



Committee: Directly to Council
Committee Review: N/A
Staff: Pamela Dunn, Sr. Legislative Analyst
Purpose: Receive briefing and have discussion – no vote expected
Keywords: Thrive, PHED, General Plan

AGENDA ITEM #3
November 16, 2021
Discussion

SUBJECT

Briefing to the Council on the Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee Draft of the Thrive Montgomery 2050 Plan.

EXPECTED ATTENDEES

Casey Anderson, Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board
Gwen Wright, Director, Planning Department
Tanya Stern, Deputy Director, Planning Department
Khalid Afzal, Special projects Manager, Planning Department

COUNCIL DECISION POINTS & COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

N/A

DESCRIPTION/ISSUE

The Planning Board transmitted its draft of Thrive Montgomery 2050 in April of this year. The Council received a briefing on the Plan prior to the public hearings held on June 17th and June 29th. Over the course of the summer and fall, the PHED Committee held several worksessions on the Plan, completing its review on October 25th.

This briefing provides an overview focusing on the PHED Committee revisions to the Plan. A copy of the PHED Committee Draft of Thrive Montgomery 2050 can be found here: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/COUNCIL/Resources/Files/2021/PHED-CommitteeDraftThrive2050.pdf>

SUMMARY OF KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

- The Committee's Draft affirms many of the policies and practices put forth in the Planning Board's Draft, which include maintaining a constrained growth area that focuses growth in centers of activity and along growth corridors; reintroducing East County growth corridors as a key to racial equity and economic competitiveness; incorporating arts and culture into discussions of land use and recognizing quality of place as integral to economic health; and encouraging environmental sustainability and resilience by focusing growth in targeted areas and protecting other areas such as the Agricultural Reserve, conservation areas, and parkland, to name a few.
- The Committee Draft starts from a revised version of each chapter prepared by Council staff, Planning staff, and the Planning Board Chair (following direction from the Committee's July

worksessions). Most revisions reorder information in the Planning Board Draft, add information from the Public Hearing Draft, or provide edited text for clarity.

- A significant change in the revised draft is the creation of a specific section in every chapter for each of the overarching objectives (economic health, racial equity and social justice, and environmental resilience) to indicate how the policies and practices put forth in the chapter support the objective. In addition, a symbol for each objective was attached to every practice that supports the achievement of that objective.
- In addition to these comprehensive changes, the PHED Committee's Draft:
 - Provides a more thorough introduction, including expanded sections on the three overarching objectives of economic health, racial equity and social justice, and environmental resilience.
 - Includes definitions and descriptions of the terms used to illustrate the 2050 Growth Map, such as Corridor-Focused Growth Area, Limited Growth Area, and the various sized centers. Removes the River Road corridor from the Beltway to Potomac Village.
 - Reorganizes and adds text to highlight the importance of context-sensitive development of Complete Communities and centers, as well as to clarify that the concept of "15-minute living" will mean different things for different types of communities.
 - Emphasizes improvements in transit, bicycling, and pedestrian infrastructure as alternatives to the auto and promotes expanding the street grid within growth centers with more connecting streets, bikeways, sidewalks, and smaller blocks.
 - Supports the conversion of existing travel and parking lanes to dedicated transit lanes, walkways, bikeways, and street buffers, where consistent with other County policies.
 - Promotes the construction of high-speed fiber optic and wireless infrastructure, focusing on connecting those in parts of the County that lack convenient access to jobs and educational opportunities.
 - Clarifies that the General Plan's housing chapter guides policies for housing for **all residents** and will require an increase in the supply and diversity of housing types for households at all income levels and for people in all stages of life.
 - States that Montgomery County must view access to safe, affordable, and accessible housing as a basic human right – where every resident of Montgomery County should have a place to call home and no resident should be homeless.
 - Ensures there is consideration of increased opportunities for housing low- and very low-income households in the analysis of how best to leverage County assets or dispose of real property.
 - Clarifies that incentives to boost housing production for market rate and affordable housing, especially near transit and in Complete Communities, not be limited to financial incentives.
 - Supports policies to increase energy efficiency, stormwater management, and other factors that increase environmental sustainability – such as improved construction and renovation practices, greater emphasis on clean energy generation, and enhanced resource conservation and stewardship – including natural green infrastructure.
 - Clarifies that metrics used to evaluate progress will include data that is disaggregated by race to facilitate measuring progress on the County's equity goals.
- The Council is scheduled to hold a Listening Session on November 30th. This will provide an opportunity for those who haven't yet commented on the Plan to provide input, and for those who are following Thrive to share their views on the Committee Draft .

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