				
Education and Skills Development	Academic Institutions	R,A	Active	Ongoing
	WSM	C,I		
Collaboration	Industry Partners	C,I	Active	Ongoing
	Academic Institutions	R,A		
	Montgomery Co. Govt.	C,I		
Early Care and Education	Montgomery Co. Govt.	C,I	July 1, 2022	Ongoing
	ECE Entity	R,A		
	Industry Partners	R,A		
	Community Partners	R,A		
Advanced Educational Trends	Academic Institutions	R,A	Sep. 1, 2022	Ongoing
Pathways Beyond STEM	Academic Institutions	R,A	Sep. 1, 2022	Ongoing
Pathways Alignment	Academic Institutions	R,A	Active	Ongoing
	Industry Partners	C,I		

PRIORITY C. BUILD LIVABLE COMMUNITIES THAT CONNECT RESIDENTS TO JOBS

HOUSING TO SUPPORT A DIVERSE WORKFORCE				
Zoning Policy Realignment	Montgomery Planning	C,I	July 1, 2022	Sep. 1, 2023
	Montgomery Co. Govt.	R,A		
Capital Programs	State/Federal Govt. Partners	R,A	Sep. 1, 2022	Ongoing
	Montgomery Co. Govt.	R,A		
	Industry Partners	C,I		
	Community Partners	C,I		
Incentive Repurposing	Montgomery Co. Govt.	R,A	Sep. 1, 2022	Sep. 1, 2023
	Industry Partners	C,I		
	Community Partners	C,I		
Public/Private Partnerships	Montgomery Co. Govt.	R,A	Sep. 1, 2022	Ongoing
	Industry Partners	R,A		

TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY				
Safety and Vision Zero Initiative	Montgomery Co. Govt.	R,A	Active	Ongoing
Transportation Related Climate Action Plans	Montgomery Co. Govt. - Transportation	R,A	Active	Ongoing
	Montgomery Co. Govt. - DEP	C,I	Active	Ongoing
Equitable Economic Growth Initiatives	Montgomery Co. Govt.	R,A	Active	Ongoing
	Industry Partners	C,I	Sep. 1, 2022	Ongoing
	Industry Partners	A,I,C		

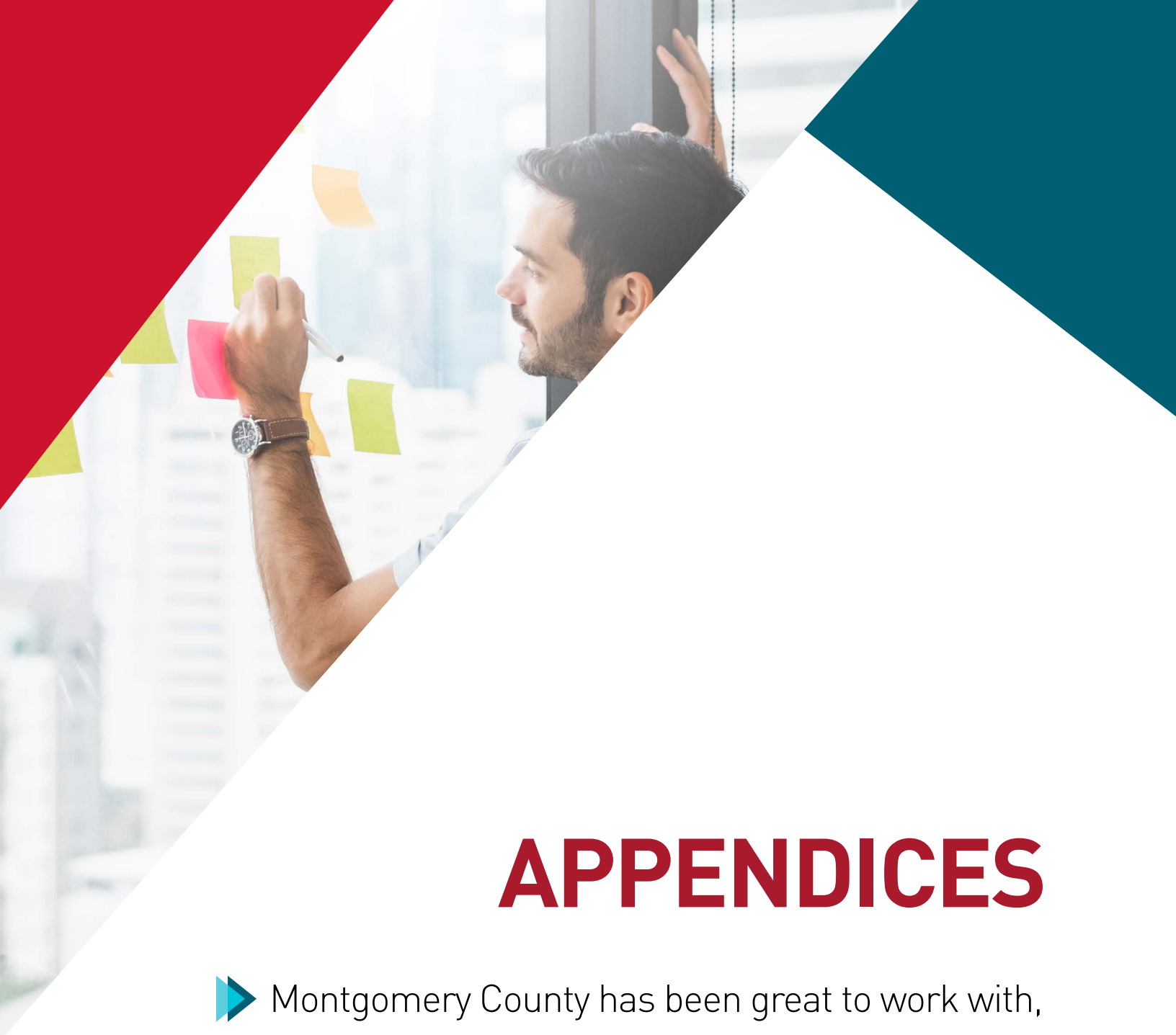
PRIORITY D. CREATE AN INCLUSIVE ECONOMY FOR SHARED PROSPERITY

COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING

Networking	Industry Partners	R	Active	Ongoing
	Business Networks	R,A		
Training and Development	Industry Partners	R,A	July 1, 2022	Ongoing
	Community Partners	C,I		
Mentoring	Industry Partners	R,A	Active	Ongoing
Business Plan Execution	Industry Partners	R,A	July 1, 2022	Ongoing
	Montgomery Co. Govt.	C,I		
Access to Capital	Industry Partners	R,A	Active	Ongoing
	Montgomery Co. Govt.	C,I		
	MCEDC	C,I		
Promotion and Cultivation	Community Partners	R,A	Active	Ongoing
	Montgomery Co. Govt.	R,A		
	MCEDC	R,C,I		

SMALL, WOMEN AND MINORITY OWNED BUSINESS GROWTH

Access to Capital	Montgomery Co. Govt.	C,I	Active	Ongoing
	Industry Partners	R,A		
	MCEDC	R,C,I		
Training	Industry Partners	R,A	July 1, 2022	Ongoing
	Montgomery Co. Govt.	R,C,I		
Networking	Industry Partners	R,A	Active	Ongoing
	MCEDC	C,I		
Messaging	MCEDC	R,A	July 1, 2022	Ongoing
	Montgomery Co. Govt.	C,I		
	Industry Partners	C,I		
Management Expertise	Industry Partners	R,A	July 1, 2022	Ongoing
	MCEDC	C,I		
Public/Private Partner Support	Industry Partners	R	Ongoing	Ongoing
	Montgomery Co. Govt.	C,I		
"No Wrong Door" Policy	Montgomery Co. Govt.	R,A	July 1, 2022	Ongoing



APPENDICES

▶ Montgomery County has been great to work with, especially over the last couple of years. They get it. I have found the leadership at Montgomery Planning and DPS (Department of Permitting Services) very accommodating to achieve necessary goals in a certain timeline.

— JAY BRINSON, VP OF DEVELOPMENT, FEDERAL REALTY

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 – MONTGOMERY COUNTY AT A GLANCE

In many ways, Montgomery County is not your typical American county.

Montgomery County is the largest of Maryland’s 24 jurisdictions and, in the most recent 2020 decennial census, became the first in the State’s history to top a million residents. If the County were one of the 50 U.S. States, its population would be larger than seven other States.

While the County is growing more slowly than in past decades, its population is still projected by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments to increase by about 200,000 people over the next 30 years¹⁴. As a result, the County will need to accommodate this growth moving forward.

Montgomery County is one of the economically strongest counties in the country with many attributes to attract business growth. Montgomery County is the largest contributor to Maryland’s economy and has the highest per capita income in the State of Maryland, putting the County in the top 1% for income and net worth in the country¹⁵. Montgomery County’s economic power, as measured by GDP, is larger than that of 12 States.

Montgomery County’s talent pipeline has few peers in the country. It has one of the most highly concentrated populations of educated, highly skilled workers. Among large counties in the country, Montgomery County is ranked first in the nation in percentage of residents having earned an advanced degree.

Diversity is one of its greatest strengths. Montgomery County is known for its racial, ethnic and international diversity, with four of the most diverse cities in the U.S. and a third of the population that is foreign-born and speaks 150 languages. Demographically, the rest of America will not be as diverse as Montgomery County for another 30 years.

Notwithstanding all these substantial assets, Montgomery County’s economy faces near-term obstacles. The current COVID-19 pandemic has had a considerable impact, creating record job losses and driving the unemployment rate to an all-time high of 8.6% in April 2020.

¹⁴ [Thrive Montgomery 2050 Draft](#)

¹⁵ U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2019

Even as Montgomery County continues to make significant economic recovery progress by many measures, there are singular challenges that must be addressed for the County to be fully competitive. For example, Montgomery County’s innovation-led economy is increasingly confronted with aggressive competition regionally, nationally and globally. This is especially clear as its jurisdictional peers in the Greater Washington region are continuously intensifying efforts to advance their competitive postures with prioritized economic development initiatives and actions. Montgomery County must do the same in key industry sectors or else jeopardize its hard-won stature.

A LARGE EMPLOYMENT BASE FACING COMPETITION

Montgomery County remains by far the largest employment base in the State of Maryland¹⁶, but job growth in the 2010s lagged many counties in the State. While Montgomery is second only to Washington, D.C and Fairfax among Greater Washington region jurisdictions, its growth rate has been lower than Washington, D.C. and Arlington, which have both attracted significant numbers of younger, working-age adults.

A HIGHLY EDUCATED AND TALENTED WORKFORCE

- 59% of adults over 25 in Montgomery County have a bachelor’s degree or higher.¹⁷
- 31.4% of adults over 25 in Montgomery County have an advanced degree.¹⁸
- Maryland has the second highest concentration of STEM jobs of any State in the U.S.¹⁹
- Maryland is a top 2 State for professional and technical workers.²⁰
- Maryland has the second highest concentration of employed doctoral biological sciences and health workers per 100,000.²¹
- Maryland is the #3 State in science, engineering and technology establishments as a share of all business establishments at 12.7%.²²
- Maryland is #4 in the 2020 ITIF State New Economy Index²³, a measure of a State’s economy as knowledge-based, globalized, entrepreneurial, information technology-driven and innovation-based.

16 Worksource Montgomery “Local area Workforce Plan 2024”

17 U.S. Census 2019

18 U.S. Census 2019

19 MD Department of Commerce: [Rankings & Statistics](#)

20 Maryland Department of Commerce

21 Maryland Department of Commerce

22 Maryland Department of Commerce

23 [The 2020 State New Economy Index | ITIF](#)

A HIGH COST OF LIVING

Housing costs factor significantly into employer decisions about where to locate, and when housing is available at costs people can afford, it is easier for employers to attract and retain employees across all levels.

Cost-of-living and housing is comparatively high in many employment centers around the Washington region. While the County’s cost of living is somewhat lower compared to other area jurisdictions like Washington D.C., Fairfax and Arlington, the County’s overall cost of living is 39% above the U.S. average, and housing costs are nearly twice the U.S. average. Critically, Montgomery County’s living and housing costs are far above other high-growth counties.

COMPARISONS: REGIONAL COST OF LIVING INDEX²⁴

LOCATION	OVERALL	HOUSING
Arlington County	168.7	294.8
Washington, D.C.	154.3	244.8
Fairfax County	152.0	238.4
Loudoun County	147.7	221.3
Montgomery County	139.4	195.0
Prince George’s County	121.3	128.9

COMPARISONS: COST OF LIVING INDEX IN SIMILAR U.S. GROWTH COUNTIES²⁵

LOCATION	OVERALL	HOUSING
Montgomery, MD	139.4	195.0
Denver, CO	128.7	184.7
Maricopa, AZ	108.0	118.7
Wake, NC	105.6	124.8
Orange, FL	105.3	108.2
Davidson, TN	102.8	112.8
Mecklenburg, NC	100.5	102.4
Dallas, TX	99.5	92.9
Gwinnett, GA	99.3	99.7
Harris, TX	97.9	83.2

A HIGHLY DIVERSE AND INTERNATIONAL POPULATION

Montgomery County is a melting pot of cultures and nationalities that is reflected in its residents. People of all nationalities and ethnicities call the region home. Its diversity is fueling the establishment of new businesses and the transformation of ideas and discoveries to the marketplace.

²⁴ BestPlaces.net

²⁵ BestPlaces.net

- **47%** of businesses are women-owned²⁶
- **45%** of businesses are minority-owned²⁷
- **138 different languages** are spoken in County public schools²⁸
- **57%** of our residents are non-white²⁹
- One in every three residents was born outside the U.S.³⁰different languages are spoken in our public schools³⁰

ATTRACTIVE BUSINESS MULTI-MODAL CONNECTIVITY³¹

Montgomery County is a key region within the country's prime commercial East Coast corridor that is centrally proximate to half of the U.S. population.

- Three international airports within 30 miles, creating a global gateway for international business
- One of the busiest regional metro systems in the country with six lines and 91 stations
- Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is in Montgomery County and expanding with dedicated lanes, green light priority signaling and more frequent service
- One third of the U.S. population is within a day's drive of Montgomery County

MAJOR FEDERAL ASSETS

As a neighboring jurisdiction to Washington, D.C., Montgomery County has the enviable position of being a magnet for federal entities and institutions. These agencies partner in many ways with private sector advancements.

- 38 federal labs³² are in the State of Maryland with a federal R&D investment of \$15.4 billion (2017)
- 18 federal agencies either have headquarters in or a significant presence in the County, including:
 - The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) which protects the public health and ensures the safety and security of drugs, biological products and medical devices

26 U.S. Census 2012, Survey of Business Owners

27 U.S. Census 2012, Survey of Business Owners

28 Montgomery County Public Schools

29 U.S. Census

30 U.S. Census

31 Maryland Department of Commerce

32 Federal Laboratory Consortium

- The National Institute of Health (NIH) which is the world's largest biomedical research agency with 27 Institutes and Centers
- The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) which has a mission to promote U.S. innovation and industrial competitiveness by advancing measurement science, standards and technology in ways that enhance economic security and improve the County's quality of life. NIST actively seeks opportunities to participate in cooperative research and development programs with non-federal entities, particularly U.S. industry partners and collaborators.

Key Opportunity Industries for Growth³³

Life Sciences

- Known as the Immunology Capital Next to the Nation's Capital
- 480 biotech companies in the County, accounting for 14,000 jobs
- The 4th highest concentration of biotech in the U.S.
- 224 venture capital deals and \$2.56 billion in private investment since 2015

Hospitality

- Half of all publicly traded hospitality companies in the U.S.
- 20 hospitality companies including Marriott, Choice, Sodexo and Host Hotels & Resorts

Quantum Computing Potential

- Partnership with the University of Maryland (200 researchers engaged in quantum computing science) and the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Lab
- Partnership potential with public-sector federal research labs such as National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), National Institutes of Health (NIH), Intelligence Advanced Research Projects Activity (IARPA), Department of Energy (DOE), National Security Agency (NSA) and private sector companies

A LEADER IN ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Montgomery County continues to be a national leader in responding to the challenges of climate change. The forward-thinking policies and plans reflected in Montgomery County's newly released Climate Action Plan³⁴ make the County more attractive

³³ Reach Advisors, 2020

³⁴ [Montgomery County Climate Action Plan: Building a Healthy, Equitable, Resilient Community; Montgomery County, June 2021](#)

and competitive to retain, grow and attract businesses that seek to be more environmentally friendly and reduce their carbon footprint.

- Reduce GHG emissions 80% by 2027 and 100% by 2035
- Generate solar, CHP and other low emissions energy on County facilities
- Design new County buildings to achieve a minimum LEED Silver certification, with many achieving LEED Gold
- Reduce fuel consumption through growing green fleet operations

MONTGOMERY COUNTY ECONOMIC SECTOR OVERVIEW³⁵

Montgomery County is combined with Frederick County in the same Metropolitan Statistical area. Here are employment sectors of note:

- The two largest employment sectors as of September 2021 are professional and business services (131,500 employed, or 23%) and government (110,500, or 19% of employed)
- Health and education services are the number three sector, with 89,000 employed, or 16% of the County workforce
- Ambulatory health services (caregiving and nursing homes) employ 36,200, or nearly half of health services

MONTGOMERY COUNTY LIVABLE COMMUNITY AMENITIES

- **42** National Blue-Ribbon schools³⁶
- **421** Parks across 37,100 acres & 270 miles of trails³⁷
- **350** Cultural and Entertainment organizations
- **93,000-acre Agricultural Reserve**, one of the country's best examples of land conservation³⁸

35 Bureau of Labor Statistics

36 Montgomery County Public Schools

37 Montgomery Parks

38 Office of Agricultural Service

APPENDIX 2 – COVID-19 PANDEMIC IMPACT ON MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Montgomery County was experiencing historically low unemployment rates. As the pandemic's effects first took hold, business restrictions and shutdowns drove Montgomery County's unemployment rate to a record high in 2020.

A year later, Montgomery County's unemployment rate fell below the state. Montgomery County has experienced a gradual economic recovery that trends closely with the regional average; however, Food Services jobs and Retail jobs were particularly hard hit and are still facing an uncertain recovery.

Montgomery County responded to the devastating impact of the pandemic with an array of outreach efforts and recovery programs including \$86.7 million in direct business assistance, which was the most support provided by any jurisdiction in the region.

There is a concern that pandemic-impacted job losses have been concentrated in lower-wage sectors and will therefore widen economic disparities. Working families in the County may recover at a slower pace because of rising income inequality and limited opportunities for higher-paying jobs. Economic recovery could be especially difficult for workers in low-wage service and support occupations as evidenced by the slow recovery of these industries.

Despite many prominent industry sectors being hit by the pandemic, the life sciences sector has remained strong. Several Montgomery County biohealth companies played a critical role in the development of lifesaving COVID-19 vaccines and treatments. In 2020, almost \$8 billion in federal, private and foundational funding was invested in Montgomery County biohealth companies for COVID-19 vaccine and immunotherapeutic developments, and four of the top ten recipients of federal 2020 Operation Warp Speed funding for coronavirus vaccine research have a presence in Montgomery County.

In addition to the billions of dollars in funding from Operation Warp Speed, Montgomery County companies have also received substantial 2021 investments in private funding and venture capital. Despite the pandemic, several companies have chosen to locate in Montgomery County, reflecting the County's strength in growing its life sciences, advanced technology and other leading industry sectors.

The expansion of the local biohealth industry is also prompting growth in commercial real estate and laboratory infrastructure. With rising demand and just 5.2% availability for the County's existing lab space, an additional 1.6 million square feet (SF) of Montgomery County lab space is currently in development to accommodate this demand surge. This is a significant infrastructure investment that will add to the gradual recovery of the County's economy and is critical to maintain a global industry leadership position in the life sciences.

APPENDIX 3 – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN: SOURCE GUIDE

Montgomery County Comprehensive Economic Strategy, A Plan for Economic Prosperity: One County, One Vision

November 2016

Issued from the Office of the County Executive

Sets a vision that Montgomery County will be a global magnet for creative companies, technologies and people; the last Council-ratified Economic Development Strategic Plan.

Connecting the Dots: Accelerating Economic Growth in Montgomery County, MD

October 2021

Issued from the MCEDC Economic Advisory Panel

Recommendations and Action Items from a panel of 20 business leaders co-chaired by Norm Augustine and DeRionne Pollard; convened by the Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation (MCEDC).

Thrive Montgomery 2050

April 2021

Issued by the Montgomery County Planning Board

The report is the update to Montgomery County's General Plan, its long-range policy framework for guiding future land use and growth; the last update to the General Plan was in 1993.

The Housing Needs Assessment

July 2020

Issued by the Montgomery County Planning Board

Provides background to develop a comprehensive housing policy that meets the needs of current and future residents; contains housing principles, goals, targets, strategies and priorities to be adopted via the General Plan.

The Future of Housing in Metropolitan Washington

September 2019

Issued by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG)

Report by regional officials and housing and planning directors to address the Greater Washington area's unmet housing needs.

Montgomery College Strategic Plan, 2020-2025

June 2019

Issued by Montgomery College

Current operating strategic plan used by Montgomery County's local two-year community college.

Universities at Shady Grove Strategic Plan

On-Going, 2021-2022

Issued by the Universities at Shady Grove

As a University System of Maryland institution, USG is undergoing a strategic planning exercise that is convening workshops and reviewing data to create a USG 2.0 set of goals and principles.

Montgomery County Climate Action Plan: Building a Healthy, Equitable, Resilient Community

June 2021

Issued by the Office of the County Executive

Report to help achieve Montgomery County's ambitious climate goals— to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 80% by 2027 and 100% by 2035.

Connecting Our Communities: MCDOT's Vision for Transportation in Montgomery County, MD

November 2021

Issued by the Montgomery County Department of Transportation

Highlights MCDOT's three priority areas: Safety and Vision Zero, Environment and Climate Resiliency and Economic Growth and Equitable Access.

WorkSource Montgomery Local Area Workforce Plan, 2020-2024

January 2022

Issued by WorkSource Montgomery

Countywide workforce operating plan consistent with federal and state laws; WorkSource Montgomery focuses on linking local and regional economic development and workforce efforts.

Council Bill 10-21: Economic Development Strategic Plan

May 2021

Issued by the Montgomery County Council

Council-passed legislation to transfer the drafting authority of the Montgomery County Economic Development Strategic Plan from the County Executive to the MCEDC.

Council Bill 10-21 Staff Report

May 2021

Issued by the Montgomery County Council

Council staff report that accompanied the legislative consideration of Bill 10-21.

Council Resolution 19-300: Economic Development Platform

November 2019

Issued by the Montgomery County Council

Council-passed resolution that established a platform of four pillars for Montgomery County economic development.

APPENDIX 4 - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN: LEGISLATIVE HISTORY AND STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Since the creation of the last Montgomery County Economic Development Strategic Plan in 2016, a statutory change has been made that affects all future strategic plans going forward. The County Council took action to transform Montgomery County's economic development strategic approach with the passage of Bill 10-21 on May 27, 2021.

The Council-passed legislation shifted responsibility for drafting the plan from the County Executive to the Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation (MCEDC) and consolidated leadership over the strategy development to MCEDC. The Council concluded that this action would have a positive, long-term impact on economic conditions in Montgomery County.

Consistent with the enacted legislation, the plan is submitted to both the County Executive and the County Council for the Council's eventual ratification. The County Executive will provide input on the MCEDC draft plan, and the Council will hold a public hearing on the draft plan and adopt the final version by resolution.

The intention is the plan will not be a static document. Starting two years after Fiscal Year 2022, MCEDC will update the plan based on any changes in County priorities and market dynamics. The County will then formally adopt a new Economic Development Strategic Plan every four years with biennial updates.

**APPENDIX 5 - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN: COUNTY COUNCIL
 BILL 10-21**

CORRECTED COPY

Clerk's Note: Removed an inadvertently placed bracket at the beginning of line 99.

Bill No. 10-21
 Concerning: Economic Development –
 Economic Development Strategic
 Plan – Economic Development
 Corporation - Duties
 Revised: 5-12-21 Draft No. 12
 Introduced: March 2, 2021
 Enacted: May 27, 2021
 Executive: June 2, 2021
 Effective: September 1, 2021
 Sunset Date: None
 Ch. 12, Laws of Mont. Co. 2021

**COUNTY COUNCIL
 FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND**

Lead Sponsor: Councilmember Friedson
 Co-Sponsors: Councilmembers Riemer, Navarro, Albornoz, and Katz

AN ACT to:

- (1) transfer the drafting of the County's Economic Development Strategic Plan from the Executive to the County's Economic Development Corporation;
- (2) require the Executive to provide comments to the Council on each draft Plan by a date certain;
- (3) require the Council to adopt the Plan by a date certain; and
- (4) generally amend the law governing the County's economic development.

By adding

Montgomery County Code
 Chapter 15A, Economic Development
 Section 15A-4A

By amending

Montgomery County Code
 Chapter 15A, Economic Development
 Section 15A-5

Chapter 20, Finance
 Sections 20-75 and 20-76

Boldface	<i>Heading or defined term.</i>
<u>Underlining</u>	<i>Added to existing law by original bill.</i>
[Single boldface brackets]	<i>Deleted from existing law by original bill.</i>
<u>Double underlining</u>	<i>Added by amendment.</i>
[[Double boldface brackets]]	<i>Deleted from existing law or the bill by amendment.</i>
* * *	<i>Existing law unaffected by bill.</i>

BILL NO. 10-21

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland approves the following Act:

1 **Sec. 1. Section 15A-4A is added and Sections 15A-5, 20-75 and 20-76 are**
2 **amended as follows:**

3 **15A-4A. Economic Development Strategic Plan.**

4 (a) Duties of the Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation.
5 Beginning no later than July 1, 2021 and each fourth year thereafter, the
6 Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation (Corporation)
7 must submit a draft Economic Development Strategic Plan to the
8 Executive and the Council. The draft Economic Development Strategic
9 Plan should include relevant economic development measures and input
10 from partner agencies and organizations, such as the Planning Board and
11 the County's Workforce Development Organization.

12 (b) Duties of the Executive. Beginning no later than September 1, 2021 and
13 each fourth year thereafter, the Executive must submit to the Council any
14 recommended revisions to the draft Economic Development Strategic
15 Plan submitted by the Corporation.

16 (c) Duties of the Council.

17 (1) After receiving the draft Economic Development Strategic Plan
18 from the Corporation, the Council must hold a public hearing on
19 the draft Plan.

20 (2) Beginning on December 1, 2021 and each fourth year thereafter,
21 the Council must adopt, by resolution, an Economic Development
22 Strategic Plan.

23 (d) Contents of the Plan. The Economic Development Strategic Plan should
24 be consistent with the Council's Economic Development Platform
25 approved by Resolution No. 19-300 and must include metrics to assess
26 the County and its partners' ability to address relevant economic
27 development measures including:

- 28 (1) creation of jobs;
29 (2) growing wages;
30 (3) identifying and supporting strategic industries;
31 (4) retention and attraction of new companies and employers;
32 (5) growing the tax base;
33 (6) supporting and increasing entrepreneurial activity; and
34 (7) other actions necessary to promote economic development in the
35 County.
- 36 (e) Two-year Update. Beginning no later than July 1, 2023 and every fourth
37 year thereafter, the Corporation may submit amendments to the approved
38 Economic Development Strategic Plan based on new information since
39 the Council adoption of the previous Plan. The Executive may comment
40 and the Council may approve, after holding a public hearing, an amended
41 Economic Development Strategic Plan.
- 42 (f) Outcomes. The desired outcomes of the Economic Development
43 Strategic Plan should include:
- 44 (1) a thriving and diversified economy;
45 (2) racial equity and social justice;
46 (3) greater innovation; and
47 (4) environmental sustainability, including a reduction in climate
48 change.
- 49 (g) Reporting. The corporation must report to the Council periodically on
50 the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

51 **15A-5. Economic development program.**

- 52 (a) The [Board of Directors] Montgomery County Economic Development
53 Corporation must recommend economic development programs and
54 associated performance measures to the Executive and Council each year

55 to advance the policy objectives and perform the activities listed in
56 Section 15A-1], including revisions to the County’s strategic plan for
57 economic development established by Section 20-76(a)].

58 (b) In its economic development programs, the Corporation should
59 collaborate with the Montgomery County Workforce Development
60 Board to advance the County’s economic development strategic plan
61 adopted under Section [20-76] 15A-4A.

62 * * *

63 **20-75. Use of Fund.**

64 (a) The Director may spend or allocate funds from this Fund consistent with
65 the economic development strategic plan approved under Section [20-76
66 in a Regulation adopted under method (1)] 15A-4A, including the
67 following criteria:

68 (1) the proposed assistance will materially improve the County’s
69 economy and advance County economic development objectives
70 and strategies; or

71 (2) the assistance is necessary to:

72 (A) bring a significant number of new jobs to the County;

73 (B) add a significant number of new jobs to an existing
74 operation in the County;

75 (C) retain a significant number of jobs at an existing operation
76 in the County; or

77 (D) respond to other economic development objectives.

78 * * *

79 **20-76. Economic Development [Strategic Plan,] Fund Administration.**

80 (a) [The Executive must submit, by method 1 regulation, an economic
81 development strategic plan for the County to the Council for approval on

Corrected Page

BILL NO. 10-21

82 or before October 1, 2015. Beginning no later than October 1, 2019 and
83 each fourth year thereafter, the Executive may amend the strategic plan,
84 by Method 1 regulation, to be consistent with the strategic plan adopted
85 by the Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation. The
86 success or progress of the strategic plan must be measurable and the plan
87 must include measures to address:

- 88 (1) job creation;
- 89 (2) private sector compensation and benefits;
- 90 (3) target industries;
- 91 (4) target geographic areas;
- 92 (5) workforce education and training;
- 93 (6) growth in tax base;
- 94 (7) economic opportunity for residents;
- 95 (8) encouragement of entrepreneurs and small business;
- 96 (9) land use; and
- 97 (10) other actions necessary to promote economic development in the
98 County.

99 b)] The Executive may adopt Regulations under method (1) to administer
100 [this] the Economic Development Fund.

101 [(c)] (b) The Executive must report by March 15 each year on the status and
102 use of the Fund. This report can be included in the Executive's proposed
103 operating budget. The annual report must:

- 104 (1) describe the success of each award of financial assistance in
105 satisfying the economic development goals supporting the
106 assistance;
- 107 (2) identify any assistance agreement where the recipient did not
108 satisfy the performance criteria in the agreement; and

BILL NO. 10-21


109 (3) track the progress of the Fund in satisfying the overall goals of the
110 approved economic development strategic plan.

111 **Section 2. Transition.**

112 The Corporation must submit the first draft Economic Development Strategic
113 Plan to the Executive on or before ~~[[December 1, 2021]]~~ December 31, 2021. The
114 County Executive must submit comments to the first draft Plan to the Council on or
115 before ~~[[January 15, 2022]]~~ January 31, 2022, and the Council must adopt, by
116 resolution, a first Economic Development Strategic Plan on or before April 15, 2022.


BILL NO. 10-21

Approved:



Tom Hucker, President, County Council 5/27/2021
Date

Approved:



Marc Elrich, County Executive 6/2/2021
Date

This is a correct copy of Council action.



Selena Mendy Singleton, Esq., Clerk of the Council 6/3/2021
Date

APPENDIX 6 - COUNTY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 19-300 FOUR PILLAR PLATFORM OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Resolution No.: 19-300
Introduced: November 12, 2019
Adopted: November 19, 2019

COUNTY COUNCIL FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

Lead Sponsor: Council President Navarro
Co-Sponsors: Councilmember Riemer, Katz, Alborno, Friedson, Glass, Hucker, Jawando, and Rice

SUBJECT: Economic Development Platform for Montgomery County

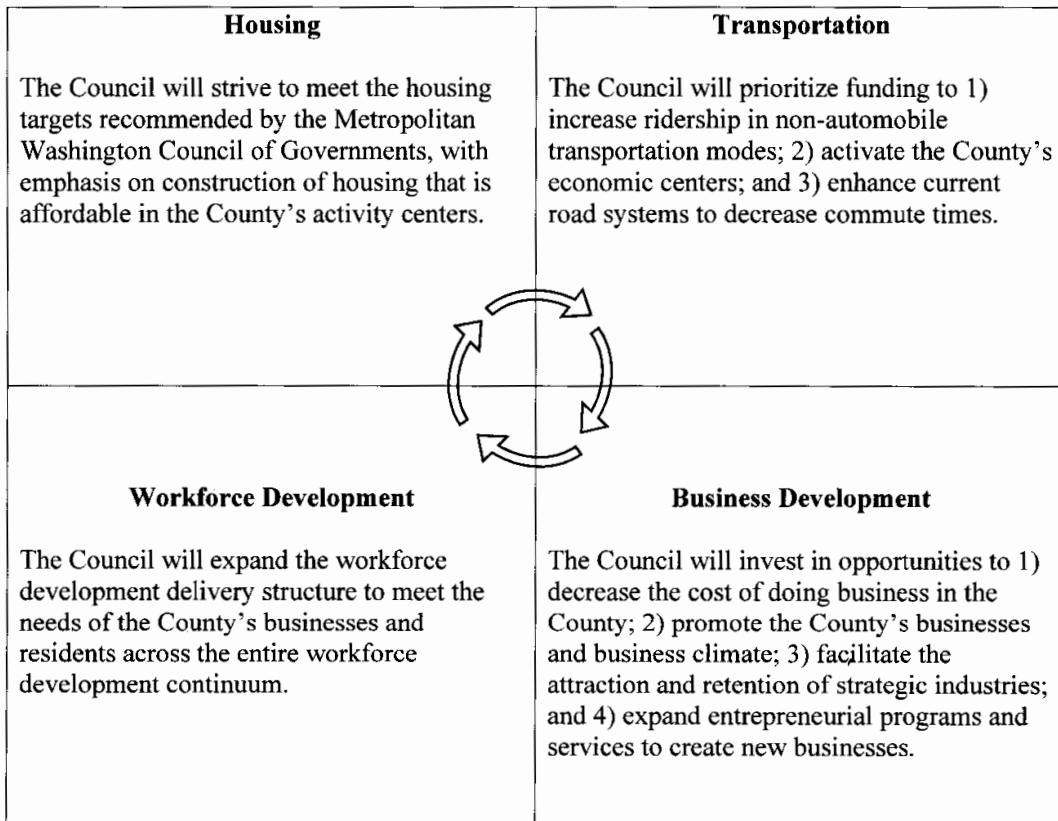
Background

1. A growing and thriving economy is necessary to provide abundant amenities, jobs with sustainable wages, and high-quality services for all residents of the County.
2. Montgomery County is rich in assets for businesses of all sizes to start, expand, and thrive.
3. We are home to diverse communities with more than one million residents that come from all parts of the world. Our median household income is 171.1% of the national average in 2018.
4. We offer an unmatched quality of life with access to numerous cultural, natural and recreational amenities. The County includes 93,000 acres of an Agricultural Reserve and 422 parks across 36,991 acres.
5. We support an excellent education system that prepares and trains the workforce of tomorrow. Our public-school system includes more than 165,000 students in K-12, and we boast several post-secondary institutions with Montgomery College, a consortium from the University of Maryland at the Universities at Shady Grove, and Johns Hopkins University.
6. Our workforce is highly entrepreneurial and talented. More than 59% of our residents have a bachelor's degree or higher, and our unemployment continues to trend below the national average with the 2019 average at 3.0%.
7. We are home to eighteen major federal agency headquarters that deliver important research. The U.S. Government invests more than \$15 billion in internal federal lab research and development in the D.C. region.

8. Our businesses drive innovative discoveries, life-saving medicines, and deliver critical services to our community, region, and the world. We are home to 22 of the 25 largest bioscience businesses in the D.C. region, and 41 businesses made the Inc. 5000 “Fastest-Growing” list in 2019.

Action

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland approves a four-pillar economic development platform that is business-friendly and leverages our assets through continued investments. The desired outcomes of this platform are: 1) a thriving and diversified economy; 2) racial equity and social justice; 3) greater innovation; and 4) environmental sustainability.

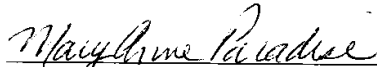


The Council’s committees will report to the Council an action plan for each pillar by February 11, 2020.

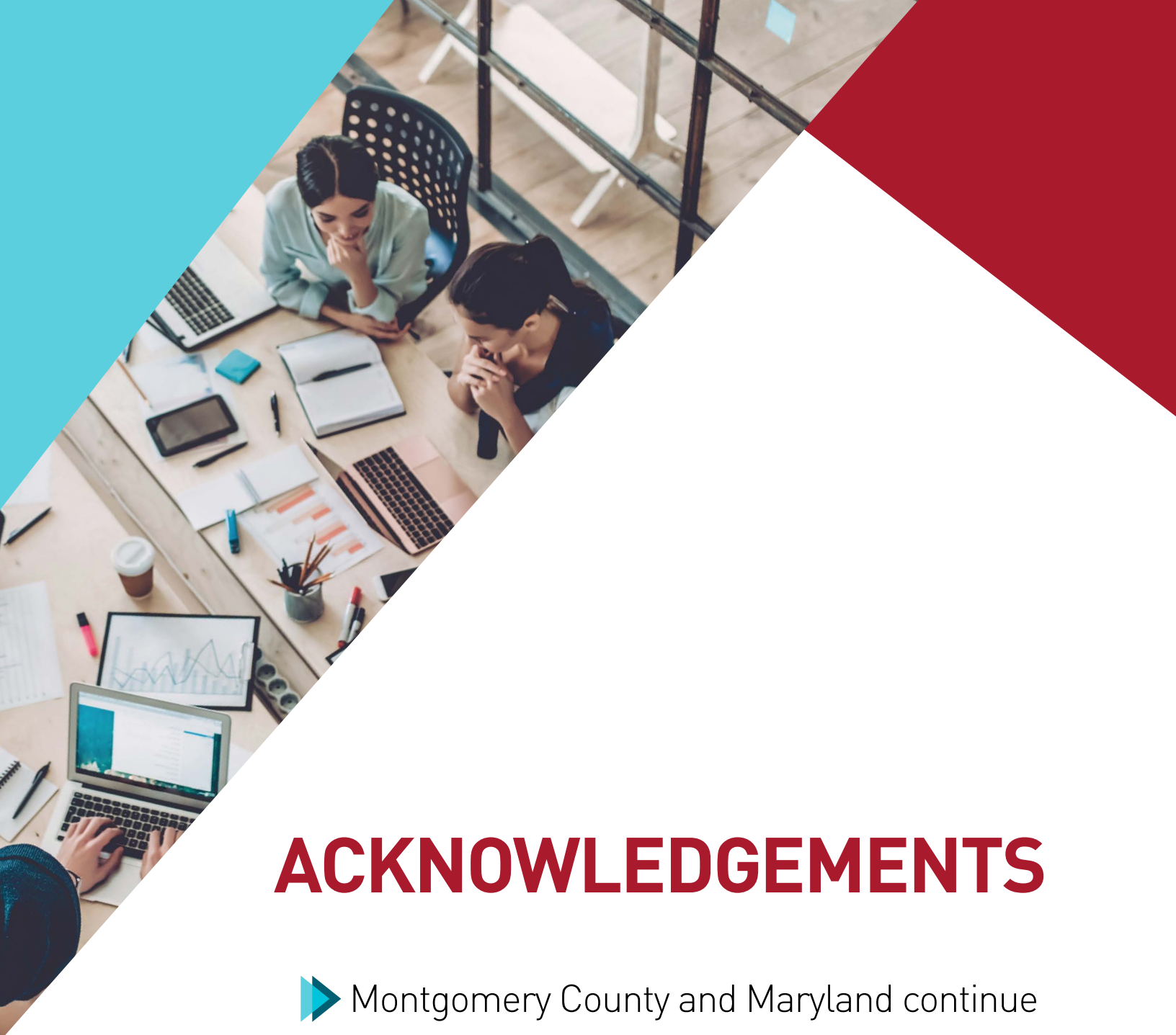
Page 3

Resolution No.: 19-300

This is a correct copy of Council action.



Mary Anne Paradise
Acting Clerk of the Council



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

▶ Montgomery County and Maryland continue to be wonderful to work with...We are delighted to continue expanding our presence here in Germantown.

— SEAN D. AUGERSON, VP OF QIAGEN

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Montgomery County Economic Development Strategic Plan is built on information drawn from the community since 2016 including direct input and guidance from local businesses, residents and County government leaders. The Plan has been developed on the foundation of an extensive outreach process that included over 35 meetings with stakeholders, over five years of engagement with local businesses along with analysis of data and reports developed for the County in the past decade.

As part of the plan's preparation, information gathered from meetings was vetted through data assessment to ensure that plan recommendations were supported by market realities. Additionally, the plan and its findings will be reviewed through an extensive process including review and comment by the County Executive, County Council and members of the general public. A special thank you to MCEDC staff for their dedication and invaluable contributions to the development of this plan.

For further information concerning this document please contact:

Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation
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Rockville, MD 20852
www.thinkmoco.com
Connect@thinkmoco.com



Sec. 15A-4A. Economic Development Strategic Plan.

(a) *Duties of the Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation.* Beginning no later than July 1, 2021 and each fourth year thereafter, the Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation (Corporation) must submit a draft Economic Development Strategic Plan to the Executive and the Council. The draft Economic Development Strategic Plan should include relevant economic development measures and input from partner agencies and organizations, such as the Planning Board and the County's Workforce Development Organization.

(b) *Duties of the Executive.* Beginning no later than September 1, 2021 and each fourth year thereafter, the Executive must submit to the Council any recommended revisions to the draft Economic Development Strategic Plan submitted by the Corporation.

(c) *Duties of the Council.*

(1) After receiving the draft Economic Development Strategic Plan from the Corporation, the Council must hold a public hearing on the draft Plan.

(2) Beginning on December 1, 2021 and each fourth year thereafter, the Council must adopt, by resolution, an Economic Development Strategic Plan.

(d) *Contents of the Plan.* The Economic Development Strategic Plan should be consistent with the Council's Economic Development Platform approved by Resolution No. 19-300 and must include metrics to assess the County and its partners' ability to address relevant economic development measures including:

- (1) creation of jobs;
- (2) growing wages;
- (3) identifying and supporting strategic industries;
- (4) retention and attraction of new companies and employers;
- (5) growing the tax base;
- (6) supporting and increasing entrepreneurial activity; and
- (7) other actions necessary to promote economic development in the County.

(e) *Two-year Update.* Beginning no later than July 1, 2023 and every fourth year thereafter, the Corporation may submit amendments to the approved Economic Development Strategic Plan based on new information since the Council adoption of the previous Plan. The Executive may comment and the Council may approve, after holding a public hearing, an amended Economic Development Strategic Plan.

(f) *Outcomes.* The desired outcomes of the Economic Development Strategic Plan should include:

- (1) a thriving and diversified economy;
- (2) racial equity and social justice;
- (3) greater innovation; and
- (4) environmental sustainability, including a reduction in climate change.

(g) *Reporting.* The corporation must report to the Council periodically on the implementation of the Strategic Plan. ([2021 L.M.C., ch. 12](#), §1.)

Editor's note—[2021 L.M.C., ch. 12](#), § 2, states: Sec. 2. Transition. The Corporation must submit the first draft Economic Development Strategic Plan to the Executive on or before December 31, 2021. The County

Executive must submit comments to the first draft Plan to the Council on or before January 31, 2022, and the Council must adopt, by resolution, a first Economic Development Strategic Plan on or before April 15, 2022.




OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Marc Elrich
County Executive

MEMORANDUM

January 31, 2021

TO: Gabe Albornoz, President
Montgomery County Council

FROM: Marc Elrich, County Executive 

SUBJECT: County Executive's Comments on Montgomery County Economic Development Strategic Plan proposed by Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation

On June 2, 2021, I signed into law Bill 10-21 - Economic Development - Economic Development Strategic Plan - Economic Development Corporation – Duties. This legislation, proposed by Councilmember Friedson, and unanimously supported by the County Council, required the Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation (MCEDC) to draft an Economic Development Strategic Plan, and put a timetable in place for future updates to the plan every two years, with complete rewrites every four years.

The plan put forth by MCEDC lays out a unified vision of the County that relies on studies conducted by a variety of entities including the Executive Branch and MCEDC, as well as the Economic Development Resolution (19-300) passed by the County Council in November of 2019. In preparing my feedback to the Council upon review of MCEDC's report, I am focusing on wholesale ideas, with a collaborative approach, looking for ways to highlight the strongest ideas, point out concerning issues, and find places to add suggestions.

I wish to thank the staff at MCEDC for their work on this report. This document, building off the works of the Executive and Legislative branches this term, will allow the County a more unified approach on the major goals of Economic Development. In addition, I would like to thank the staff in relevant departments throughout my administration for looking through this draft report. The experts in our County government are eager to address this issue. Their input is critical as we collectively bring this county through the greatest public health crisis of any of our lifetimes, as

well as its economic ramifications, which has had many economic repercussions. We look forward to working with you as we continue to improve the economic conditions of the county.

I. Big Picture: The Proposed draft is a good overview of many of the unified goals County residents and their representatives share. Where it falls short is in the details and action items. Therefore, the Council should use this as a starting point for the 2023 amendments, which can give specific policy solutions with metrics and goals

If the greatest strength of this draft is the unifying nature of its proposals, so too is that a weakness. The draft is largely focused on four priority areas important to the County: *Accelerating Innovation Economic Drivers and Entrepreneurship; Provide Greater Workforce and Educational Opportunities; Build Livable Communities That Connect Residents to Jobs; Create an Inclusive Economy for Shared Prosperity.* While the details of these sections provide some guidance, one would be hard pressed to find many willing to criticize these priorities and many of the recommendations. Unfortunately, this is because many of these recommendations contained in the draft are more surface level than the detailed policy solutions needed for the County. Many of the recommendations are similar to the general comments and suggestions we have heard members of the public, but they do not include the specifics required for key agencies and partners to take necessary steps forward.

When tackling this draft, MCEDC was faced with a unique challenge – looking through the lens of a county economy amid a national pandemic – while writing this statutorily required Economic Development report – while also being the agency responsible for Economic Development in the County. Therefore, while this is not the report many of us anticipated, it is a reasonable approach by laying out a broad groundwork for Economic Development in our County moving forward.

This groundwork will be essential as future Councils and Executives wrestle with the path forward, and by writing this report, the MCEDC ensures that this is the new starting point for any future drafts. I would urge, however, that the Council use this as a starting point, and I would urge MCEDC, for their 2023 amendments; that they delve deeper and expand upon these priorities, to give precise policy solutions that we can all act on to best grow jobs and revenues in our County.

In addition, one of the largest shortfalls in this report is in specific metrics that can be used for the accountability of all parties involved. In its *Recommended Key Stakeholders* section, MCEDC lists a variety of stakeholders including the following:

- Academic Institutions
- Biohealth Innovation
- Business Networks
- Commerce Cabinet
- Community Partners
- MCEDC
- Montgomery County Government
- Montgomery Planning
- Private Industry
- Startups

- Connected DMV
- Early Care & Education entity
- Federal Government Partners
- Industry Partners
- State Government Partners
- Target Companies
- Worksource Montgomery

Some of these stakeholders are specific, others are broad categories, depending on what is needed, but none of them are given specific metrics to guide them along their path or hold them accountable to the public for their successes or failures. While this can be understandable for a more guiding document as this one is, we would urge the Council to ensure that future amendments and drafts have specific metrics that hold all partners accountable, with enough information to ensure their potential success along the paths. For example, the list of Key Metrics on page 31 includes metrics that are difficult to track, not controllable, or not really relevant.

Our Countystat team is ready to assist should the Council wish to establish more robust metrics.

II. Overview: This is a well thought out report which sets a strong vision for the County.

It is clear that MCEDC provided a framework that can be built upon for years to come, as the Council was envisioning when the mission of the Strategy was designated to MCEDC. The overriding principles listed in the Introduction are sound. Many of the items in the SWOT analysis are items that all stakeholders agree to. Its four priority areas guide the direction where county government and partners should be focused to help grow Montgomery County.

III. Sources: The sources that MCEDC utilizes in Appendix 3 are varied and contain a wealth of information but are missing several key reports. In addition, the decision to refer only to the Appendix, rather than include key facets from these reports into the Draft Economic Development Strategy is a missed opportunity for a more comprehensive document.

The writers at MCEDC approached this document from a smart standpoint. They knew they did not need to start from scratch due to the variety of reports and recommendations available in the County – including those commissioned by the government, partners, and MCEDC. Putting aside the source material for the legislation which moved duties of this report to MCEDC, the report relies on ten reports over the last five years. These include the Comprehensive Economic Strategy written in 2016 by County Executive Leggett, strategic plans of Montgomery College and the Universities of Shady Grove, reports on Housing from the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, Montgomery County Planning’s, stalled Thrive Montgomery 2050 plan, and MCEDC’s Connecting the Dots report from last October. In addition, the plan cites the County’s Climate Action Plan, MCDOT Vision for Transportation in the County, and the just-released Worksource Montgomery Local Area Workforce Plan. Finally, while not listed in the appendix, the report cites from the 2020 Reach Advisors report that was commissioned by MCEDC. We assume it was errantly omitted from the Appendix.

Surprisingly, the Draft does not include any references to the Montgomery County Economic Advisory Group, which both the Executive & Council branches participated on, even though the work overlaps with this draft. That report, which is available here (https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OPI/Resources/Files/2020/EAG_Roadmap_11-2020.pdf), had recommendations which are being implemented, and others that feed into the long-term health of the County. As the Council is reviewing this Draft, I would urge them to consider this report as well. In addition, the Department of Housing and Community Affairs has published a fantastic annual report for FY2020 and FY2021, which can provide key input to the Strategic Plan. That report is available here (https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DHCA/Resources/Files/director/publications/dhca_annual_report-fy20-21.pdf).

Also omitted from this report is the 2021 Incubator report from MCEDC. Once the Council chooses to make this report public, I would recommend the Council include that report in the Appendix. The overlap between the recommendations in that report, and the incubator recommendations in this Draft are reiterative and I would urge the Council to consider those recommendations in sync with this Draft.

Moreover, we think there is a missed opportunity in this report to not delve more carefully into these cited reports and utilize them better. As an example, I would refer to the County's Climate Action Plan: Building a Health, Equitable, Resilient Community (CAP). This plan – cited in the report – is the County's strategic plan to cut greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions 80% by 2027 and 100% by 2035 – an ambitious and necessary goal set by the Council to do our part to combat Climate Change. While putting the full plan in this draft would admittedly be a waste, we would like to highlight how a couple of insertions and references could be important for the County's economic development process.

- **SWOT Analysis:** There are opportunities in this to better recognize and incorporate items from the CAP including the threat of Climate Change on the County, and the opportunity for the potential job creation from the implementation of the CAP.
- **Priority A: Accelerate Innovation Economic Drivers and Entrepreneurship:** Utilizing the CAP, there is an opportunity to create a distinct Innovation Driver on “Climate Sciences” under the Life Sciences section to reflect the increasing awareness and interest in using life sciences to tackle the growing issues of Climate Change. Recommendations associated with this could have included hosting a convening of the Life Sciences Industry to explore the potential of developing a Climate Science Cluster; or establishing County programs focused on green startups or businesses addressing climate change.
- **Priority B: Provide Greater Workforce and Educational Opportunities:** Workforce development can transform local economies by delivering several interrelated benefits: more competitive businesses, greater economic mobility for residents, and increased regional economic growth. In the context of climate action, workforce development can contribute to Greenhouse Gas emissions reductions while simultaneously improving economic opportunities for residents. High-road workforce development – which is highlighted in the CAP - can support the successful implementation of climate plans while enhancing economic inclusion and equity.

While there are undoubtedly other places where the CAP and recommendations in all of the other reports cited as Sources in Appendix 3 can be utilized, simply referencing them in an Appendix does not ensure they will be utilized or part of the overall framework for the County moving forward.

Finally, when it comes to the County sources, while I appreciate the work of the staff of MCEDC and the two Board members who were consulted, I am disappointed that the MCEDC Board was not better utilized in providing input for this report. We are fortunate to have talented, smart, and successful members of our business community who use their time to help improve our business environment. In the future, I would urge MCEDC to consult with all members of the MCEDC board to ensure that their knowledge is used to the benefit of our County, its businesses, and residents.

IV. Foundational Matters: While both Equity and Workforce concerns are addressed in this report, we are concerned that they are only addressed in separate sections, and not consistent throughout the report

Both Equity and Workforce were not ignored in this report, and the staff at MCEDC spent significant time focused on these issues.

Concerning Equity, which is the primary focus of Priority D, from pages 27-29, the recommendations to ensure broader access to capital and access to mentorship is critical. Similarly, the “No Wrong Door” recommended approach is one that I wholeheartedly endorse. To make certain that all small businesses can immediately find the help they need is a great recommendation.

Unfortunately, as happens far too often, equity issues were put in a box in this draft strategic plan, rather than given a front row seat to ensure they are incorporated throughout. While “racial equity and social justice” was one of the four stated outcomes of Bill 10-21, the term racial equity is only mentioned five times in the draft, all in the Introduction, and Priority D. This is a missed opportunity throughout the document. While the County’s Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice stands ready to assist, there are three issues that we feel highlight how this report falls short in the issue of addressing the County’s Economic Development through an Equity lens.

First, the strategic plan does not appear to center the experiences of workers or entrepreneurs most impacted by racial inequities in education, employment, and wealth building opportunities, making it difficult to truly be inclusive or equitable. This is evidenced by the absence of workers or entrepreneurs in the stakeholder list – erasing the input from large segments of our population.

Similarly, not only do workers need access to skill development and career pathways, but also, they need access to jobs that pay a living wage and offer critical workplace benefits. We would urge the Council that the strategic plan should outline policies and investments that drive coordination across the workforce system and attract employers who understand and prioritize job quality, particularly in low wage industries.

Although the plan addresses some overall strategies to address racial inequities, issues such as the need for increased funding to support English as a Second Language instruction, increasing culturally appropriate programs for Black and Brown youth, and the underutilization of highly skilled, internationally-trained health professionals are significant omissions.

Finally, though the strategic plan does not completely ignore the realities facing entrepreneurs of color in accessing capital and business development services, the strategy seems to lack a nuanced understanding of these issues. There is no shortage of ambition among entrepreneurs of color as they start businesses at higher rates than other groups, but structural barriers impede their growth. An effective strategic plan would provide resourcing support to local Community Development Financial Institutions, provide low-cost capital to entrepreneurs in key sectors, and include metrics that track job creation/retention and revenues of small businesses.

While the Draft focuses on Workforce (pages 20-23), it needs to be reemphasized that Workforce should be more of an undercurrent of our county's Economic Development plan than it is here. We cannot address issues of growing our key sectors without bringing workforce into the conversation. It is why the County's Memorandum of Understanding with the University System of Maryland (USM) last year was so critical, and we would urge the Council to look at the whole picture of Workforce when finalizing this draft.

V. Comments on Individual Sections: Below are limited bulleted highlights from each section that I highlight for the Council as you do your evaluation

Introduction

When the Council is considering the SWOT Analysis, we would propose the Council also consider the following:

- Our county's location, not just next to two metropolitan centers - but adjacent to the nation's capital – is a strength that should be recognized.
- The Draft states that there is a “Limited existence of industry clusters outside of biohealth” as a weakness. The County hosts tremendous growth opportunities for leisure & hospitality, and other industries.
- The Council should consider the recovery from the global pandemic as a potential opportunity depending on the industry. Similarly, the move of so many white-collar offices to becoming more remote based is an imminent threat to the County's office space. While this is less of a threat to the county's property tax base because these spaces can be repurposed and the new use would still pay property taxes, the overall ramifications of fewer people working in offices are readily apparent.
- Our investments in Climate are opportunities for growth in our county's workforce and long-term growth.
- An aging workforce is listed as a Threat, but it is also an Opportunity, as pointed out in our County's Climate Action Plan. Conversion of businesses with retirement age owners to worker-owner models offers a significant opportunity to retain legacy businesses and sustain quality jobs.

- The threat of Climate Change should not be ignored. Climate Change requires focused investments in resilient infrastructure to minimize loss of life and property, public tax dollars for clean-up and recovery, as well as supply chain, food, and energy disruptions from the frequency and intensity of extreme weather (e.g., floods, heatwaves, storms).
- The lack of a local airport should be listed as a weakness that the County should be aware. Dulles Airport played a key role in some of the economic successes Northern Virginia has had recently. While there are multiple airports within 30 miles of the County, not having one in the County is certainly a part of the puzzle.
- If life sciences is perceived to be our only cluster, as MCEDC insinuates in this chart, the County will not be set up to succeed. I hope the Council will ensure this report acknowledges the slate of opportunities throughout the County.

Priority A: Accelerate Innovation Economic Drivers and Entrepreneurship

This section has a strong focus and is the most comprehensive Draft. A couple of issues for Council consideration are as follows:

- In this section, and throughout, the report fails to cite the many active, ongoing projects throughout the County in life sciences and many other industries. This includes the ongoing progress in North Bethesda - especially in light of the MOU with WMATA, the growth focused around Shady Grove, the projects in East County, or many of the other exciting Economic Development opportunities around our County.
- A distinct category for an Innovation Driver on Climate Sciences and a cross-list of recommendations would recognize the importance of the opportunities of being a national leader in addressing the Climate Crisis.
- While Quantum continues to be discussed, it is far into the future, with limited availability right now. The draft is correct about finding partnerships with our neighbors in Prince George's County. It is remiss in not discussing Artificial Intelligence or other advanced opportunities that are not being addressed in the region.
- As mentioned earlier in this document, we cannot talk about the tech talent without addressing the need to grow our educational footprint here in the County, in partnership with the University System, the Universities at Shady Grove, Montgomery College, and Montgomery County Public Schools.
- While we are doing everything, we can within the Executive Branch to streamline permitting, more needs to be done, which is why my administration supports Councilmember Friedson's Zoning Text Amendment to accelerate the timeline specifically for biohealth companies. We recommend that MCEDC lay out specific, coordinated steps that both the Executive Branch and Montgomery Planning can take to increase the county's timely, clear response to requests from these companies – especially as we are faced with regional and national competitors who are not hampered by our unique system of development review and permitting. Further, we need to consider the economic development consequences of having different processes for different industries. At some point, and sooner rather than later, the county will have to grapple with our duplicative, confusing, and time-consuming bifurcated development

process, which hinders our county's competitiveness and fuels the inaccurate perception that Montgomery County is unfriendly to business.

- While we appreciate the focus on Hospitality Technology, it obscures the need to also focus on making Montgomery County the hospitality capital of the country. We need to focus on the industries of the future, but the Council should consider also focusing on the growth industries the County has and how we can continue to nurture and grow those.
- As the Council is aware and members of the Council have publicly praised, the Department of Permitting Services has undergone major improvements under the leadership of Director Pedoeem and continues to improve. While the mention of improving is always appropriate, making the reference without specific suggestions can let an old reputation linger without a marker to point to for success.

Priority B: Provide Greater Workforce and Educational Opportunities

The Workforce aspect of the plan focuses on attracting and retaining “talented Workforce” (i.e., individuals with high skills) for key industries. However, the plan lacks a strategy to support the existing needs of businesses such as retail, restaurants, and other small businesses that cannot move out of the county and are vital employers, as well as key government stakeholders. These organizations are struggling to fill basic positions, while at the same time the County has populations with whom proper investments in training and social supports could do these jobs perfectly well.

This could result in a win-win situation: existing businesses can get the employees they so desperately need, and for these communities it would represent opportunities for development and experience in work fields that need knowledgeable and skilled employees. There are some key reasons why this is lacking including cultural and linguistic ineffectiveness, isolation, lack of proper incentives, pathways, and training, among others. The plan should be enhanced to address this workforce gap and offer viable solutions to close it. If anchor businesses are not strong, it will be difficult to attract new “key industries” and achieve economic stability and growth for all.

In addition, while the plan provides a cursory mention of access to childcare on page 21, it does make strong recommendations to solve the childcare barrier to jobs. Childcare access – together with transportation access – is often cited as one of the top obstacles for job seekers in the County, and we cannot fix Workforce without properly addressing this issue.

Priority C: Build Livable Communities That Connect Residents to Jobs

Montgomery County is part of a world-class cultural, diplomatic, and international business center, recognized worldwide as one of the leading regions in the United States. Specifically, our County stands out in the region because of our diversity, strength in education, commitment to environmental sustainability and general quality of life for our residents. Our county has unique amenities – a person could take a hike in the morning to view the sunrise, kayak at lunchtime, and dine at an authentic restaurant featuring almost any cuisine in the world by dinnertime. Our county's investments in mass transit, bike, and walk pathways, and our parks help to recruit the next generation of thought leaders to our county.

We appreciated this report section and recognized that building livable communities must be part of the solution. The proposed CIP before the Council has critical needs to address these issues, including more than \$400 million for badly needed Bus Rapid Transit expansion. In addition, we appreciated pointing out the need to coordinate between housing and transportation programs with employment programs and County amenities. This coordination will be critical as a key to success.

A couple of comments for Council consideration are below:

- This section is an opportunity to add a section on Environmental Sustainability – a key thing younger residents are seeking, and an opportunity to highlight some of the ways our County is leading in these areas.
- The section on Housing speaks in broad generalities – perhaps because it is predicated more on the passage of Thrive and the efforts of Montgomery Planning than more original ideas, but the section contains definitions which are outdated with the current County code and has loose terms (such as the use of “where appropriate on page 25 with no further definition) that makes implementation difficult. Extra focus and definition here could be helpful – especially in an area that faces so much contention throughout the County.
- Similarly, I was disappointed that there was no mention of the need to preserve Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH), which is an underpinning of my administration’s efforts to retain affordable housing in our County, which is a necessary step in addition to increasing affordable housing throughout the County
- As referenced above, the Department of Housing and Community Affairs annual report would be a useful resource for this section.
- It was surprising to see the MCEDC recommend the expedited expansion of I270/495 – a position not held by the Executive Branch, or the Council. While the project is likely to move forward, it is unlikely to relieve the transportation issues the County faces and is an uncreative directive in what should be an opportunity for creativity.
- As is often cited by a variety of studies and business leaders, addressing transit is crucial to aiding our county’s growth in economic development. Building a complete Bus Rapid Transit system and supporting the growth of our region’s mass transit system is a key piece of the puzzle. In addition, our county Department of Transportation’s Ride On Reimagined study will help optimize this extensive transit system. The Council has been a key part on finding these solutions, and we hope our joint efforts will be recognized in the final draft.
- This section should also include a nod to the county’s expansion of its bike network, and the need for first and last mile solutions, which will help connect Montgomery County residents and visitors to our growing mass transit system.
- While those who will read this report understand the positive impacts that the Purple Line will have on our county, the report itself neglects to mention those benefits, or make recommendations as to how the County can capitalize on the benefits of a better connected region. The report does not mention the Purple Line or make recommendations as to how the County can capitalize on the benefits of a better connected region

- While we have many amenities in our County, we have a lack of placemaking in the growing areas – an oft-cited necessity to help continue to grow and make our region most attractive. This is a key area where, in partnership with Visit Montgomery, the County and MCEDC can make positively impact our business community and recruitment.

Priority D: Create an Inclusive Economy for Shared Prosperity

As referenced above, this section could be better expanded to better serve our residents and business leaders, as well as ensuring a greater focus on equity throughout the draft. Other high-level considerations for the Council include:

- Investment in the climate sector provides the best opportunity to create business opportunities for minority, female and disadvantaged (MFD) businesses. It provides opportunities ranging from energy auditing, architecture, construction and engineering, facility operations and maintenance, landscaping, and other fields.
- The No Wrong Door approach should not be limited to Small, Minority, and Women Owned businesses, and placing it in this section may give off the impression that these populations are the only ones who would benefit from such a system. Our Office of Procurement has taken the lead on creating a more open process including a website revamp, a designated Vendor Resources page, monthly open house events, and annual procurement fairs. These are some of the steps County government can take to make our services more accessible to more people

VI. The Draft Report has a lot to provide guidance to the County, and I am confident that the Council can build upon this work

Building off ten other reports, and the accumulated wisdom of many County leaders, MCEDC has provided the County with a framework that all future County Economic Development Strategies should be built upon, and I appreciate their work.

Montgomery County is the home of many assets. Some of them are by nature of our proximity to our nation’s capital, or our regional partners, but many of them are because of our people. When a discovery comes out of the National Institutes of Health – that is a Montgomery County innovation; when hoteliers are trained on the best way to serve their clientele – that is a Montgomery County smarts leading the way. Our county can lead the way while also ensuring responsible and ethical business behavior, proper treatment of employees, and demonstrating best practices in the region on climate, equity, transit, housing, and so much more.

As the Council begins its work on this over the next two and a half months, the Executive Branch stands ready to assist, and provide the partnership to grow our county’s economy.