



Committee: PHED

Committee Review: Completed

Staff: Pamela Dunn, Senior Legislative Analyst

Purpose: Briefing/Discussion – no vote expected

Keywords: #Thrive, Montgomery 2050, M-NCPPC

AGENDA ITEM #15

September 20, 2022

Discussion

SUBJECT

The Council will receive a continuation of the consultant briefing on the racial equity and social justice review of the Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee Draft of Thrive Montgomery 2050. Thrive Montgomery 2050 contains the text and supporting maps for a comprehensive amendment to current the General Plan (On Wedges and Corridors) for the County. It sets a vision for the county and encompasses broad, county-wide policy recommendations for land use, zoning, housing, the economy, equity, transportation, parks and open space, the environment, and historic resources.

EXPECTED ATTENDEES

Charnelle Hicks, President, CHPlanning and Nspiregreen
Jordan Exantus, Managing Associate, Nspiregreen
Casey Anderson, Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board
Gwen Wright, Director, Montgomery Planning Department
Tanya Stern, Deputy Director, Planning Department

COUNCIL DECISION POINTS & COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

- N/A

DESCRIPTION/ISSUE

On April 8, 2021, the Montgomery County Planning Board approved the Thrive Montgomery 2050 Planning Board Draft. The Plan was transmitted to the Council on April 13, 2021. Following two public hearings, one on June 17 and another on June 29, the Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee held nine worksessions on the Plan. The Committee completed its review on October 25 incorporating its recommended changes into a PHED Committee Draft.

Before beginning its work, the Council held two listening sessions with close to 150 speakers and asked the five Regional Service Center Advisory Boards to host discussions about Thrive at their January meetings. In addition, the Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) responded to a request for an equity analysis of the plan with a recommendation to seek consultant assistance with targeted outreach on Plan recommendations. The Consultant team was selected after an informal solicitation process. On June 16, the consultant team, made up of staff from Nspiregreen and Public Engagement Associates, met the Council and provided an overview of their planned work program.

At today's item, the consultant team will continue a briefing to the Council on their Racial Equity and Social Justice Report providing an overview of their recommendations on the PHED Committee Draft of Thrive Montgomery 2050 and their chapter on racial equity and social justice issues in Montgomery County (current and past).

SUMMARY OF KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

- Following the briefing, Councilmembers will have an opportunity to ask questions.
- Attached on page 2 of the staff report is a tentative schedule for the Council's review of Thrive Montgomery 2050.

Attachments:

Staff Report	Pages 1-2
Report on Racial Equity and Social Justice Review of PHED Committee Draft Plan	© 1-55
Outreach Appendices	© 56-176

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MEMORANDUM

September 15, 2022

TO: County Council

FROM: Pamela Dunn, Senior Legislative Analyst

SUBJECT: Thrive Montgomery 2050

PURPOSE: Continuation of briefing by Nspiregreen on the PHED Committee Draft of Thrive Montgomery 2050

Background

On June 21, 2022, the Council met the consultant team awarded the contract to obtain targeted input from communities of color and other under-represented communities across the County in order to conduct a chapter-by-chapter review of the policies and practices recommended in the Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee Draft.

Last week the Council received a briefing on the racial equity and social justice review of the PHED Committee Draft of Thrive Montgomery 2050. During this briefing, the Council received detailed information regarding the mobilization and outreach efforts of the consultant team, including comments from community members, the results of a questionnaire, and recommendations for future outreach efforts in general.

Racial Equity and Social Justice Review of Thrive Montgomery 2050: Briefing Continued

Given the breadth of information and interest by the Council, the consultant team did not have time to provide their recommendations on topic-specific chapters in the Plan nor to present their chapter on racial equity and social justice. This briefing will allow the team time to complete their presentation highlighting their recommendations and chapter on racial equity and social justice issues in Montgomery County.

The report can be found on © 1-55, including the draft chapter at © 42-55. The consultant team has also provided several appendices including outreach materials, questionnaire, and questionnaire results. The appendices can be found at © 56-176.

Review Schedule

In an election year the Council cannot adopt a master plan nor make any zoning changes after October 31. Below is a tentative schedule for review of the PHED Committee Draft of Thrive Montgomery 2050, including a review of new chapters on racial equity and social justice, the environment, and economic development. Specific consultant recommendations relevant to topic-area chapters will be covered as part of each chapter review.

Session	Topics for Review
September 20	Continuation of Briefing by Nspiregreen including recommendations on the PHED Committee Draft Plan and a new draft chapter on Racial Equity and Social Justice
September 22	Review of new chapters on Racial Equity and Social Justice, the Economy, and the Environment. Begin review of the PHED Committee Draft – Introduction chapter
October 4 (AM)	Review of chapters on Compact Communities, Corridor Growth, Design, and Transportation
October 4 (PM)	Review of chapters on Housing, Parks, and Conclusion (including additional sections on implementation)
October 11	Review of all Council changes to the PHED Committee Draft in order to post the draft resolution
October 25	Action to adopt resolution indicating all Council changes to the PHED Committee Draft Plan



THRIVE MONTGOMERY 2050

Racial Equity and
Social Justice Review



Thrive Montgomery 2050

Racial Equity and Social Justice Review



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Thrive Montgomery 2050 (Thrive 2050) is the new countywide general plan developed by the Montgomery County Planning Department. Thrive 2050 is a policy document that will guide future growth and development over the next 30 years.

Racial Equity and Social Justice Review

The Montgomery County Council contracted the Nspiregreen/Public Engagement Associates project team to work with the County and its residents to evaluate the current Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (“PHED”) Committee draft of Thrive Montgomery 2050 with a focus on issues of racial equity and social justice.

This project aims to ensure that historically disadvantaged and vulnerable social groups are more accurately and carefully represented in the Thrive 2050 plan. Central to this initiative, a public outreach effort was conducted to connected with Black, Indigenous, other ‘People of Color’ (BIPOC), and low-moderate income residents to gather input on their lived experiences and how they relate to the planning themes in Thrive 2050.

Feedback from engagement activities was used to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the current planning process and develop new recommendations on how to improve Thrive 2050 while centering issues of Racial Equity and Social Justice in all of the significant plan areas:

Compact Growth: Corridor Focused Development

Complete Communities: Mix of Uses and Forms

Design, Arts, and Culture: Investing and Building Community

Transportation and Communication Networks: Connecting People, Places, and Ideas

Housing for All: More of Everything

Parks and Recreation for an Increasingly Urban and Diverse Community: Active and Social

Generally, we found a lukewarm reaction to Thrive's policies amongst our target demographic. While we received some positive feedback, many people expressed frustration due to a perceived lack of context-sensitivity in approach that did not go far enough to consider and prioritize the needs of working class communities. Some folks expressed skepticism around successful plan implementation and felt that adverse unintended consequences were likely in their communities if certain safeguards were not reinforced in the methodology. Additionally, there were many who felt that the prior community engagement efforts were not adequate, and that the plan did not reflect a truly participatory process. One thing everyone could agree on, is that Montgomery County is doing a great job with their parks, recreation and open space planning.

FRAMING

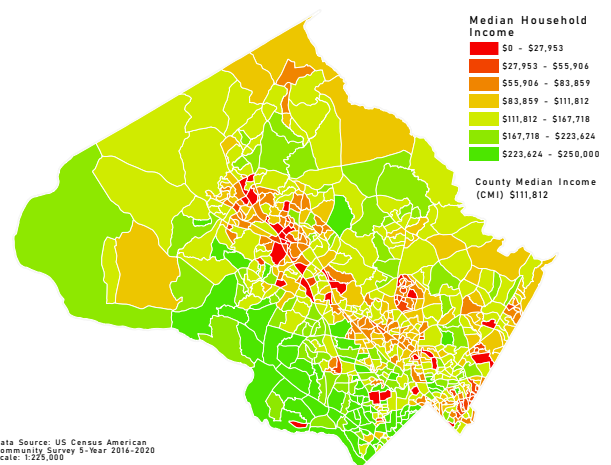
COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Our process was designed to engage Black, Indigenous, Latin/x, and other people of color, as well as low-moderate income individuals to learn about their lived experiences, their perspectives on Thrive 2050, and what they felt needed to be done in the County to advance Racial Equity and Social Justice.

Identifying and Consulting with Key Institutions

The importance of engaging local social and cultural institutions when seeking to build inroads into historically disadvantaged and vulnerable communities cannot be understated. These communities, in particular, grapple with diminished or nonexistent trust in public institutions due to historical exploitation and/or broken promises. As a result, it can make mobilizing genuine participation very difficult. One of the first steps to building relationships in these communities was to identify vital groups that help create the underlying social fabric. The essential groups comprise local community-based, faith-based, and focused immigrant organizations; schools; civic associations; community development corporations; third spaces (for example, barbershops, bodegas, or ethnic restaurants) that can serve as congregation points for community members where they will feel safe and comfortable expressing themselves.

Obtaining support from community leaders helped mobilize populations previously excluded or unengaged by prior planning initiatives to have a "seat at the table" in addressing the future of their communities and region.



The County's low-income communities are clustered along the central corridor (I-270) and along the east edge of the County. It is no coincidence that these areas are also where the majority of the people of color live.

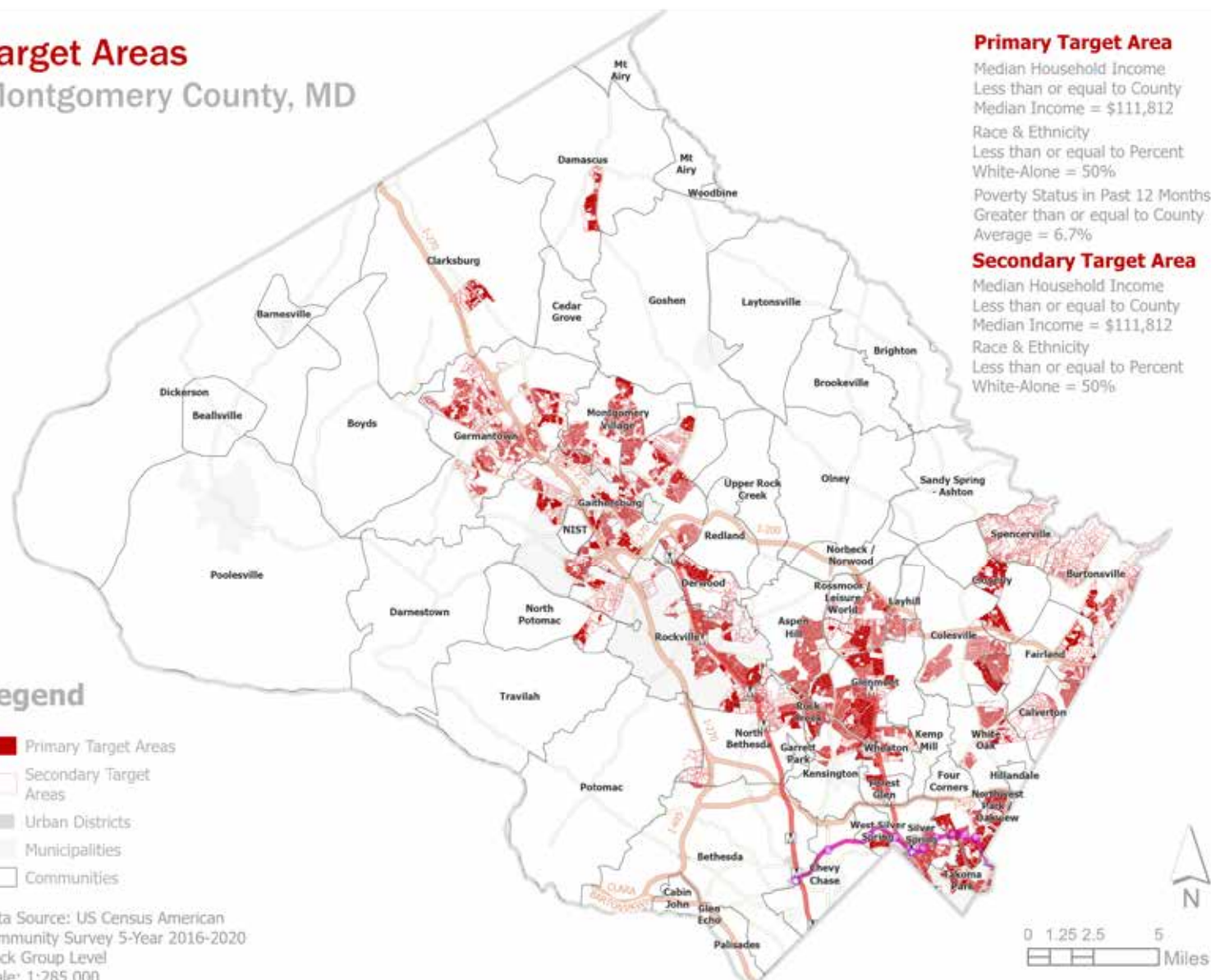
Target Areas

Montgomery County, MD

Legend

- Primary Target Areas
- Secondary Target Areas
- Urban Districts
- Municipalities
- Communities

Data Source: US Census American Community Survey 5-Year 2016-2020
Block Group Level
Scale: 1:285,000



Identifying Target Communities

A demographic analysis was conducted to identify key communities for targeted outreach including those with significant African American, Latinx, other significant/growing immigrant groups, and low-income populations.

Target Areas are areas within Montgomery County that have been identified, at the block group level, to have higher representation of minorities, low-income households, and poverty rates when compared to the County averages.

The Primary Target Areas are those with a Median Household Income that is less than or equal to \$111,812, a population where those identifying as white is less than 50-percent, and a proportion of those in poverty at 6.7 percent or higher.

Secondary Target Areas share similar characteristics with Primary Target Areas except for the poverty status factor.

Target Areas appear to be concentrated within urban areas, immediately adjacent to interstate highways such as I-270, and areas along the existing Metro Red Line and future Purple Line light rail.

The communities of Glenmont, Wheaton, Cloverly, and Oakview appear to have a high concentration of Primary Target Areas.

Lessons Learned

Task Overview

The consultant team was tasked with conducting a comprehensive review of previous Thrive 2050 Outreach and Engagement materials to identify ways in which community engagement could be improved and expanded to reach target communities and better integrate their feedback into the goals and priorities of the plan.

The team evaluated past engagement metrics and used input from the focus groups, survey, community forum, and other stakeholder conversations to review the engagement strategy adopted by the Montgomery County Planning Department and to provide recommendations on how future outreach and engagement can better reach out to and incorporate input from communities that were underrepresented in previous Thrive 2050 efforts.

Comprehensive Review of Previous Thrive 2050 Efforts

The Montgomery Planning Department officially conducted public outreach and engagement efforts from June 2019 to December 2021. Thrive 2050's engagement efforts were guided by strong goals that sought to prioritize equitable engagement within underrepresented communities, offered metrics to determine level of success, and outlined communities of focus for the project. The metrics used to define success in outreach and engagement included:

The public will have provided significant meaningful input and feedback throughout the process.

The public understand that this planning is long view thinking, and the outcomes will come over many decades.

The public feel that they've been heard and see how their input is used.

People understand why some plan recommendations don't reflect their precise input.

The public support and advocate for the plan.

» *Envisioning Survey*

1500+ Participants

» *Newsletter Subscribers*

1374 Subscribers, 36 letters sent, 39% open rate and 8% click rate

» *Virtual Meetings*

286 Participants, 36 letters sent, 39% open rate and 8% click rate

» *Mailers and Public Testimony*

90,000 mailers sent to equity emphasis areas to invite people to provide public testimony. Total of 85 people provided public testimony.

» *Advertisements*

Transit ads reached 6500 Daily/ 1.4 million on Metro Platforms. Online advertisements: clicks on ads 9250+ and reached 1.1 million people.

» *Thrive 2050 Website*

68,139 Views

» *Meetings in a Box*

1300 Meeting-in-a-Box sent to HOAS and Community Associations

Additionally, outreach and engagement to community organizations was outlined to be successful when community organizations were able to:

- Provide expertise, insight, and feedback throughout the entire process.

- Help engage community members.

- Feel good about the plan and support plan recommendations, and specifically embrace the policy recommendations that came from the plan.

Thrive 2050's engagement strategy also specifically identified community groups of focus that needed to be prioritized during the engagement process. These groups included renters, Latin/x residents, foreign born residents, African Americans, Millennial and Gen X families, High School and College students, community based organizations, and small business.

The outreach goals and metrics that were identified from the beginning follow public engagement best practices of identifying actionable goals for outreach, identifying populations of focus particularly those previously underrepresented in planning processes, and agreeing on metrics that can measure the success of engagement activities.

However, while these goals were clear and present from the beginning of the outreach and engagement process, they were not reviewed or connected to engagement activities as the project progressed. Evaluating

Outreach and Engagement Successes

The outreach and engagement efforts that were conducted from June 2019 to December 2021 benefitted from successful outreach tactics, platforms, and engagement levels. Overall, the Montgomery County Planning department reported that approximately 12,000 residents from Montgomery County were reached by the earliest stages of engagement. Participation levels in the Thrive 2050 newsletter demonstrated a significant interest in staying involved in the Thrive 2050 process. The newsletter received 1374 subscribers and the open rates and click rates averaged 39% and 8% respectively. The Montgomery Planning Department invested funding in advertising in areas that were accessible to most residents within the populations of interest for engagement. These advertisements were able to reach approximately 6500 daily from transit ads and 1.4 million on Metro platforms.

Equity was also centered on the design of some engagement activities. Specifically, the planning department sent 80,000 mailers to households in equity emphasis areas to invite residents to provide public testimony. A total of 85 people were able to testify at the planning board hearing. However, it was not clear if these participants received information about this engagement opportunity from the 90,000 mailers.

COVID-19 and Virtual Engagement

Thrive 2050's engagement and outreach process was impacted by the sudden public health emergency brought by the COVID-19 Pandemic. While in-person engagement efforts were put on pause, the planning department was successful in quickly adapting some of their engagement activities into virtual opportunities. Some of these activities included providing more informational virtual meetings, continue to engage via their newsletter platform, and promoting innovative virtual series such as 'Pints with a Planner' and the 'Ask me Anything' series. The planning department reported that approximately 286 participants participated in virtual meetings.

Public Outreach and Engagement Shortcomings

Three main issues were identified as being the primary problems with past Thrive 2050 Outreach: a lack of demographic data gathering, lack of racial representation in early phases of engagement, and lack of transparency and clarity about the stakeholder and community outreach process.

01. Lack of Demographic Data Gathering and Reporting

Engagement activities such as the Envisioning Quiz, Newsletter Subscribers, and Mailers sent to equity emphasis areas engaged a significant number of residents. However, there was no proper demographic documentation from participants. Engagement activities lacked sign-up sheets with demographic questions during virtual meetings or a demographic information section on the Envisioning Quiz. Additionally, mailers sent to emphasis areas have been highlighted as the primary equity-based engagement method implemented in this process. However, demographic information was not captured if any of the 90,000 fliers were received by the target population.

02. Racial Representation in Early Stages of Planning

Input received during focus groups and the Thrive Montgomery 2050 questionnaire show that the public was not satisfied with the racial representation of the group of participants from the first round of engagement. There were no methods applied to evaluate the demographic information of active participants from the first round of engagement. However, the 2020 Thrive Montgomery 2050 Questionnaire asked participants if they participated in previous engagement activities hosted by the Montgomery County Planning Department. 411 people expressed that they had participated in the early stages of engagement. Out of these 411 participants, 94 chose to not answer the question and 324 identified as white. 260 people reported having an income over \$75,000, with a majority of this group having an income that exceeded 100k. While these survey questions are not meant to provide a complete representation of the people that were involved in early phases of Thrive 2050 engagement, these numbers do give a good idea of the demographic background of the majority of participants from the first phase of engagement.

03. Lack of Clarity and Transparency in the Outreach and Engagement Process.

During the focus groups and public forum, stakeholders expressed not trusting the outreach that was done to community organizations. Two primary problems were identified:

Meetings were scheduled with community organizations; however, they were scheduled to discuss other different issues than Thrive Montgomery 2050. During these meetings, Thrive Montgomery 2050 was mentioned in relationship to the issues already being discussed but it was not the sole topic of the meeting. Community members did not think it was transparent to list those meetings as part of Thrive Montgomery 2050 outreach.

Meetings with community organizations were listed down as official activities of the outreach process. However, multiple community members from these organizations expressed never having heard of Thrive 2050 or the meetings that took place about Thrive 2050.

Public Engagement and Outreach Recommendations

The consultant team has put together a series of general recommendations that directly addresses some of the shortcomings from the early phases of Thrive 2050 Engagement. These general recommendations are more tailored to make changes to current agency procedures that can serve as more equitable blueprint for future engagement plans or efforts. In addition to these recommendations, there are additional recommendations on how to more equitably reach out to BIPOC communities. Recommendations with ** were directly recommended by members of the public.

General Recommendations

General Recommendations	Details
Adopt a formal and uniform agency procedure to collect demographic information from engagement participants.	Use Title VI requirements as benchmarks goals for collecting demographic data during engagement efforts. Title VI demographic data collection requirements should be the starting point for this process and not the standard. Aside from race/ethnicity, income, gender, zipcode, age, town/city, consider including asking other questions such as sexual and gender orientation, housing status, country of origin, language barriers, and level of education.
Require the creation of Public Outreach and Engagement Plans for each project that requires public participation	These plans need to differentiate the planning, implementation, and metrics associated with engagement vs. those associated with outreach. This will create transparency and clarity in the level of effort that goes into conducting outreach and the level of success in getting people to actually participate in the activities being promoted.
Invest Time and Resources in Community Relationship Building Outside of Official Engagement Project Timelines **	Engagement activities will benefit from higher levels of engagement when community members and leaders feel personally connected to the project or know about agency promoting the engagement events. This type of awareness and comfort cannot be created during tight engagement timelines. Consider doing some of the actions that were implemented during early stages of engagement, such as meeting-in-a-box tool kits, pop-up at community events, and general presentations about planning work throughout the year.
Prioritize community input-based planning process by being transparent about how public input is being utilized in planning projects. **	Be clear with the public about the type of input you need from them and how their input will be utilized throughout the project. Do not bury or isolate public input reporting in public engagement reports or appendices, instead find ways to directly connect planning and technical work with public input. Be clear about how public input influenced planning work in official work like planning documents, reports, and presentations.

Recommendations for Engagement for Future Long Range Planning work

Recommendation	Details
Complete a Comprehensive Study of Racialized Planning History in Montgomery County to help guide future community outreach and engagement work.	This study should focus on determining social impacts and economic loss due to racist policies and practices. Establish full implementation plan aimed at economic empowerment for communities of color.
For future plans, require an equity analysis which focuses on the impacts of growth strategies on displacement and opportunity for people of color.	Use this analysis to evaluate future planning recommendations and strategies and to identify populations of focus for future engagement work.
For future range planning work, design and implement a statistically significant survey that represents the values and opinions across all demographic groups. Establish statistically significant thresholds to reach out to underrepresented communities in the county.	Offer this statistically significant survey as part of a greater mixed methods engagement process. This includes supplementing the survey with additional focus groups, pop-ups, or community organization presentations to make sure qualitative methods are being utilized to reach out to underrepresented communities that might not feel comfortable participating in big quantitative engagement efforts.
Look for opportunities to empower communities of color and low-income communities on advisory and Decision Making Boards. **	Do not expect people to independently volunteer time and effort into these efforts. Conduct targeted outreach within community organizations, schools, and other advocacy groups that are actively engaged in underrepresented communities to share information about advisory and decision making boards and ways to be involved.

Best Practices in Outreach and Engagement in BIPOC Communities

BIPOC Outreach Best Practices

Invest significant resources in grassroots recruitment and engagement with and for underrepresented populations. **

Offer meetings at different times and days to include people who work in the evenings and make meetings more accessible with less writing, more oral communication that mirrors the way people speak and understand English. **

Utilize onsite child care during engagement events. **

Make engagement far more convenient and accessible. Convene in traditionally underserved communities. Meet at times and locations convenient to them. **

Reach out at the beginning of a process to the county's wealth of nonprofits and faith-based organizations. Collaborate with a subset of them as genuine partners in the outreach and engagement. **

Come to these communities very early in the process to understand their concerns, needs, and aspirations. Then follow-up and work with them throughout the process.

Involve youth directly in all aspects of the work and be more versatile and innovative in how you reach them. **

Bring Thrive Discussions to the People. Go to: metro stops, international grocery stores, food banks, libraries, cultural exchanges, barbershops, public schools, Montgomery College, Universities at Shady Grove. **

Table at public events, parades, festivals, urban walking trails, or grocery stores like Westfield Mall or Cotsco in Wheaton.

Tailor surveys to the people you want to reach. Create more than 1 survey to help gather input from various perspectives.

Offer compensation for participation. **

Have trusted constituents who are part of communities to co-host meetings/events with Thrive planning leads.

Look for community ambassadors to convene the conversation. If possible, have them facilitate with incentives.

Invest further time in Thrive 2050 to engage BIPOC communities. Thrive 2050 needs 1-2 more years for community chats. **

Conduct door to door canvassing in equity emphasis areas to engage with residents from low-income backgrounds and BIPOC communities. **

Executing a Comprehensive Engagement Approach

As part of the Racial Equity and Social Justice analysis of Thrive Montgomery 2050, the Office of Montgomery County Council requested our team to design and execute a robust community outreach strategy to obtain input from communities of color and other underrepresented groups in the County.

Nspiregreen and Public Engagement Associates (PEA) implemented a five-part effort to ensure the voices of people of color, immigrants, and residents from lower-income households were well represented in this process.

Focus Groups

We convened eight focus groups involving nearly 90 residents from these groups in a two-hour process to learn about and weigh in on the basic elements of Thrive 2050 while also providing a unique perspective on where the plan falls short on racial equity and social justice issues

Community Questionnaire

We deployed a community survey focused on reaching our target populations, which was also disseminated widely. More than 1,850 county residents took the Thrive 2050 racial equity and social justice survey, with nearly 37 percent of them from BIPOC communities.

Large Community Forum

We organized a single, community-wide, virtual Community Forum in mid-August attended by more than 150 county residents (from nearly 300 registrants), about half of whom were BIPOC. Residents learned and were polled on key elements of the Thrive 2050

plan and then provided in-depth input on how the plan could ensure a greater focus on racial equity strategy and outcomes, as well as how to improve future engagement in planning initiatives with BIPOC communities.

Recruitment and Engagement Advisory Group

Given the constraints of time, we pulled together a relatively small advisory team to:

- solicit feedback, in mid-July, on our overall recruitment and engagement strategy as well as provide input on equity issues

- provide initial analysis, in mid-August, of input and feedback received from our engagements and receive guidance on preparing for the final report.

Community Pop-ups

We held a series of seven pop-up events, at community festivals, Metro stations, and shopping centers from late July through mid August. At each high traffic area, we gave people access to the community survey (through the use of project tablets), distributed flyers about the project and the forum, and engaged in brief conversations about key issues in the Thrive 2050 plan.

As a result of these extensive efforts in a very compressed time frame (early July-mid August), Nspiregreen has identified a comprehensive set of themes from the community's input on Thrive 2050 and drafted recommendations about how County officials can improve community engagement with underserved communities in the future.

RACIAL EQUITY & SOCIAL JUSTICE //

FOCUS GROUPS

The Outreach and Participant Recruitment Strategy

General Strategy

Involving Montgomery County residents underrepresented in discussions about THRIVE 2050 in the previous Planning Department outreach efforts presented many challenges for our team. Those who the planning department had difficulty including in initial efforts remain "hard to reach" for many reasons. The consulting team had to make special efforts to get valuable feedback from them. This task was made much more difficult by the compressed timeframe for this project since the scope of work only allocated 6-8 weeks to organize and conduct all of the activities. This timeframe works inadequately when schools are not in session, people are away on vacation, and many organizations are less active.

To get as much meaningful input as possible from low-moderate income residents, immigrants, and members of racial and ethnic minorities, we crafted a strategy based on two key principles that are particularly important when working with people underrepresented in the discussion of important issues. Those two principles are:

Issue invitations that are as personal as possible—This means talking directly with key individuals, sending personal emails, and following up with texts or calls to those who express interest.

Work closely with organizations trusted by those we are trying to reach—People who are not generally involved in discussions are much more likely to respond positively if asked to do so by an organization they are a part of

Another belief underlying our outreach strategy is that planners should **compensate people** from these target communities who give significant time to share their views, if possible. The need for compensation is particularly true given the large number of activities the work scope required the consultant team to conduct in a short period. Fortunately, the Nspiregreen team obtained funding from the Montgomery County Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice to compensate focus group participants and created a raffle for those who filled out the survey. Montgomery County also provided free meals for all in-person focus group participants. This support was essential to our success in getting people involved—especially in the focus groups.

While our main focus was on issuing targeted invitations to key individuals and groups, we also experimented with several methods of reaching out to the broader target population to reach more significant numbers of people. We sent emails to selected lists, mailed postcards to residents in target neighborhoods, and conducted "pop-up meetings" in selected neighborhoods.

Community Advisory Group

To assist our personalized and direct outreach efforts, we created an informal advisory group to help us develop strategy and make contacts. Each of the ten members of this advisory group are well connected in the communities we sought to engage. They gave valuable advice and guidance about how to get people involved. We held two meetings with this group, and we also consulted individually with most of them on multiple occasions. The members of the advisory group were:

Ana Martinez—IMPACT Silver Spring and MORE

Eneshal Miller—Educational Sustainability Mobilization

Mady Nadjé—Everyday Canvassing

Vanessa Pinto—CHEER

Dan Reed—Greater Greater Washington

Rhiannon Reeves—Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice

Harriet Shangarai—Office of Community Partnerships

Izola Shaw—Montgomery County Racial Equity Network (MORE)

Lene Tsegaye—Kefa Café/ Ethiopian community groups

Alex Vazquez—CASA de Maryland

Personal Invitations to Participate

We began our invitation process by developing a key contacts list composed of individuals, groups, organizations, and county agencies that are part of our target communities and/or work closely with them in some way. More than 150 contacts were on this list, and we issued direct invitations to participate to all of them. This list included leaders in these communities and organizations representing almost every ethnic group in Montgomery County. Several groups also focused on economic development and the specific concerns of low-moderate income people. We also contacted some groups active in particular neighborhoods as well as a few key churches and direct service organizations.

In most cases, we made the initial contact with a personal email, and whenever possible, it was followed up by a phone call and/or a text message. Individuals were presented with several ways that they - and those they work with - could be involved, such as filling out the survey, participating in a focus group and/or attending the public forum. We made an explicit effort to get clear commitments about how they would help so we could follow up and support their efforts. We sent multiple personal invitations to almost everyone on the list, and shared follow-up information (i.e., copies of the surveys in different languages and registration information for the forum) as it became available.

We shared another set of personal invitations directly with members of two specific communities—Takoma Park and Briggs-Cheney. To organize focus groups and promote the survey, we partnered with Everyday Canvassing to reach out to individuals they had previously talked to as they went door to door in those areas. We developed a telephone script that the Everyday Canvassing staff used and some follow-up materials they could send to interested individuals. They had a very high response rate from the calls they made; as a result, we were able to fill two focus groups entirely from the individuals who responded in these two neighborhoods.

Work with Trusted Organizations

Trust is a key factor in getting people who have not previously been involved to take time to give feedback on something like Thrive 2050. Therefore, working with organizations that are known and respected in the community was essential to our efforts. Fortunately, more than half of the 40 groups we contacted agreed to assist our outreach efforts in some way. The most common actions were to promote the survey and help us to recruit focus group participants. Groups did this in various ways, such as forwarding information to their mailing lists, inserting links in their newsletters, making announcements at meetings, and referring us to specific individuals who wanted to participate.

Below is a list of some of the key organizations we reached out to about getting their members involved in our efforts:

Action in Montgomery (AIM)
African American Chamber of Commerce
Asian American LEAD
CASA de Maryland
CHEER Takoma Park
Educational Sustainability Mobilization
Ethiopian Community Center
Everyday Canvassing

Francophone Africans Alliance
Gandhi Brigade
Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
Identity
Impact Silver Spring
Jews United for Justice
Korean Community Service Center
Latino Civic Project

Leadership Montgomery
League of Educators for Asian American Progress
Montgomery County Food Council
Montgomery County Students for Change
Montgomery County Muslim Foundation
NAACP Montgomery County Chapter
SEIU local 500
Vietnamese Americans Association

In addition, we also worked with representatives of several Montgomery County agencies that work closely with those we were seeking to involve, including:

Regional Service Centers—We reached out to all five service centers and had frequent contact with the ones in East County and Silver Spring; one of the focus groups took place in the East County Regional Center

Gilchrist Immigrant Resources Centers—We sent information and made calls to staff in the main center in Wheaton and the one in Gaithersburg.

Office of Community partnerships—We had contact with the OCP staff that work with immigrant communities from Africa, Vietnam, Ethiopia, China, and Latin America and asked them to promote the surveys in various languages.

We worked closely with organizations comprised of members of two of the hardest-to-reach populations: 1) Spanish-speaking residents and 2) students of color (ages 16-25). We made agreements with CASA de Maryland in Wheaton and CHEER in Long Branch to host focus groups and recruit members of their organizations to participate. Both groups did this successfully, and their offices held focus groups in Spanish. In addition, we worked with several different groups to identify participants for a focus group held with high school and college students. Montgomery County Students for Change, staff at Montgomery College, and the Gandhi Brigade all assisted in recruiting a diverse group of students for an online focus group.

Outreach to Broader Target Population

Although our strategy focused primarily on making direct and personal appeals for involvement, we also undertook three other efforts in the hopes of significantly expanding the number of people who could be involved. We did that in three ways:

Sending emails to existing lists of interested individuals—we sent emails to a total of about 2000 people who had been previously involved in discussions on THRIVE 2050 as well as those county residents Public Engagement Associates had worked with on fair housing and other social justice issues

Mailing postcards to residents in equity focus areas—we mailed a postcard to 27,000 people who are residents of the Target Areas we identified in our demographic analysis of the County

Organizing "pop-up meetings" in communities—we went to seven locations in target communities, handed out hundreds of flyers, and invited residents to fill out the survey and participate in other ways.

These outreach efforts were particularly helpful in increasing the number of people who took the survey and registered for the forum. Still, they also attracted significant numbers of people who were not in our target demographic. In particular, the email lists had a significant number of people already active in Montgomery County, and many responded to the invitation to join our activities. Even though we targeted the postcards to equity focus areas, they also seemed to attract a surprisingly high percentage of people who were not our target demographic. The "pop-up meetings" reached more directly into the communities we were focused on, but the brief nature of the involvement limited what feedback we could gather.

Lessons Learned on Recruitment and Outreach During This Brief Project

- The time allowed for this project was not adequate, and the summer months presented additional challenges
- Most people respond very positively to personal outreach that seeks to make a connection and build a relationship
- Surveys are a good vehicle for getting input from a wide range of individuals
- Having trusted organizations endorse the outreach and host specific programs is crucial to effective involvement
- Incentives are essential for significant commitments of time like a focus group
- Traditional efforts to reach people through large email lists make it more challenging to keep outreach focused on those who have been underrepresented
- Mass mailing of postcards helped us attract individuals to take the survey and community forum but were less helpful to attract people from the target groups we were seeking to engage for the focus groups
- Pop Up Meetings have good potential to reach those not involved but need to have significant staff and resources to be successful

What we heard

A Summary of Perspectives

Overall

In the pages that follow, we will provide more detail on the results of each of the main venues for collecting feedback and guidance on Thrive 2050:

Eight Focus Groups involving 90 participants

A Community Questionnaire engaging more than 1,850 respondents

A large Community Forum convening more than 150 residents

7 pop-ups conducted at key equity areas in the county – distributed over 650 flyers

Overall Thrive Polling Results for BIPOC Residents

Focus Area	Focus Groups	Community Forum	Questionnaire
Housing	54% strongly agree/agree – issues 51% strongly agree/agree on policies	61% strongly agree/agree – issues 52% strongly agree/agree on policies	63% absolutely fits my vision/fits my vision for where the county should be going
Transportation	69% strongly agree/agree – issues 61% strongly agree/agree on policies	63% strongly agree/agree – issues 48% strongly agree/agree on policies	70% absolutely fits my vision/fits my vision for where the county should be going
Design, Arts, and Culture	53% strongly agree/agree – issues 69% strongly agree/agree on policies	45% strongly agree/agree – issues 46% strongly agree/agree on policies	61% absolutely fits my vision/fits my vision for where the county should be going
Parks and Recreation	77% strongly agree/agree – issues 83% strongly agree/agree on policies	48% strongly agree/agree – issues 45% strongly agree/agree on policies	77% absolutely fits my vision/fits my vision for where the county should be going

Overall, BIPOC residents liked the planning methodology in Thrive 2050. There were, however, real concerns about the housing strategies and how effective they might be in addressing a whole host of serious challenges. Residents wanted assurances that the housing strategies (designed to integrate their communities) would not, in fact, displace them replicating challenges experienced during 'Urban Renewal'.

Residents also expressed concerns about Transportation policies being too focused on transit and not acknowledging the needs of the working class who rely on their vehicles to access jobs and employment.

There was also widespread acknowledgement that the Design, Arts, and Culture issues and policies did not feel inclusive of communities of color, especially considering the immense contributions these communities make to driving culture.

BIPOC residents overwhelmingly supported the parks and recreation planning issues and policies

What we heard

A Summary of Perspectives

Focus Groups

Core to our consultant team's work and where we invested the most time and effort was organizing and convening **eight focus groups involving 90 residents.**

Why so much time and effort? We wanted to ensure that we found the right mix of people for each meeting and the right mix of groups to meet our mandate of engaging residents of color and low-to-moderate (LMI) income residents. These were the **key populations missing from the original Thrive 2050 process.**

Over three weeks, from July 27th to August 18th, our team convened focus groups as follows:

Wednesday, July 27th, 6:30-8:30pm for thirteen **youth and young adults of color** from across the County (virtual)

Thursday, July 28th, 6:30-8:30pm for twelve LMI **residents of color in the Briggs-Cheney area** (in-person)

Wednesday, August 3rd, 6:30-8:30pm for eight LMI **residents of color in the Takoma Park area** (in-person)

Thursday, August 4th, 6:30-8:30pm for thirteen LMI, **Latinx residents in the Wheaton area** (in-person)

Thursday, August 4th, 6:30-8:30pm for nine **LMI residents from across the County** (virtual)

Tuesday, August 9th, 6:30-8:30pm for eleven **middle-class African American residents** from across the County (virtual)

Thursday, August 18th, 6:30-8:30pm for twelve low-income **Latinx residents in the Long Branch area** of Silver Spring (in-person)

Thursday, August 18th, 6:30-8:30pm for twelve **middle-class residents of color** from across the County (virtual)

Focus Group Meeting Design (& Polling Results)

All eight focus groups followed the same design, meaning we provided participants with the same presentation slides and asked them the same polling and discussion questions in each two-hour meeting.

All presentations began with an overview of the project, what a general plan is and does, and a high-level overview of Thrive Montgomery 2050. The remainder of each meeting delved into specifics of key elements of the draft plan.

A brief presentation, first on **Complete Communities** and then on **Compact Growth**, followed. Participants shared their responses to the following questions at the end of each segment:

What does a community need to be considered 'complete'?

Would you consider your community complete? Why or why not?

Do you agree that leveraging existing centers and corridors (compact development) is a good strategy for future development in the Thrive 2050 plan?

Next, the lead facilitator reviewed four critical components of Thrive 2050: housing, transportation, design/arts/culture, and parks and recreation, sharing major issues or challenges in each area that the master plan identified and key policies it proposed as strategies to pursue. Not every issue or proposed policy in the four areas were presented in the interest of time.

After the review of each issue, participants commented on the issues and proposed policies, and after each comment period, they took part in two polls:

Do you feel that the issues outlined in this area are representative of the challenges in your community?

Do you agree with the policies outlined in this area of Thrive 2050?

Across the eight focus groups, the policy area with the best polling was **Parks and Recreation**. About 77% of respondents believed that Thrive 2050 had effectively identified the issues, and 83% thought that the policies proposed were on target.

Broadly, **transportation** was the next highest vote-getter: about 69% believed the issues were identified well while 61% indicated they agreed with the proposed policies.

The **Design, Arts, and Culture** results were a little more mixed: while only a little more than half (53%) believed the issues were correctly identified, 69% believed the policies were.

The results for **Housing** were the lowest overall for the four policy areas: only 54% of respondents believed Thrive 2050 had identified the issues well, and even fewer (51%) thought it had identified the policies effectively.

The final segment of each focus group centered on a brief presentation on three elements of **racial equity and social justice** for the plan. Below are the elements and the discussion question we posed after a brief contextual presentation:

Integration

How important do you think residential integration (including educational) and economic integration ins to the future of the County? If leaning toward important, why? If leaning toward not important, why?

Environmental Justice

If we define environmental injustice as including inadequate access to healthy food, inadequate transportation, air and water pollution, unsafe homes, etc.:

How well has the County done in recent years to address these issues in your community and other communities of color?

What do you see as the top priorities in the next decade(s) for the County to address concerning resolving environmental injustices in our communities?

Institutional reparations

Given that the County's planning, housing, and economic practices have involved pervasive racial discrimination in the past, what structures, systems, and policies would you want to see the County put in place to make essential (or fundamental) change to repair the damage?

Given time constraints, participants did not have a significant amount of time to weigh in on these substantial topics, but many offered essential insights on all three topics and how the County might address them.

You can [VIEW the focus group presentation in the Appendices](#)

Participants across the focus group meetings provided thoughtful remarks and stayed highly engaged throughout the two-hour process. We identified seven themes common to every session, as found below. Underneath every theme statement are representative comments made at the meetings that fit the overarching theme:

Overall Focus Group Themes

If We are to Have Complete Communities, We Must...

- Satisfy Basic Needs for All
- Invest in Good Infrastructure
- Provide Affordable Housing and Economic Opportunities for All
- Accept Everyone No Matter Race or Class (allowing everyone to be comfortable anywhere in the County)
- Make Education a Number One Priority to Complete Communities
- BUT ... are complete communities Attainable?**
 - Are complete communities attainable for us?
 - The plan lacks realism about creating 'complete communities.'

We Need More Accessible, More Affordable Housing & Housing Options

- We Need More Accessible, More Affordable Housing
- We Need Accessible, Affordable Housing
- The Lack of Affordability in Housing Currently is Huge
- The County has an Enormous Number of Housing Challenges.
- The County has a Large Number of Cost-burdened Households
- We Need Far More Housing Options

We Have Doubts that the Plan Will Be Able to Overcome Our Significant Disparities

- We Have Several Dimensions of Inequity: Amenities, Infrastructure, Services
- There are Significant Disparities in Amenities across the County.
- We Must Overcome Current Disparities in Education
- We Have Numerous Geographic and Demographic Inequities
- There are Multiple Disparities between Lower-East and Lower-West County.
- There are Multiple Racial and Socioeconomic Inequities in the County
- The County Needs to Fix Near-Term Issues before Implementing a Long-Term Vision
- Discrimination and Racism in the County Continue to Segregate Us
- The County Must Repair Broken Relationships with Black Families; Greater Equity will Require Some Form of Reparations

The County's Efforts to "Integrate" Will Make BIPOC Residents More Vulnerable

- Residents have a Great Fear of Displacement
- The County Needs to Safeguard Against Displacement.
- Integration Will Not be Possible
- Residents Don't Believe that Equal Development of Corridors Will Happen

The County is Not Currently Prioritizing Vulnerable People

A Focus on Arts and Culture Must Embrace & Understand Cultural Differences

We Need Better, More Convenient, Affordable, and Green Transportation

Thrive Must Focus on Reliable, Frequent, Convenient, and Affordable Public Transportation

We Need Better Public Transportation and Transportation Alternatives.

We Need a Commitment to Green Transportation

The Challenge with Compact Growth is it...

Extends the Problematic Legacy of Wedges/Corridors

Doesn't Focus on Needed Connectivity Across the County

Will Make Light Blue Parts of the Map Very Overcrowded

Has a Primary Focus on Transit, Which Ignores Blue Collar Workers' Needs

Won't Prioritize Good Jobs Near Our BIPOC Neighborhoods

Will Cause Worse Access for Us to Green & Open Space

Won't Benefit People of Color

We Need to Learn How to Plan Differently

The Plan Needs to Demonstrate Greater Flexibility in How it Addresses Communities & Issues

The Plan Needs to Provide Flexibility as Every Community is Different

We (BIPOC people) are Heard but Not Prioritized in Planning and Policy-making

High Level Themes for Each Focus Group

BIPOC Youth + Young Adults (July 27)

We Need Acceptance of Everybody. Complete community is ... where we accept everyone no matter race or class, allowing everyone to be comfortable anywhere in the county

We Need More Accessible, More Affordable Housing

We Have Several Dimensions of Inequity: Amenities, Infrastructure, Services

We're Heard but Not Prioritized in Planning and Policy-making

County Needs to Fix Near Term Issues before Implementing Long Term Vision

BIPOC LMI – Fairland-Briggs Chaney (July 28)

Need more and improved access to programs, activities, opportunities for youth and young adults

Crime and Security a threat to businesses and neighborhoods

Perception that they are not cared about

Need transit, but commutes are too long and service infrequent – disconnected from employment and destinations

Housing is substandard and building inspectors are not being accountable

Would like to have better housing locally AND opportunities to move elsewhere

Poor quality retail, want more commercial development

LMI & Immigrants - Takoma Park (Aug 3)

There are Significant Disparities in Amenities across the County.

The County Needs to Safeguard Against Displacement.

The County is Not Currently Prioritizing Vulnerable People

We Need Accessible, Affordable Housing

We Need Better Public Transportation and Transportation Alternatives.

We Must Overcome Current Disparities in Education

BIPOC LMI - Aug 4th Virtual

- We Have Numerous Geographic and Demographic Inequities
- The Plan Lacks Realism about 'Complete Communities.'
- The County has a Large Number of Cost-burdened Households
- Residents have a Great Fear of Displacement
- The Plan Needs to Provide Flexibility as Every Community is Different

CASA (Low-Income Spanish, Aug 4)

- Residents Don't Believe that Equal Development of Corridors Will Happen
- Education is the Number One Priority to Complete Communities for Latino Families
- Lack of Affordability in Housing Currently is Huge
- Good Jobs Do Not Exist Near Our Neighborhoods
- We Need a Commitment to Green Transportation

Middle Class African American - Aug 9th Virtual

- There are Multiple Disparities between Lower-East and Lower-West County.
- There are Multiple Racial and Socioeconomic Inequities in the County
- The County has an Enormous Number of Housing Challenges.
- The Plan Needs to Demonstrate Greater Flexibility in How it Addresses Communities & Issues

CHEER - Low-Income Spanish (Aug 18)

- Are Complete Communities Attainable for Us?
- Latinos Can't Benefit from Compact Growth
- A Primary Focus on Transit Ignores Our Non-Office Worker Needs
- A Focus on Arts and Culture Must Embrace & Understand Cultural Differences
- Integration Will Not be Possible

BIPOC LMI - Aug 18th (virtual)

- If We are to Have Complete Communities, We Must ...
 - Satisfy basic needs for all
 - Invest in good infrastructure
 - Provide affordable housing and economic opportunities for all
- The Challenge with Compact Growth is
 - Extends problematic legacy of wedges/corridors
 - Doesn't focus on needed connectivity across county
 - Will make light blue parts of map very overcrowded
- We Need Far More Housing Options
- Thrive Must Focus on Reliable, Frequent, Convenient and Affordable Public Transportation
- We Need Better Access to Green & Open Space
- The County Must Repair Broken Relationships with Black Families
- Discrimination and Racism Continue to Segregate Us
- Integrate Potomac

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What we heard

A Summary of Perspectives

Community Questionnaire

The Thrive Montgomery 2050 Community Questionnaire was conducted from July 19, 2022, to August 20, 2022. A total of 1860 participants took the questionnaire, with 37 people taking the questionnaire entirely in Spanish. The questionnaire was designed to gather feedback, on 3 primary areas:

- Measure the level of public understanding of the focus planning areas on the plan including, compact growth, complete communities, housing, transportation, design, arts & culture, and parks & recreation.
- Incorporate racial equity and social justice-based questions to understand residents' perceptions on issues of race, discrimination, segregation, and equitable access to county resources.
- Understand the level of engagement and demographic background from participants previously engaged in Thrive 2050 public involvement work coordinated by the Montgomery County Planning Department.

While the Community Questionnaire was conducted to primarily gather input about the current focus identified in the plan, it also gathered information about other systemic issues of race, segregation, and equity not explicitly mentioned in the plan, but the nonetheless can impact how underrepresented community members experience housing, transportation, design, arts, culture, and parks and recreation in the county.

The questionnaire was conducted through SurveyMonkey and was open to any resident of Montgomery County who wanted to take the questionnaire. The decision to make this questionnaire open was explicit, allowing the consultant team to share the link with community organizations that already have the trust and established working relationships with BIPOC community members to disseminate the questionnaire through their networks.

People were incentivized to participate in the questionnaire by offering them the chance to enter a raffle to win either a \$10 or \$50 gift card. Because of this project's racial equity and social justice emphasis, all questions on the questionnaire, including the demographic questions, were required to be answered to officially enter the raffle.

Section 1: Public Awareness of Thrive Montgomery 2050

The initial section of the questionnaire sought to understand awareness about Thrive Montgomery 2050 and comprised three primary questions: Q1: Are you aware of Thrive Montgomery 2050, the general plan for the County? Q2 [If answer was yes to Q1]: When did you first become aware of Thrive 2050? Q3: Have you participated in the any of the following engagement activities in the past?

71% of participants who took the questionnaire were already aware of Thrive Montgomery 2050, while 29% had not heard of the draft plan. Of those who were aware, 17% had just learned about Thrive 2050 during the summer of 2022. The source of information about Thrive 2050 varied throughout the group, indicating already knowing about Thrive 2050. About half of the people learned about Thrive 2050 through previous engagement work done by Montgomery Planning.

Of those aware of Thrive, 79% were White, and 21% were BIPOC. Of those unaware of Thrive, the percentages were significantly different:

Section 2: Thrive Montgomery 2050 Planning Areas

Section 2 of the questionnaire first asked participants to describe their hopes for Montgomery County's future in 1-3 words. A word cloud of the most mentioned words can be found below. Among the most mentioned words were affordability, safety, sustainability, diversity, equity, affordable housing, jobs, walkability, and education.

Q7 What are 1-3 words that describe your hopes for Montgomery County's future?



Next, the questionnaire asked participants about their level of agreement on Thrive Montgomery 2050's three overarching priorities to develop a strong economy, protect the environment, and advance racial equity and social justice.

Overall, for all respondents, **protecting the environment received the most support - 55% strongly agreeing and 23% agreeing (78% total).**

Fostering a strong economy came second - 47% strongly agreeing and 30% agreeing (77% total).

Racial equity and social justice came in third - 42% strongly agreeing and 21% agreeing (63% total).

Of the three priorities, **the highest percentage disagreed with racial equity and social justice as a priority - 23% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.**

BIPOC respondents had a somewhat different ordering of priorities: fostering a strong economy came first with 80% agreeing or strongly agreeing; protecting the environment came in second with 70%; racial equity and social justice came in a bit lower at 58%. Further, 28% of BIPOC respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that racial equity and social justice should be considered a priority.

Next, questionnaire respondents were asked, "Do the following six focus areas outline in Thrive 2050 fit your vision for where the County should be going?"

Overall Respondents			
Planning areas	Fits my Vision	Absolutely fits my vision	I don't understand what this is about
Parks and Recreation	33%	45%	3%
Transportation and Communications Network	29%	43%	3%
Housing for All	19%	40%	4%
Design Arts and Culture	35%	27%	4%
Compact Growth	23%	25%	10%
Complete Communities	22%	29%	13%

Overall, Parks and Recreation (78%) and Transportation and Communications Network (72%) received the best scores of either 'absolutely fits my vision' or 'fits my vision.' About six in ten respondents found a fit with Housing for All (59%) and Design, Arts, and Culture (62%), although Housing for All had a higher percentage indicating 'absolutely fits my vision' (40% vs. 27%).

Respondents rated the final two focus areas, compact growth (48%) and complete communities (51%), the lowest, with both receiving only about half for 'absolutely fits' or 'fits.' Respondents also expressed the most difficulty understanding the meaning of these two focus areas.

When looking at BIPOC responses separately, they too, viewed Parks and Recreation, Transportation, and Housing for All as the best fit for their vision for the County. BIPOC respondents also identified compact growth and complete communities as the most complex terms to understand.

BIPOC Respondents			
Planning areas	Fits my Vision	Absolutely fits my vision	I don't understand what this is about
Parks and Recreation	32%	45%	3%
Transportation and Communications Network	26%	44%	4%
Housing for All	19%	44%	4%
Design Arts and Culture	31%	30%	4%
Compact Growth	23%	24%	11%
Complete Communities	23%	30%	13%

Respondents were asked about other essential themes beyond the six focus areas. The most frequently cited were: schools/education (78 responses); equitable development throughout the County (38 mentions); protecting current neighborhoods (37 responses).

Concerns within Thrive 2050 Focus Planning Areas

Our questionnaire team also asked respondents about their concerns on other essential issues.

Jobs and Economic Opportunity: the top four concerns were the length of the commute (54%), transportation costs (45%), wages (45%), and access to local jobs (42%). BIPOC respondents also indicated that job opportunities and competition for jobs were of concern.

Housing Concerns: the top four concerns were cost (66%), safety (52%), housing quality (48%), access (43%). BIPOC respondents shared the same priority concerns.

Transportation Concerns: the top concerns were reliability (66%), convenience (58%), safety (53%), and cost (47%). Thirty-three percent indicated that accessibility for people with disabilities (33%) was also a significant concern. BIPOC respondents had nearly identical concerns. Parking also rated a high concern for BIPOC respondents (47%).

Parks and Public Space Concerns: the top concerns were safety (54%), pollution (52%), proximity to home (41%) and difficulty getting to parks/public spaces (32%). For BIPOC respondents, safety received a far higher percentage, 65%, of the vote.

When asked about concerns beyond the four categories above, BIPOC residents indicated crime, safety, overcrowded neighborhoods, high taxes, and increasing access to housing as key concerns.

Affordability and safety emerged as prominent issues across the questionnaire's quantitative and qualitative responses, especially for BIPOC respondents. Also, while displacement and gentrification were not in the top 4 concerns for housing, they continued to be prominent issues identified by participants. Overall, 32% of participants identified displacement as a housing-related concern, while among participants with lower incomes (from \$0-\$49,999) more than a third identified displacement as a significant concern.

Section 3: Race, Discrimination, and Equity Section

The Race, Discrimination, and Equity section asked participants to rate race relationships in Montgomery County, share their experience with discrimination in the County, and offer input about the level of public services that their neighborhoods receive.

Responses on a scale of 1-10 (10 being high) about how high a priority it should be for the government to address racial equity gaps in education, criminal justice, jobs, health, housing, and other areas the average response for overall respondents and for BIPOC respondents was 6.

When asked about the level of tension for race relations in the County, from not tense at all to very tense, overall responses were very similar to aggregated BIPOC responses.

	Overall	BIPOC
A little tense	23%	20%
Somewhat tense	24%	20%
Very tense	9%	8%

Yet, responses were quite different when respondents were asked about their personal experience with discrimination in the County.

	Overall	BIPOC
Yes, have experienced	19%	38%
No, haven't experienced	69%	46%

As you can see, more than double the percentage of BIPOC respondents compared with overall respondents reported having directly experienced discrimination in the County. **BIPOC participants reported having faced discrimination in education (17%), employment (16%), policing and court system (16%), and access to governmental resources (11%).**

Section 4: Demographic Information

Eighteen-hundred-sixty (1,860) people took the Thrive 2050 Community Questionnaire. The questionnaire asked a series of demographic questions to help identify the background of participants. Only 1308 participants completed the demographic section of the questionnaire, and just under 1300 shared their race ethnicity and household income.

Geography

Although dozens of cities and towns were represented in the questionnaire, residents from the following seven jurisdictions had the most participants: Silver Spring (410), Bethesda (133), Rockville (114), Chevy Chase (89), Gaithersburg (85), Takoma Park (64), and Wheaton (49).

Race and Country of Origin

A total of 1287 people reported their race. People were able to input more than once race to indicate mixed race. A total of 27 participants selected more than one option for race, which resulted in receiving more number of responses than the number of participants who shared their demographic information.

The breakdown was as follows:

White: 976 or 76%

Black or African American: 181 or 14%

American Indian or Alaska Native: 45 or 3.5%

Asian: 124 or 9.6%

Native Hawaiian or another Pacific Islander: 31 or 2.4%

Hispanic: 111 or 8.6%

Total BIPOC: 492 or 36%

Countries of Nationality

Nearly 1,300 shared their nationality. Nearly every part of the world was represented:

South America
Central America and Mexico
North Africa
Southeast Asia
Cuba and the Caribbean
Europe
Russia
China
Middle East
South Asia
USA

Income

1287 participants reported their income from 2020.

Under 15,000: 53

Between \$15,00 and \$29,999: 58

Between \$30,00 and \$49,00: 78

Between \$50,000 and \$74,999: 115

Between \$75,000 and \$99,999: 149

Between \$100,000 and \$150,000: 310

Over \$150,000: 524

Housing status:

Of the 1287 participants who reported their housing status, 12.2% were renters, 80.3% were homeowners, and the remaining 7.5% had

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What we heard

A Summary of Perspectives

Community Forum

The Nspiregreen team held a large online community forum near the end of the engagement process to expand the opportunity to provide input on the racial equity and social justice issues in the Thrive 2050 plan.

Because the forum was promoted online and some emails went out to people who had participated in previous activities around Thrive 2050, those who registered were generally reflective of the broader Montgomery County demographics and not just those of our target audience. Thus, a majority of registrants were White and relatively affluent, but there was also a significant number people of color and low-moderate income residents who registered to attend.

In the end, more than 300 Montgomery County residents signed up to participate and, when we convened the meeting, there were 160 who actually attended. Although the participants in the forum had different demographics than in our other programs, it was helpful to see what the broader Montgomery County population felt about the issues we discussed and it enabled in-depth conversations and feedback across race and income levels.

In the end, more than 300 residents registered, well more than half White; when we convened the meeting, 160 attendees showed up, two-thirds of whom were White. Although this didn't allow our consultant team to access our target audience fully, it still enabled in-depth comment and input across race and income level.

We opened the meeting by asking people to place in Chat where they were participating from. Although only 60 of the 160 submitted to chat, we were quickly able to see that we had people from all across the County, including:

- The Silver Spring area inside and just outside the beltway, including folks from Brookeville, White Oak, and Hillendale, among others
- The Gaithersburg area, including Montgomery Village
- The broader Wheaton area, including Aspen Hill and Colesville
- The broader Bethesda area, including Chevy Chase, Kensington, and North Bethesda
- Germantown
- Rockville
- As far north as Clarksburg and as far southeast as Takoma Park

Community Forum Design (& Polling Results)

As we opened the meeting, we asked a series of demographic polling questions, the same ones posed in the focus groups.

The results were:

- Gender: 66% female; 32% male; 2% something not listed here
- Age: 18-34 years old – 9%; 35-54 years old – 36%; 55-64 – 24%; 65+ 34%
- Household income: 30% under \$75,000/year; 43% between \$75,000-\$150,000; 27% did not say
- Race/Ethnicity:
 - 1% American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 4% Asian or Asian American
 - 21% Black or African American
 - 7% Hispanic or Latino
 - 1% Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
 - 64% White
 - 4% Other not mentioned here
 - 2% Prefer not to say

Much as we did in the focus group meetings, we invested significant time presenting the key concepts, issues, and proposed policies across the Thrive 2050 plan: complete communities, compact growth, housing, transportation, design, arts, and culture, and parks and recreation.

After each mini-presentation, we asked attendees to answer three polling questions and to enter any ideas they had for that topic into the Chat.

For **Complete Communities**, we asked a single polling question – Do you agree that the focus on complete communities is a good strategy for future development in the Thrive 2050 plan?

Poll Result

60% strongly agreed or agreed, 21% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 13% indicated they did not know enough yet to say. Seven percent neither agreed or disagreed.

For **Compact Growth**, we also asked a single polling question – Do you agree that leveraging existing centers and corridors (compact development) is a good strategy for future development in the Thrive 2050 plan?

Poll Result

59% strongly agreed or agreed, 18% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 11% indicated they did not know enough yet to say. Eight percent neither agreed nor disagreed.

Next, we presented, in order, the key issues and proposed policies for the other four issue areas. For all four, we asked the same questions for each: (1) Do you feel that the issues outlined in the plan are representative of the challenges in your home community? (2) Do you agree with the proposed policies outlined in the plan? (3) How well do these policies address the issues of Racial Equity and Social Justice (RESJ).

Polling Results in the Four Policy Areas

For **Housing**:

Issues representative of challenges in your community:

61% strongly agree or agree, 27% disagree or strongly disagree

Agree with policies in the plan:

52% strongly agree or agree; 31% disagree or strongly disagree

How well policies address RESJ:

31% very well or well, 40% not well or not well at all, 18% I don't know enough yet to say

For Transportation:

Issues representative of challenges in your community:

63% strongly agree or agree, 25% disagree or strongly disagree

Agree with policies in the plan:

48% strongly agree or agree; 31% disagree or strongly disagree

How well policies address RESJ:

26% very well or well, 36% not well or not well at all, 24% I don't know enough yet to say

For Design, Arts, and Culture:

Issues representative of challenges in your community:

45% strongly agree or agree, 26% disagree or strongly disagree

Agree with policies in the plan:

46% strongly agree or agree; 21% disagree or strongly disagree

How well policies address RESJ:

23% very well or well, 37% not well or not well at all, 29% I don't know enough yet to say

For Parks and Recreation:

Issues representative of challenges in your community:

48% strongly agree or agree, 31% disagree or strongly disagree

Agree with policies in the plan:

45% strongly agree or agree; 21% disagree or strongly disagree

How well policies address RESJ:

23% very well or well, 33% not well or not well at all, 19% I don't know enough yet to say

Compared to the aggregated results from the focus groups, forum participants ranked three of these four policy areas lower for the plan's success in identifying the issues and its success in identifying policy proposals. The only area that ranked higher compared to the focus groups was housing, which was the lowest vote-getter of the four policy areas as rated by focus group members.

We asked for the policy areas for the new polling questions, and only a tiny minority of forum participants believed the plan's policies addressed RESJ well. About one-fifth to one-quarter of participants across the four areas believe they did not yet know enough to have an opinion one way or the other.

In the second half of this two-hour meeting, we provided a brief overview of how the issues of equity and justice show up in the current Thrive 2050 plan draft. We then proposed brief definitions of terms (equality, equity, and justice), and shared examples of where racial disparities show up and how Thrive 2050 has identified RESJ "target areas" in the plan.

After sharing some of the themes identified relating to RESJ in the focus groups, we moved everyone into six randomized breakout groups of about twenty-five participants.

In the first breakout, we asked participants to identify specific things the County can do to achieve prosperity while also addressing historical injustices and limiting future disparities.

In the lead into the second breakout, we shared ideas forward-thinking communities utilize to center historically disadvantaged communities in community planning. We then put them into the same breakout rooms to discuss their ideas for what the County should do to more effectively engage people of color, immigrants, and lower-income residents in future planning and policy-making initiatives.

After each discussion, we asked attendees to identify their most significant insight or takeaway from the conversation and place it in Chat.

On the next page, we summarize the common themes that emerged from both of those discussions. We also review the themes that emerged from 1000+ comments in Chat made throughout the meeting.

We concluded the meeting by asking everyone to respond to four final polling questions:

- How worried are you about displacement?
- What is the current level of trust in the Montgomery County government, especially concerning planning?
- What is your level of willingness to engage with the County on policy-making and planning in future years?
- To what degree would you like racial equity and social justice be incorporated into the Thrive 2050 plan?

Results for Final Polling Questions

For **displacement**: 53% very worried or worried; 30% not worried or not worried at all

For **trust**: 22% very high or high trust; 55% low or very low trust

For **willingness to engage**: 82% very willing or willing; 7% unwilling or very unwilling

For **incorporating RESJ**: 86% very important or important; 4% unimportant or very unimportant

You can [VIEW the community forum presentation in the Appendices](#).

Overall Community Forum Themes

Breakout Discussion #1: Rebalancing and Ensuring Greater Racial Equity & Social Justice

Invest Heavily in Racial Equity in the County's Future Development and Redevelopment
 Demonstrate Greater Urgency in Making Far More Housing Affordable
 Address and Counteract the County's Racist Legacy and Continuing Discrimination
 Pay Attention to Environmental Issues/Impacts
 Lift Up Populations Economically / Support Parents & Families
 Invest in Transit
 Provide Greater Equity in Quality Schools & Education
 Prioritize Seniors and Youth
 Compressed Time Frames are the Enemy of Equity & Justice

Breakout Discussion #2: Improving Community Engagement with Underrepresented Communities

Conduct Far More Robust Outreach When Engaging Underrepresented Communities
 Meet at Times and Places Convenient to Busy People
 Advertise Far and Wide in Our Communities
 Provide More Supports to Help People Engage
 Make Writing and Communications about the Plan Clear and Accessible
 Don't Enable or Advantage Privileged Voices
 Listen & Understand First in Order to Act Effectively

Chat Themes

Themes about the Outreach and Engagement Process

Involve Youth Directly and Be Versatile in How You Reach Out to Young People
 Lift Up Voices of Those Who are Underserved / Prioritize BIPOC People in BIPOC Forums
 Grassroots Organizing with and for Underrepresented Populations
 Reach Out to Nonprofits & Faith-based Organizations
 Make Engagement Convenient and Accessible
 Bring Thrive Discussions To The People (dozens of examples of where and how)
 Create Formal Mechanisms to Be More Inclusive
 Fund the Office of the People's Council
 Invest Further Time in Thrive to Engage BIPOC Communities

Equity and Thrive

How Will Thrive Remedy Past Wrongs and Current Disparities?
 If We're not Careful, Thrive Could Increase Inequity
 Broaden What's Included in the Definition of Equity
 Equity: What the County Already Has in Place
 Need Better Investments in Jobs, Education, Skills Training, and Benefit Programs
 Concerns that Displacement is Both Already Here and on the Near-Horizon
 We Need to Implement Effective Plans for the Differently-Abled

Housing

Concerns about Whether Enough Affordable Housing Will Be Built
 Concerns about Where Affordable Housing is Built
 I Can't Afford to Live Here or Am Concerned I Won't Be Able to in the Future
 What Will Happen to Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH)?
 What Will Happen to Single-Family Neighborhoods?
 MPDUs Will Never Accommodate All the People Who Need Affordable Housing.
 We Need Social and Cooperative Housing
 We Need Smaller, Context-Sensitive Plans & Planning.
 We Need Creative Approaches to Solve the Complex Housing Crisis
 We Need to Increase Developers' Impact Fees

Other Thrive Policy Areas

There's a Need to Balance Transportation Needs: Beyond Commuting, Beyond Growth Areas & Also to DMV Region
 Focus on the Environmental and Human Impact of Compact Growth on Existing Communities
 What We Must Incorporate, Environmentally, to Get this Right

Critiques of Thrive

A COMMON VIEW: Slow Down Thrive & Do it Right
 ANOTHER COMMON VIEW: Pass Thrive Now with Adjustments
 The Status Quo is a Significant Obstacle to Genuine Progress in the County
 The Thrive Plan is Difficult to Understand
 Most Residents Don't Know about Thrive
 Concerns Residents Have about what Thrive Doesn't Address

- The needs of BIPOC, seniors, and Upcounty jurisdictions
- The needs of these growing, vulnerable populations
- The disparities in amenities and investment between East and West county.
- Infrastructure, tree canopy, parking, school overcrowding
- How to implement the ideas in this plan
- Eliminating building-by-right
- Collaborative and innovative ways to address the high level of need in the County

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What we heard

A Summary of Perspectives

Pop Up Events

Nspiregreen and PEA, along with staff from Everyday Canvassing distributed approximately eight hundred plus flyers at various locations in Montgomery County promoting Thrive 2050 Survey, Focus Groups and Community Forum. Participants could access the survey using a QR Code, through the project website, and on tablets provided at 2-3 pop-ups. Pop-up outreach efforts included tables at various events and businesses, distributing flyers in targeted communities and high traffic areas, engaging residents in a conversation about the project. Locations were selected due to their proximity to targeted communities and businesses, access to large groups of Montgomery County BIPOC residents who fit within our targeted low-mid income range.

Pop-up	Address	Community
Wheaton Safeway and Wheaton Metro	11201 Georgia Ave	Wheaton
Wheaton Giant and surrounding small businesses	2900 University Boulevard West	Wheaton
Crossroads Farmers Market	Anne Street at University Boulevard E	Takoma
The Rio or the Crown in Gaithersburg	9841 Washingtonian Boulevard	Silver Spring
Rockville Metro & targeted neighborhoods	251 Hungerford Dr,	Rockville
Silver Spring Metro	8400 Colesville Rd	Silver Spring
International Food Festival in Downtown Silver Spring at Veteran's Plaza	Veterans Pl	Silver Spring

Pop-ups were conducted between 11am - 5pm, between August 5th - 16th. We distributed over 600 flyers promoting the questionnaire and engagement opportunities.

Wheaton Safeway and Wheaton Metro 100 Flyers – 3 hours

Wheaton Giant and surrounding small businesses 200 Flyers – 4 hours

Crossroads Farmers Market, 4 hours, talked to 74 people, distributed 60 postcards, and 10 people took the survey in person.

The Rio or the Crown in Gaithersburg 3 hours - 80

Rockville Metro & targeted neighborhoods 2 hours - 60 flyers

Silver Spring Metro 2 hours - 80 flyers

International Food Festival in Downtown Silver Spring at Veteran's Plaza 1.5 hours – 80 flyers

Recommended Changes to Thrive Montgomery 2050

General

- For all plan chapters, the “How will we evaluate progress?” sections need to include establishing specific targets for equity outcomes - for example: Establish criteria to support black owned businesses recruitment and retention
- After revising Thrive: Revisit with low-income and BIPOC communities to make sure communities can support the policies before passing the document
- Allow more time and resources to complete drafting RESJ Review language
- Conduct a housing study that will seek to address displacement fears by community, determine how to achieve growth targets, and identify barriers to successful implementation
- Establish working relationships with Communities that prioritize participatory planning and delegate power to vulnerable communities

Compact Growth

- Focus density near transit stations
- When new development comes, efforts need to be made to ensure that the existing community benefits in a significant and meaningful way. Community Benefit Agreements need to have accountability mechanisms and follow up to measure outcomes
- Partner compact growth with social work that helps residents access housing affordability resources.
- Create policy framework to ensure that BIPOC businesses are accessing opportunities in new development(s)
- In existing low-income areas, prioritize development of parks, open-space and institutional uses to support improved property values.
- If market rate housing is going to be built in areas with naturally occurring affordable housing, strong tools to prevent displacement are needed
- Design a clear growth management strategy to protect communities of color from displacement and overcrowding
- Neighborhood stabilization and conservation strategies for communities of color

Complete Communities

Planning must seek to strengthen existing communities to make them complete. Social networks should be leveraged, and institutions strengthened.

- Work with County to set up incentives for workforce development youth + adult
- Leverage partnerships to increase education access
- Identify way to improve access to recreational programming, jobs, and education for young people 16-24
- Incentives for BIPOC entrepreneurs + pathways to contracts
- Invest in racial equity

Design, Arts, and Culture: Investing and Building Community

- Leverage rich diversity in the County, especially in places like Silver Spring, Rockville, Gaithersburg, and Germantown.
 - Explore ways to celebrate “Diversity Hubs” in Montgomery County as places to reinforce inclusion.
- Invest in urban design and architecture that promotes safe communities and civic pride
 - Consider CPTED or other standards to encourage safe/welcoming public spaces
- Discourage walls and buffers which keep communities disconnected
- Create official channels for BIPOC artists, neighbors, and businesses owners to come together to provide input on arts and culture
- Create training, internship, and jobs programs for local artists, specifically local BIPOC artists, to get jobs in advancing public arts and culture.
- Prioritize inclusion of racial minorities and immigrants in public placemaking to help nurture a sense of culture which celebrates all residents
- Invest in urban design that allows communities to adapt to climate change and extreme weather patterns. Pair these plans with long-term maintenance plans to detail plans for maintenance, key players involved, and populations impacted by these plans.
- Sustainable Urban Design needs to be accompanied by formal guidance that ensures equitable use of design technique, sustainable materials, and investment in sustainable infrastructure in all neighborhoods, regardless of the demographic composition of a neighborhood.
- Create plans to specifically reuse existing viable buildings to support BIPOC entrepreneurs access affordable spaces for small local businesses.

Transportation and Communication Networks

- Improve access to the Ag reserve and urban centers, from neighborhoods through Multi-Modal Transit
- Subsidize the cost of shared mobility options for residents with limited access to train stations or bus stops.
- Encourage mixed-use zoning to integrate a balance of parking options to accommodate car-dependent residents
- Encourage Antiracism, accessibility, and implicit bias training for transportation officials, including decision makers, planners, agency leaders, and bus and train conductors.
- Address issues faced by commuters travelling to/from outside of the County for work through regional collaboration
- Consider exemptions for policies such as congestion pricing and reduced parking for low-income and BIPOC communities
- Look at ways to address the costs of transit
- Consider creating land uses such as lots for essential vehicles
- Improve communication to address anxiety over changes
- Identify strategies and partnerships to help address the “digital divide” bringing free networked resources to vulnerable communities

Housing for All

- Encourage establishment of rent to own programs and create systems to educate homeowners on how to protect and enhance their investments.
- Make home improvement and maintenance incentives available to low income property owners who spend a certain proportion of their income on housing costs.
- Weatherization programs will help with County’s sustainability goals and improve health outcomes for residents. Prioritize making grant dollars and incentives available to low income families to improve their indoor environmental quality and overall resource management.
- Integrate high-income neighborhoods by identifying a threshold of low-income housing which supports the local economy – enough housing should be provided to ensure that people who work in retail, service and other low wage earning employment sectors have the option not to commute.
- Develop a zoning and design strategy which allows different housing types to be built and high income (primarily single family) areas that will preserve existing property values through careful design and allow for low income residents to live with dignity.

- **Missing Middle:** Based on the observed trend over time of the widening wealth gap between economic elites and the working class, it is doubly important importance to ensure that future development makes room for the growing low to moderate income class. New development should preserve at least 15 to 20% of units for the lowest income earners, but also set aside at least 20% for low to moderate income households i.e. Workforce housing that people earning standard wage jobs can afford.
- Promote and expand inclusionary zoning with tools such as density bonuses and reduced parking requirements for developers that build affordable housing
- Develop system for measuring outcomes to ensure that initiatives put in place to help communities of color are having intended outcomes.
- Increase checks and balances to offset the personal bias that impacts programs meant to help people of color but end up causing problems due to inadequate safeguards.
- Reestablish the River Road Growth Corridor to provide opportunities for low-moderate income housing development.
- Identify new mechanisms to provide supportive housing for vulnerable residents, with a special focus on those who may be ageing out of youth programs (18-24)
- Advocate on the state and federal level of funding to support development of low-income housing
- Identify and inventory existing areas that have private restrictive covenants and work with state to address
- Work with lenders to make capital available to BIPOC and low-income first-time home buyers
 - identify subsidies to support down payment and weatherization
 - integrate green systems opportunities (solar, water, etc.)
- Identify Affordable housing targets and create realistic measures to reach them
- Preserve naturally occurring affordable housing
- Develop social and cooperative housing
- Strengthen strategies to deal with unsheltered populations
- Strengthen strategies aimed at foreclosure prevention
- Increase developer impact fees if the economic case can be made

Parks, Recreation, and Natural Resources

- Establish clear environmental thresholds and targets with a focus on improving access to parks and enhancing environmental quality and resource management in communities of color
- Inventory and establish plan to address environmental justice issues

Racial Equity and Social Inclusion

- Conduct analysis to determine social and economic costs of past discriminatory practices to develop an implementation plan to address the legacies of racism. This should serve as a baseline for determining what reparations might look like.
- Capital Improvement Program should be aligned with Thrive
 - Ensure the priority is given to projects that show benefit to vulnerable communities. Address the most serious 'wounds' first.
- Protect and preserve historic African-American and Indigenous sites
- Encourage distribution of assets and resources that reflects a prioritization of historically disadvantaged residents, giving them a chance to "catch-up" and level the proverbial playing field.
- Establish programs and policies which create opportunities for vulnerable groups to participate more fully in business opportunities
- Look for opportunities to improve outcomes for vulnerable communities through regional partnerships and collaboration
- Hospitality and Life Sciences cluster
 - Work to achieve a way in for low-income and minority residents through partnerships and workforce development opportunities
- Identify opportunities for Capacity Building to increase the capacity for Target communities to have meaningful participation
 - Create pathways into the planning profession for local people of color from diverse communities

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Racial Equity and
Social Justice

Plan Chapter

Introduction

Planning for Racial Equity and Social Justice

Urban Planning is the process by which communities build consensus around a shared vision for the future. Planning, like other tools, must be wielded carefully or its use can unintentionally [or intentionally] establish far-reaching consequences that disadvantage those who are not fully considered during the process...

Context

The modern planning profession was born out of social movements like the 'Tenement House Reform' movement which broadly exposed substandard living conditions endured by immigrant and working-class residents in New York City in the late 19th century. The resulting Tenement House Act of 1901 established one of the first laws governing how buildings should be constructed and regulated to account for human health and safety. Since that time, countless academics, organizers, politicians, and agitators alike have contributed to establishing urban planning as the 'epistemological field of study' which informs how so many of the decisions that impact our lives are made. Planning is the tool that the state wields when exercising its 'police power' to regulate and govern the development of land and infrastructure through plans, codes, and ordinances, and their associated administrative processes. As such, planning decisions have significant and cross-cutting impacts; how and where things are built (or not built) directly correlates to the physical quality of place and the quality of life for inhabitants. It is precisely because of the tremendous importance of planning why **who** gets to participate in the planning process matters so much in determining future outcomes.

Historically, there has frequently been an atmosphere of distrust around planning because there are often limited opportunities for everyday citizens to participate and truly be empowered in making the important decisions regarding the future growth and development of their communities. This dynamic is compounded by a legacy of exclusion reinforced through racism and classism. Generally speaking, power and decision-making authority in planning has been reserved for those with either direct political access, or those with privileges associated with wealth, education, race, and/or social status. This imbalance has contributed to a dynamic where the interests of 'capital' have often trumped the interest of the public good. While capitalism's market theory has its merits, one of its flaws is that there is no mechanism by which externalities (like pollution) get paid for. Planning's prescriptions are designed to correct for market failure[s] when the market is not able to correct itself. As such, planning is one of the primary tools available to us to deal with the problems of racial inequities and social injustices, which most often show up in the form of segregation, poverty, and its associated impacts.

This chapter will seek to identify how Montgomery County can improve the overall quality of life for ALL residents, deliberately achieve [more] equitable outcomes, and unwrite past injustices which adversely impact historically disadvantaged and vulnerable communities.

Survey before Plan

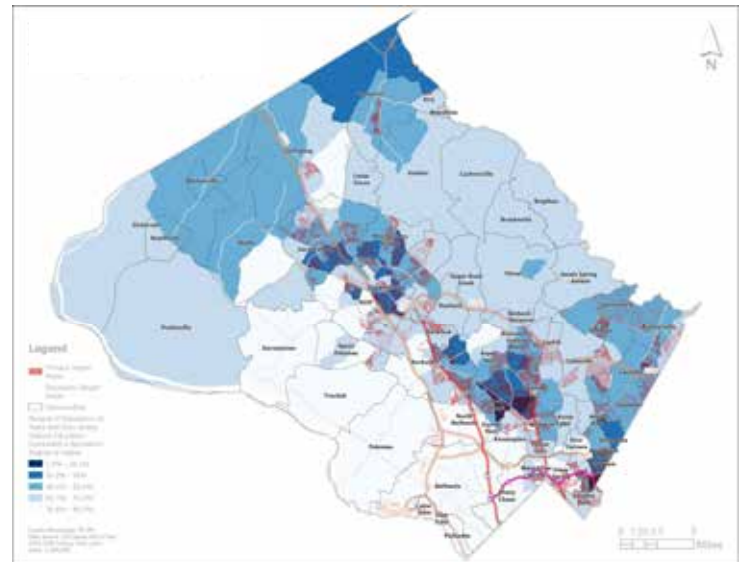
Foundational to planning theory is the work of Patrick Geddes, a planning pioneer, who theorized that you must 'survey before you plan'. The underlying idea is that before you can apply a prescription, you must thoroughly understand and diagnose the issues. Meaningful public engagement is the prerequisite to building the transparency, trust, and collaborative relationships with communities that are needed to establish the two-way learning process which supports holistic planning solutions. Without careful consultation with the community, it is unlikely that a comprehensive understanding of place can be achieved. John Forester, preeminent urban planning professor who writes on participatory planning processes emphasizes that the ears are the practitioners most useful tool, and that listening [is] the most important planning exercise.

Two Americas

During the Civil Rights Movement, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. gave a speech about the "Two Americas" which highlighted the legacy of racial and economic oppression and the plight of poor people and how their lived experiences juxtapose with the promise of America as the land of opportunity, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Unfortunately, for the decades since this speech was given there are still significant swaths of the black, indigenous and other people of color (BIPOC) communities that continue to be 'stuck' in cyclical poverty. The persistent challenges of social and economic mobility is clearly highlighted in the land use and economic patterns observed in Montgomery County, today.

In 2022, across America, we are still seeing communities of color disproportionately dealing with eroding infrastructure, substandard living conditions, and environmental justice issues like unsafe drinking water. These neighborhoods do not exist by coincidence, they were 'carved out' on the map, years ago, by people who wielded the 'dark side' of planning's power.

Too often, when these communities are finally paid attention, the original residents are displaced and unable to benefit. The cycle of divestment and real estate speculation in communities of color has been well documented over time, making 'Gentrification' one of the hottest issues impacting urban America today.



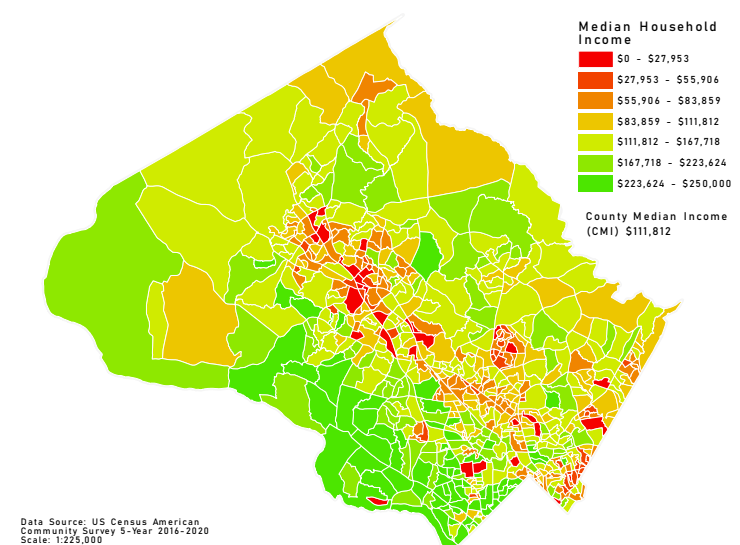
Educational Attainment

This map depicts Educational Attainment by showing, at the census tract level, the percent of the population 25 years and over who has at least obtained a bachelor's degree.

Census tracts with the low proportions (20.2%-36%) of those holding a bachelor's degree or higher are concentrated in tracts within Germantown, Montgomery Village, and Gaithersburg.

The Rock Creek, Wheaton, and Oakview communities have tracts with the lowest proportion (1.4%-20.1%) of the population holding a bachelor's degree or higher.

The tracts with lowest concentrations of educational attainment are also those that overlay the primary and secondary target areas with high concentrations of BIPOC and LMI residents.



Median Household Income

It is no coincidence that the Median Household Income map "follows" the education attainment map. The highly educated communities in East County far outpace incomes in other parts of the County.

Racial Equity

Racial equity work seeks to **heal**; implementation of its ideals requires an honest and careful examination of history to inform deliberate actions aimed at repairing past injustices which have disproportionately impacted black and indigenous communities in America. The legacy of racist policies, and the land-uses they influenced reverberate throughout the entire spectrum of communities of color with Latin/x, Asian, and other BIPOC communities experiencing different, but familiar challenges as their predecessors. Addressing racial equity requires an honest look at root causes of social problems and recognizing that some form of restitution is required to fix them.

To make planning more equitable we have to acknowledge the systems of racial discrimination and privilege which reinforce disparate outcomes for Montgomery County households. Planning alone cannot end racism and segregation, or prevent the erosion of cultural communities that wish to remain intact, it can however be an important tool to begin the work of dismantling long-established systems of privilege.

Social Justice

In a planning sense, wealth affords you the opportunity for exclusion: to live in an environment where you do not have to interact with poor people. However, due to the time value of money, the compound nature of wealth creation, and other factors the wealth gap between 'haves' and 'have-nots' is growing. This imbalance creates a strain on society which makes it unstable.

Social justice is a process by which working class people begin to access the privileges only enjoyed by the historically privileged class[es], to afford healthy lifestyles and to experience education and built environments which inspire them to lead happier and more productive lives. In modern times, this is becoming increasingly important as more and more people are finding it hard to thrive economically. As the County plans for the future, special attention needs to be paid to the hidden costs of poverty and determine ways to design communities to reduce problems associated with public health, crime, housing instability, food insecurity, and segregation.

“Overcoming poverty is not a task of charity, it is an act of justice. Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings.” – Nelson Mandela

Justice in Planning

A Right to the City?

The right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city. It is, moreover, a common rather than an individual right since this transformation inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanization. The freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves is, I want to argue, one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights (Harvey 23).

Property and Pacification

Quality of urban life has become a commodity, as has the city itself, in a world where consumerism, tourism, cultural and knowledge-based industries have become major aspects of the urban political economy. The postmodernist penchant for encouraging the formation of market niches—in both consumer habits and cultural forms—surrounds the contemporary urban experience with an aura of freedom of choice, provided you have the money. Shopping malls, multiplexes and box stores proliferate, as do fast-food and artisanal market-places. We now have, as urban sociologist Sharon Zukin puts it, ‘pacification by cappuccino’ (Harvey 31).

Source: David Harvey, *Rebel Cities*

As inflation heats up, 64% of Americans are now living paycheck to paycheck

PUBLISHED TUE, MAR 8 2022 8:40 AM EST
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Jessica Dickler
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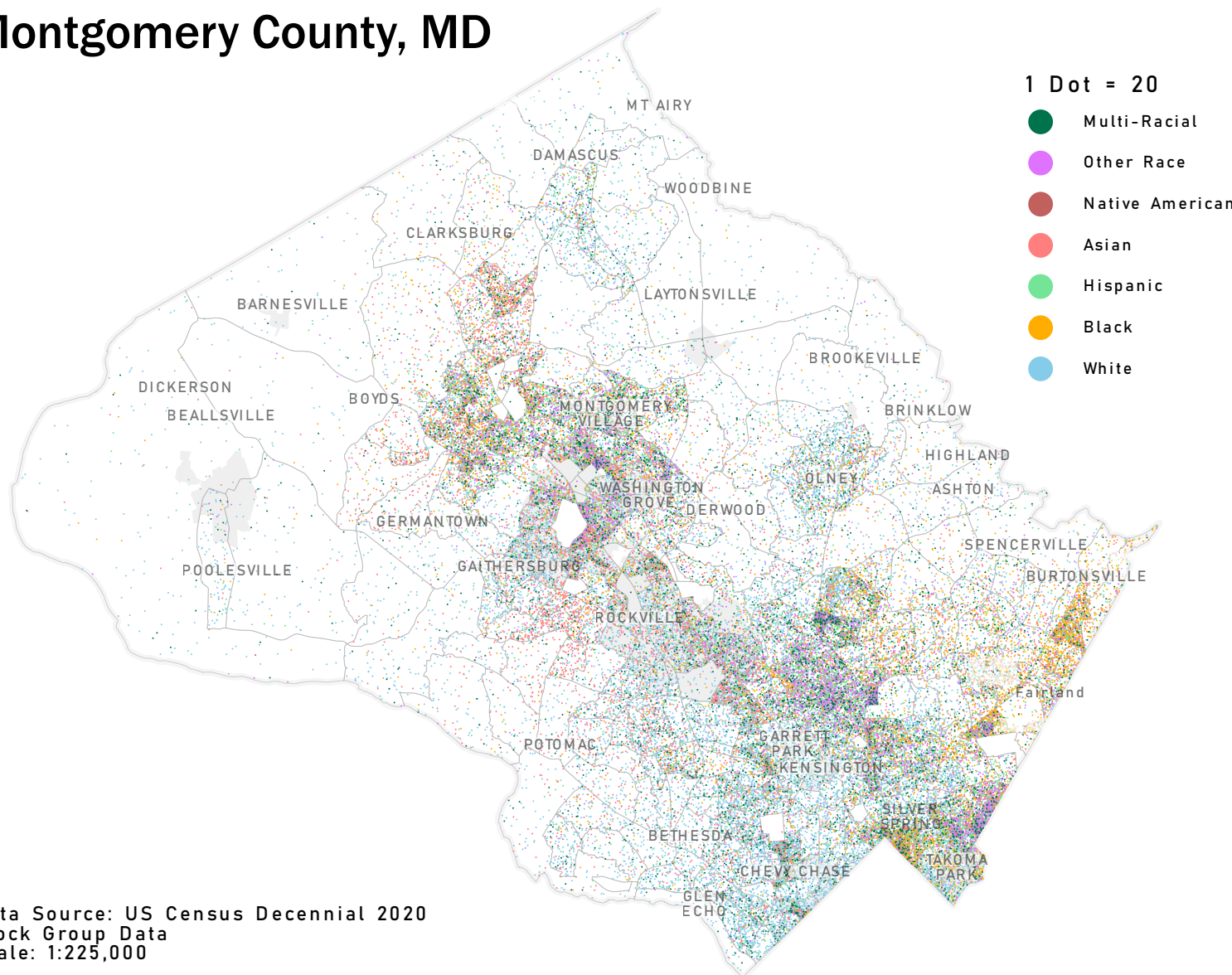
WATCH LIVE

KEY POINTS

- The increased cost of living is straining households nearly across the board.
- Almost two-thirds of Americans are now living paycheck to paycheck, according to one report.

Source: CNBC, Life Changes

Montgomery County, MD



Race & Ethnicity

This dot density map depicts the racial make-up of Montgomery County through showing the concentration and location of racial groups. The data, retrieved from the latest US Decennial census (2020), is depicted at the block group level with one dot representing twenty individuals. The order of racial groups was organized from least predominant to most predominant to ensure the visibility of less reoccurring dots and the representation of these groups. Some noticeable concentration of individual racial groups includes:

High representation of Whites in Glen Echo, Chevy Chase and Kensington;

High representation of Blacks in East Montgomery communities of Burtonsville, Fairland, Calverton, and Colesville;

High representation of Asians around Rockville, Gaithersburg, Germantown, and Clarksburg;

High representation of Hispanics around Montgomery Village, Washington Grove, Rockville, and Glenmont.

Areas like Silver Spring, Montgomery Village, Washington Grove, Wheaton, Glenmont, and Takoma Park contain a more diverse and concentrated population.

Areas that have greater density tend to have greater racial and ethnic diversity. In contrast, areas such as Boyds, Clarksburg, and Colesville has a diverse racial and ethnic make-up even at lesser densities.

Areas that have a high concentration of those identifying "Other Race" often also have those of more than one race or "Multi-Racial" close by.

Examining History (From Plan Draft)

After the Civil War, African Americans suffered from all forms of discrimination (social, housing, education, employment, commerce, health, etc.). The resulting alienation led to the creation of self-reliant kinship communities in many parts of Montgomery County in the late 19th century. A significant part of the history of racial injustice and discrimination suffered by African Americans includes the formation and subsequent decline (in some cases, destruction) of kinship communities in the early 20th century.

Over time, these communities suffered from lack of public investment in infrastructure such as new roads, sewer and water, schools, health clinics, and other public amenities and services needed to be viable places to live. Some communities suffered the devastating impacts of urban renewal policies of the 1960s. Others faced pressure to sell their houses or farms to developers for housing subdivisions. These communities declined because of an accumulation of racially-motivated actions paired with social, political, and economic circumstances. The very few of these communities that survived in some way include Ken-Gar in Kensington, Lyttonsville in Silver Spring, River Road in Bethesda, Scotland in Potomac, Stewartown in Gaithersburg, and Tobytown in Travilah.

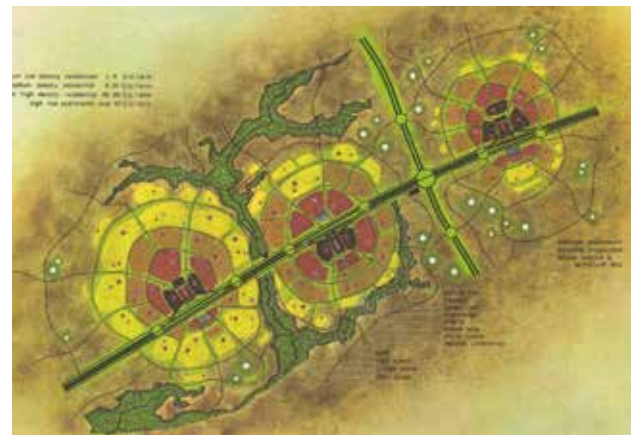
From the 1890s to the 1920s, the first suburban subdivisions in Silver Spring and Chevy Chase used racial covenants prohibiting African Americans and other racial and religious groups from purchasing land or homes. Well into the mid-20th century, these types of covenants were placed in the land records. Even after the passage of the Fair Housing Act of 1968 and the Community Reinvestment Act of 1977 to end these practices, a development pattern of segregation continued. Injustices were evident in unfair banking and lending practices; federal immigration policies; unequal public investment in schools, parks and other public facilities; and siting a disproportionately high number of undesirable uses, such as landfills, near communities of color.

In Montgomery County, the legacy of such discriminatory policies and the exclusionary zoning and other land use controls led to neighborhoods defined by income, race, and housing types. As a result of these practices and other societal factors, a significant quality of life gaps exist for various racial and ethnic groups in the county.

Urban renewal policies which may have been designed to address 'blight' were popularly coined "Negro removal" because the aftermath of efforts resulted in the disbandment of communities and created economic and social losses for African Americans and exacerbated psychological trauma.

On Wedges and Corridors (WAC)

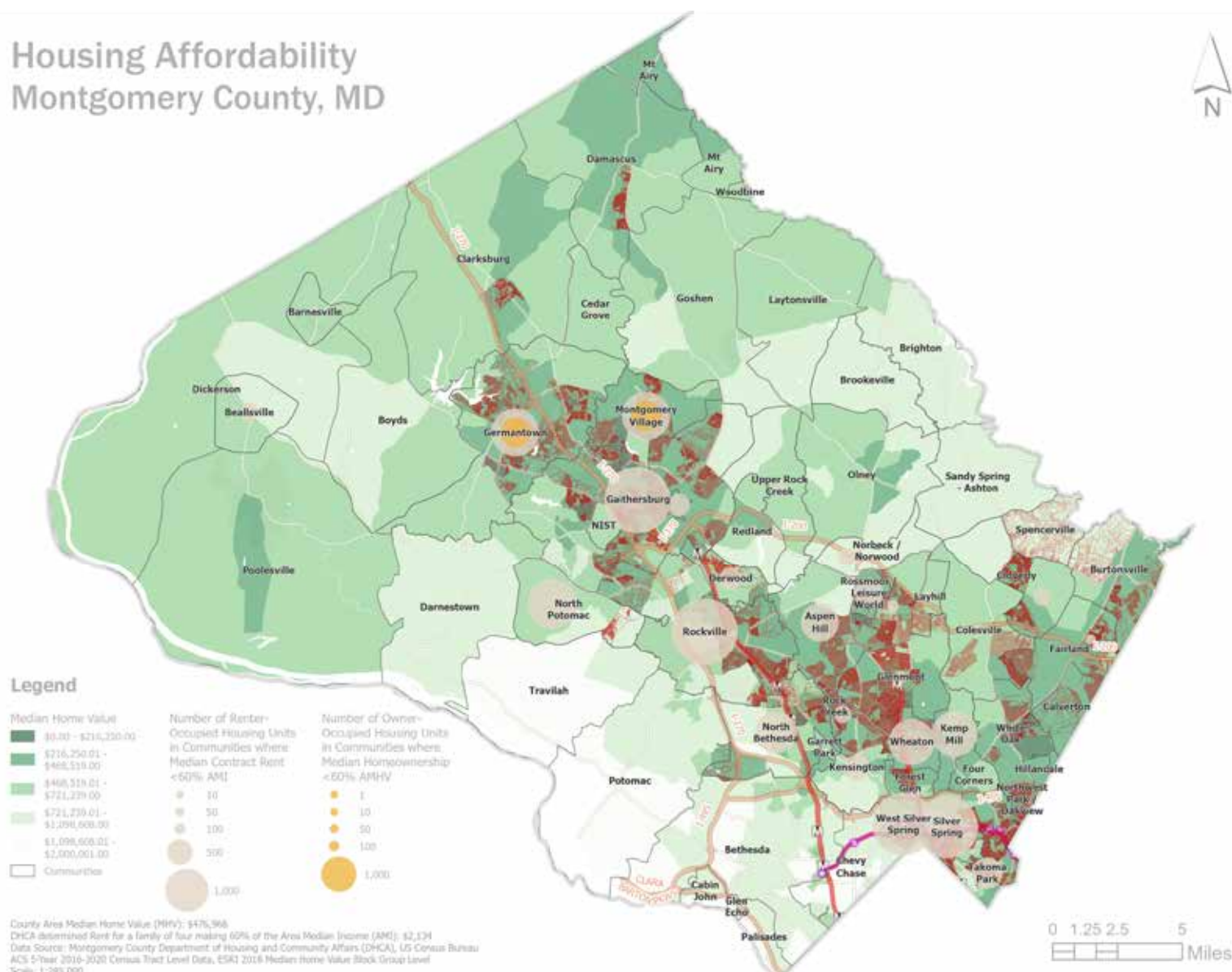
Thrive seeks to "modernize" the old Wedges and Corridors Plan. While it is prudent to not throw the proverbial "baby out with the bathwater," the WAC plan created "land use patterns... which left neighborhoods disconnected and reinforced segregation along racial and economic lines." If the old had plan adverse outcomes for historically disadvantaged groups, how do we address/mitigate its failures? What does "modernization" of the Wedges and Corridors Plan look like?



Wedges and Corridors Plan

To address segregation and economic inequality established in past zoning/land use planning, deliberate mechanisms need to be introduced to create racially and economically inclusive communities. Planning needs to consider social and economic consequences of efforts to integrate. Communities that face historic challenges need special attention paid to community development and stabilization to ensure that existing social networks and institutions are strengthened so that it is not harder for the existing community to survive in the reimagined one, but they feel a central part of it. Conversely, established areas need to create opportunities for less privileged to access the schools, jobs, natural resources, and other benefits through housing opportunity and improved physical access.

Housing Affordability Montgomery County, MD



Housing Affordability

This map depicts various layers including median home values, number of renter-occupied housing units where rent is less than 60-percent of area median income (AMI), and number of owner-occupied housing units where median homeownership is less than 60-percent of area median home value (AMHV). Data from the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCA) shows \$2,134 as the rent for a family of four making 60% of AMI.

High concentrations of homes with MHVs at or below the County MHV (\$476,966) appears to make up most of the housing stock of census tracts in Germantown, Montgomery Village, and Gaithersburg. Communities in east Montgomery County such as White Oak and Calverton also have MHVs at or below the County MHV (\$476,966).

The availability of affordable rental housing units, shown here as less than 60-percent of AMI, are shown most prominently in Gaithersburg, Rockville, Silver Spring, and West Silver Spring. Each of these communities have over a thousand units where rent is less than 60-percent of AMI.

Owner-occupied Housing Units with an AMHV less than the County AMHV (\$476,966) are only present in Germantown and Montgomery Village.

The data clearly shows that access to affordable housing is going to be one of the biggest challenges faced by Montgomery County in the future. As such, real planning innovation will be required to protect working families from displacement.

Housing

Thrive's housing prescriptions to address racial equity and social justice largely center on a strategy to integrate communities with high concentrations of minorities and/or poverty with new development that attracts multi-racial and higher income households into the area. The strategies seek to integrate (gentrify) communities while simultaneously protecting existing residents from displacement. The idea of development without displacement is an exciting one, but these ideas, in practice are often acting in direct opposition of each other. Development without deliberate community and neighborhood conservation efforts will almost certainly result in (some) displacement. So, instead of ignoring this possibility, let's determine where people can go. Undoubtedly, many residents who currently occupy a community where they have historical, cultural, spiritual, and other ties (kindship) will want to remain in their home community. However, there will be some residents who may like to move to a more affluent area. Traditionally, planning documents are written to support **Housing Choice** as a strategic goal for future outcomes. When we juxtapose this idea with regional housing markets, it would seem that in order to balance the integration of low-income neighborhoods, some accommodation for rebalancing should be made to ensure that economic benefits begin to reach historically disadvantaged populations. As such, integration should be a two-way process, by which there should be a parallel strategy of making accommodation for low-income housing in areas which are already wealthy and thus providing new residents who want the choice of living somewhere else to achieve immediate access to communities that have close proximity to jobs, good education, etc. If we are going to promote development in the growth areas with new market-rate housing, there should also be provision of new low-income housing in high income areas to allow for housing choice in different markets.

The justification for this strategy is doubled when you consider that to support economic competitiveness and sustainability Thrive's number one transportation priority is connecting low-income communities to job areas, but the housing strategy should also seek to provide workforce housing locally. Consequently, areas of high wealth and business activity such as Bethesda should also include sufficient workforce and low-income housing to support housing choices for people who work in the area. Future planning should conduct detailed market analysis of labor markets and determine thresholds by which area plans should promote low-income, workforce,

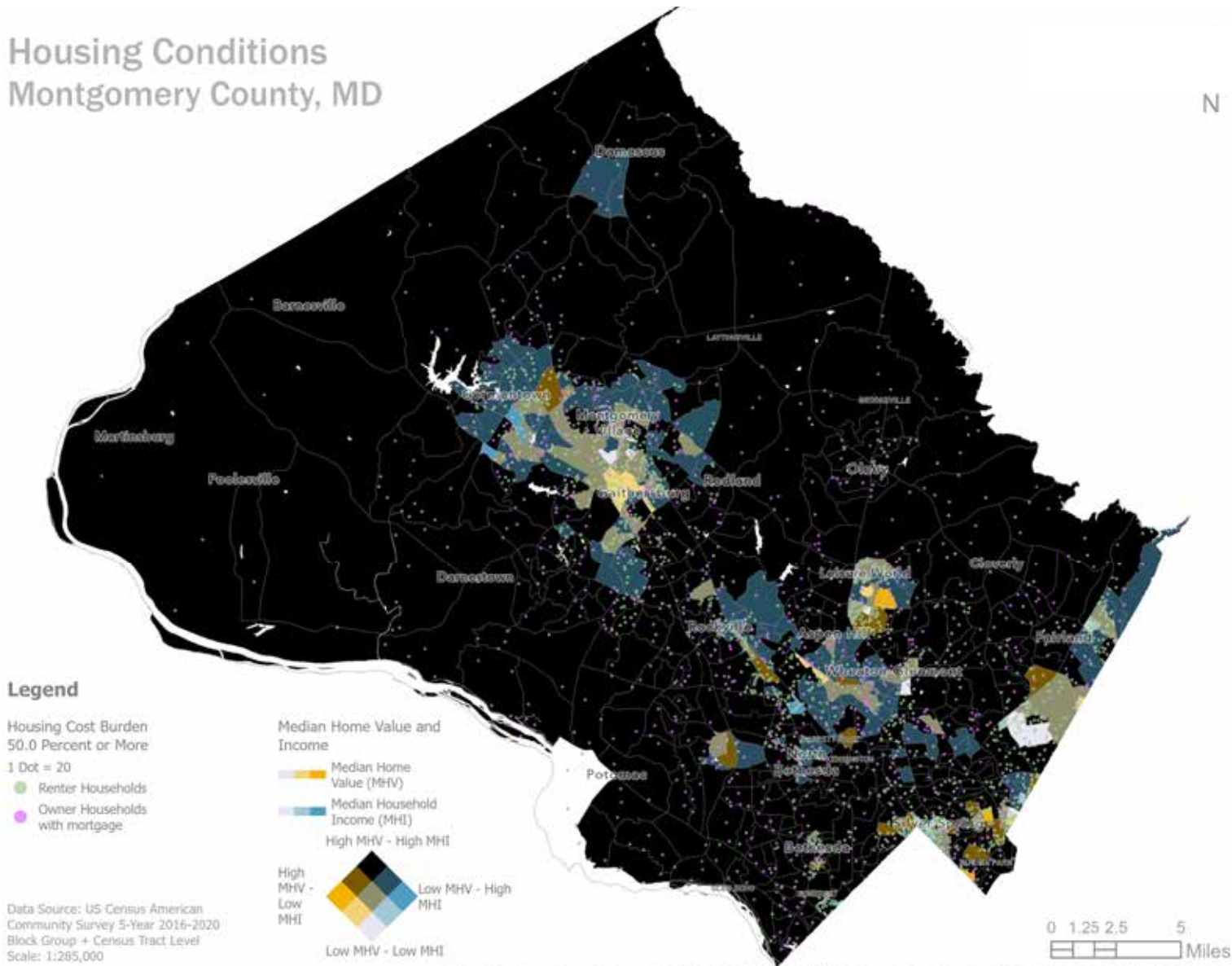
and middle-class housing options to support a truly local community where commuting is "optional" because the mathematical possibility of the local workforce is reflected in the housing availability.

In our first focus group meeting with black and brown residents in East County, we heard a story as old as planning itself: several residents were embroiled in a legal case about their substandard housing conditions and alleged that the building inspector meant to enforce quality controls was being paid off. Almost every conversation we initiated on plan topics somehow found a way to veer off into issues of safety, crime, and feelings of neglect...

Residents of Montgomery County shared lots of challenging stories about their housing experiences. It is clear that many of the mechanisms put in place to help them are being offset by personal bias (racism) in the system or by individual actors. The County will need to be vigilant to seek accountability for all actors. Successfully addressing racism in housing will require deliberate action and systems of checks and balances.

Increase access to safe, affordable housing and promote wealth-building by confronting historical and ongoing harms and disparities caused by structural racism.

Housing Conditions Montgomery County, MD



Housing Conditions

This map shows housing conditions in terms of areas with high-to-low ranges of median home value (MHV) compared to high-to-low median household income (MHI). The map also shows renter and owner households who are experiencing a housing cost burden of 50 percent or more, defined as extremely cost burdened by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCA). This means that 50 percent or more of a household's income is devoted to housing-related costs.

Census tracts that are approaching solid gold color represent high MHV and low MHI, an indicator of unaffordable housing. Tracts in Gaithersburg, Silver Spring, and Leisure World shows signs of this unaffordable housing.

Census tracts showing a light gray color represents low MHV and low MHI, an indicator for low income but also low-cost housing. Even so, households experiencing extreme housing cost burden may also be present in these tracts. Tracts in Montgomery Village, Glenmont, and White Oak exhibit these housing conditions with all of these showing a high incident of renter households experiencing extreme housing cost burden.

More urban areas like Montgomery Village, Gaithersburg, Silver Spring, and Germantown have high concentrations of renter household experiencing extreme housing cost burden.

More rural areas like Damascus, Olney, and Cloverly have higher instances of owner households experiencing extreme housing cost burden.

Compact Growth

Encouraging growth in already developed areas, has ripple effects. Density brings economic opportunity, but it can also degrade the quality of natural resources, parks, schools, and neighborhoods. If the majority of new development will occur in urban areas where existing naturally occurring affordable housing exists, special attention needs to be paid to ensure that as the population density increases, residents maintain equitable access to parks, recreation, natural resources, and high quality places which influence quality of life. Additionally, as density increases, increased consideration needs to be made towards maintenance and operations of public spaces and institutions to ensure that effective stewardship is achieved and maintained.

Environmental Justice

As the County grows, special attention will need to be paid to Environmental Justice issues. Undoubtedly, new residents will put a strain on infrastructure and sustainable practices will need to be implemented to ensure that the County is able to maintain good air and water quality, preserve urban tree canopy, manage stormwater, and invest in renewable sources of energy. Analysis of environmental quality shows that residents of the Target Areas where the majority of BIPOC and Low-Income residents live are more likely to be exposed to poor environmental conditions and live next to polluting land uses. As we look towards the future, and grapple with issues like climate change we need to be deliberate in protecting the County's vulnerable residents to ensure they do not have their life challenges compounded by disproportionate exposure to environmental threats.

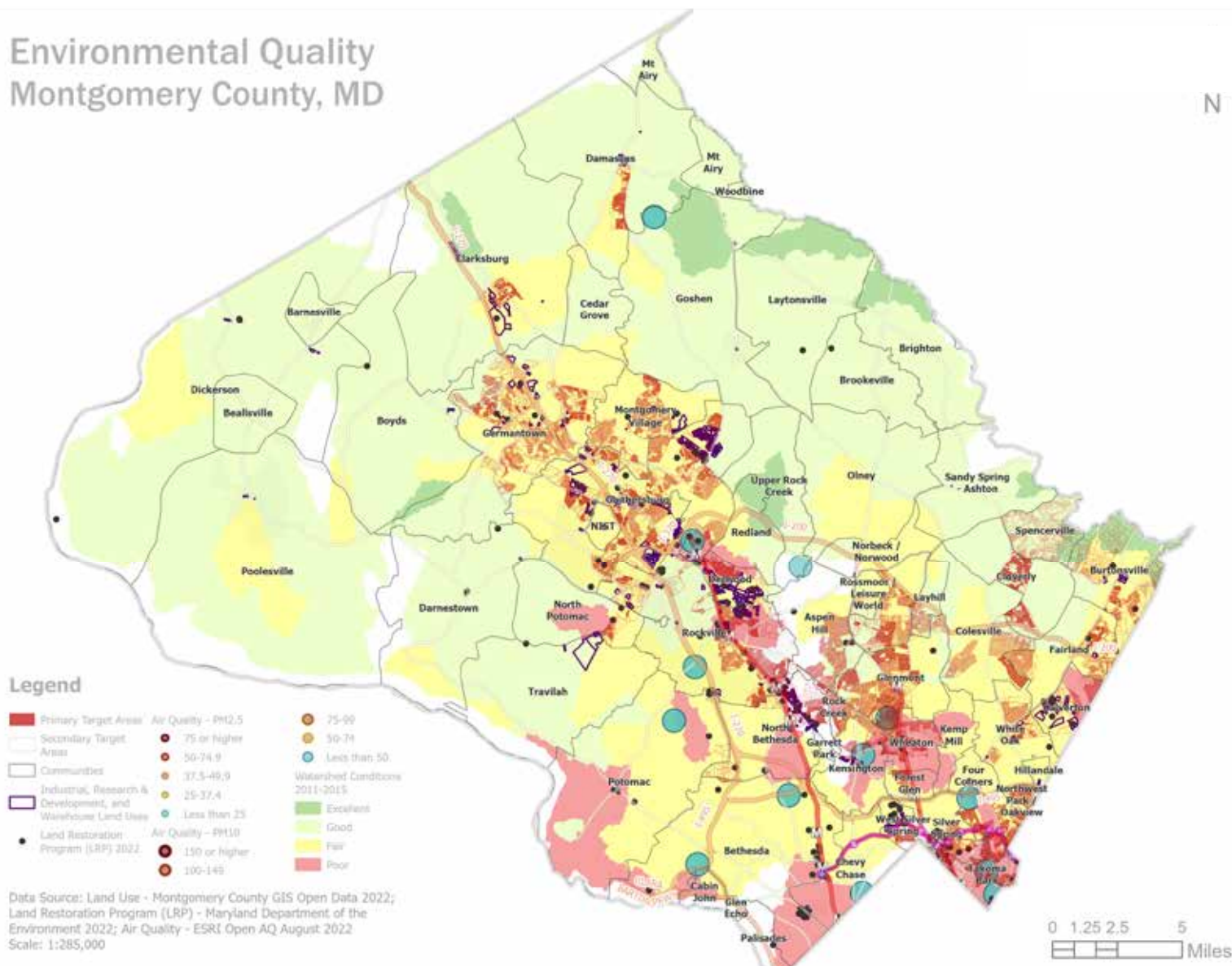
Transportation

The plight of the working class and many BIPOC people we talked to felt that the needs of working class families were not considered in the planning themes of Thrive. They felt that many of the “progressive” policies did not consider their current status in life and expressed how proposed changes would adversely impact their quality of life. Some people showed great resistance to the idea of '15-minute living' because they relied on their work vehicles to take them to different parts of the county where they had access to jobs. Many expressed that they rely on vehicle miles and parking availability to make a living. For some, getting a vehicle represented the possibility of financial independence. To others, the idea of riding a bike for leisure or to commute was seen as a luxury that comes with a level of economic empowerment they did not have yet. These sentiments are compounded by the long commutes even more traditional workers faced while using locally available transit options. There was a general sentiment that root issues needed to be addressed before new ideas could be successfully implemented.

Instead of welcoming these ideas as positive, they are often seen as a harbinger for gentrification and displacement. Ideas such as congestion pricing and reduced parking requirements that promote “good urbanism” are sometimes outside of the reality for working class people. There is a concern that shifting to this new way of life will make it harder for them to survive and in some instances this is true.

"I can't take my ladder on the Purple Line" - Montgomery County Resident

Environmental Quality Montgomery County, MD



Environmental Quality

This map depicts various layers that make up environmental quality conditions within Montgomery County. The layers include watershed conditions taken from 2011 through 2015, air quality measurements of particulate matter 2.5 and particulate matter (PM) 10, industrial land uses, and sites that qualify for the land restoration program (LRP).

A majority of the primary and secondary target areas are located within watersheds that are in fair to poor condition.

Target areas within watersheds experiencing poor conditions, like those in Derwood and Rockville, are adjacent to areas with industrial, research & development, and warehouse land uses. This land use category is associated with the processing of raw materials and hazardous substances, movement of heavy vehicles, and high impervious surfaces; functions that typically contribute to generation of pollutants, run-off, and poor watershed quality.

Target areas are also clustered around Land Restoration Program (LRP) sites, brownfield areas that are identified by the State of Maryland for restoration.

PM2.5 and PM10 values, as captured by the air quality monitors stationed throughout the County, show consistently low concentrations of particulate matter regardless of urban and rural typology.

Social Capital

In order for a shared sense of purpose to exist, it is not a one-way process. Communities where wealthy white residents are the norm also have to achieve integration and inclusivity. It could be argued that it is in fact more important for these communities to begin to see their communities as having a shared sense of purpose instead of only addressing racial and economic inequality at the "problem" side of the spectrum. Part of the inequality equation is the exclusivity of the wealthy, some of these doors need to start being opened to truly create a shared sense of purpose and belonging for ALL County residents. Exclusivity reinforces the racial and class divides within society.

Cultural Competence

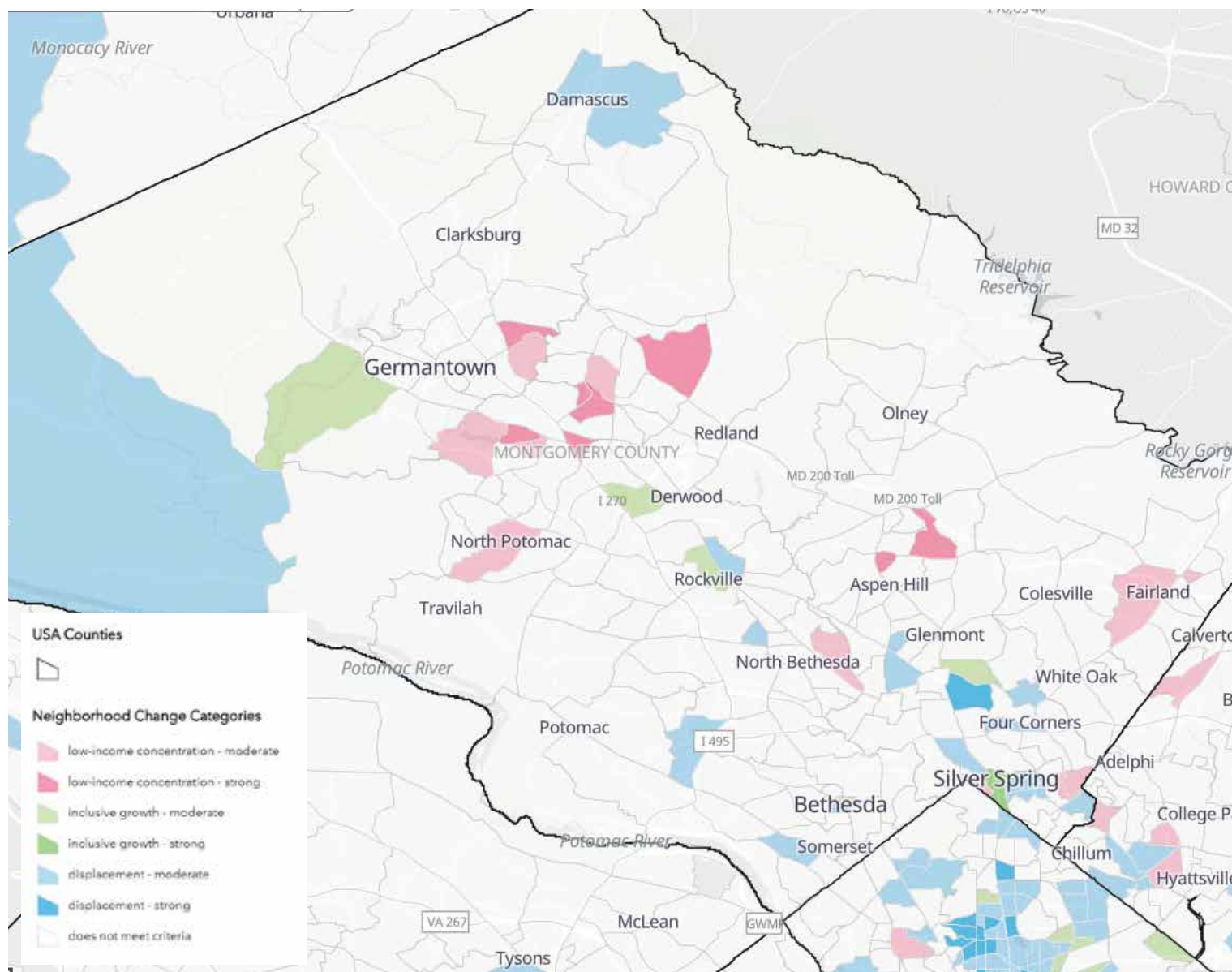
It is vital to have practitioners who can relate to the communities they serve. In executing planning in communities of color, practitioners must lead with deference. Being able to understand cultural cues and nuance plays a large role in comprehension and meaningful engagement. If communities feel that they are not being respected or understood, real conversations will not occur.

Community Development

The County has a tremendous opportunity, with Thrive, to develop partnerships with its communities that it can leverage to rebuild trust, strengthen relationships, and celebrate everything that is great about the region. Montgomery County has had success with diversifying by implementing inclusionary zoning in the 70's and 80's. Now, it is important to do the work to protect the existing communities. Planning should seek to leverage and strengthen the existing social networks and identify opportunities to empower local actors to be directly involved in the work of community development.

Economic Empowerment

Throughout the public engagement process, it was clear that displacement is a big fear for residents with less means, as they are witnessing escalating [home] prices. The vast majority of working class people expressed that they want access to better education and economic opportunity. Most people who struggle to make 'ends meet' prioritize economic advancement as their number one priority and planning for their communities should reflect that reality.



Neighborhood Change and Displacement Risk

The Montgomery County Planning Department is engaged in important work to understand the displacement risk in the County. These types of analysis need to be leveraged to understand how to protect neighborhoods and encourage Inclusive Growth. Across the board, low-income and BIPOC residents are very worried about displacement as a result of new development. More work needs to be put into understanding how to preserve naturally occurring affordable housing and establishing new affordable housing to ensure that Montgomery County doesn't lose the rich diversity, both racial and economic, to make it a complete community. If housing conditions continue on their trajectory, it is quite feasible that Montgomery County will cease to be a bedroom community, but a community that requires commuters from outside the region to staff its businesses. This dynamic would be in opposition to both the Equity and Sustainability goals of Thrive.

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Thrive Montgomery 2050:

General Plan for the County

Racial Equity and Social Justice Review

WHAT IS THRIVE MONTGOMERY 2050?

Thrive Montgomery 2050 (Thrive 2050) is the new countywide general plan developed by the Montgomery County Planning Department. The plan will guide future growth and development over the 30 years. Thrive 2050 will influence future land use, transportation, social, and economic decisions. **Learn more about this project at bit.ly/Thrive2050Engage.**

WHAT ARE WE DOING?

We are conducting an analysis of the themes in Thrive 2050 as they relate to racial equity and social justice. This summer, we are connecting with Black, Indigenous, and other people of color (BIPOC), as well as people from low-moderate income backgrounds to understand their needs and aspirations related to housing, transportation, urban development, design, and arts & culture in Montgomery County.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

You can participate in the following ways:



Take the Survey

Take the survey and enter a raffle for a chance to win one of the 300+ gift cards (\$10 or \$50). The survey takes approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Join a Focus Group

A member of our team will contact you if you are selected to participate. **Participants will receive a \$50 gift card. In person focus group will also include food and beverage.**



Check Council's Website

Check out Montgomery Council's Website to learn more about project updates and upcoming events, including the community forum.

Thrive Montgomery 2050:

Un plan general para el condado

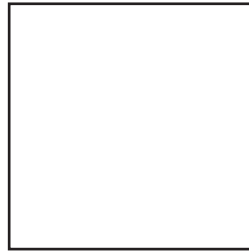
Evaluación de Equidad Racial y Justicia Social

¿QUE ES THRIVE 2050?

Thrive Montgomery 2050 es el nuevo plan general para el condado. El plan es un documento que guiara el crecimiento y desarrollo por los proximos 30 anos. Thrive 2050 influyera decisiones en el uso y desarrollo de la tierra, el transporte , y problemas sociales & economicos. **Visite bit.ly/Thrive2050Engage.**

¿QUE ESTAMOS HACIENDO?

Estamos haciendo una evaluación del documento de Thrive 2050 con un enfoque en equidad racial y justicia social. Para completar esta evaluación estamos hablando con personas que se identifican como personas negras, indígenas, o de color, igual que con personas que tienen pocos recursos económicos. Los resultados de la evaluacion informaran el desarrollo de un capitulo nuevo del plan que se enfocará en equidad racial y justicia social en el condado. **Usted puede ayudar al participar en las proximas actividades!**



Complete la Encuesta

Al completar la encuesta en su totalidad usted puede entrar en la rifa para ganar una **de las 300+ tarjetas de regalo (\$10 y \$50).**

Participe en un grupo de discussion

Complete la forma para inscribirse y un miembro de nuestro equipo lo contactará si es seleccionado. **Participantes recibirán una tarjeta de regalo de \$50.**





Thrive Montgomery 2050: General Plan for the County

Racial Equity and Social Justice Review

Thrive Montgomery 2050 (Thrive 2050) is the new countywide general plan developed by the Montgomery County Planning Department. Thrive 2050 is a policy document that will guide future growth and development over the next 30 years. Thrive 2050 will influence future land use, transportation, social, and economic decisions in Montgomery County. Montgomery County Council has contracted with Nspiregreen to work with the County and its residents to evaluate the current Planning, Housing, and Economic Development ("PHED") Committee draft of Thrive Montgomery 2050.

Central to this effort will be conducting a comprehensive analysis of the planning themes in Thrive 2050 as they relate to issues of racial equity and social justice. Our public outreach efforts will seek to connect with Black, Indigenous, other 'People of Color' (BIPOC), and low-moderate income communities to gather input on the current draft of Thrive 2050. The outcome of this work will be to propose recommendations on how to revise the current draft of Thrive 2050 to achieve better outcomes for marginalized populations in the County. Recommendations will be summarized in a new plan chapter on racial equity and social justice.

This project aims to ensure that historically disadvantaged and vulnerable social groups are accurately and carefully represented in the Thrive 2050 plan. Feedback from engagement activities will assess the strengths and weaknesses of the current planning process and develop new recommendations on how to improve Thrive 2050 and center issues of Racial Equity and Social Justice in all of the significant plan areas:



COMPACT GROWTH:
Corridor Focused Development



COMPLETE COMMUNITIES:
Mix of Uses and Forms



HOUSING FOR ALL:
More of Everything



**PARKS & REC FOR AN
INCREASINGLY URBAN &
DIVERSE COMMUNITY:**
Active & Social



DESIGN, ARTS & CULTURE:
Investing & Building Community



**TRANSPORTATION
& COMMUNICATION
NETWORKS:**
Connecting People,
Places, & Ideas

What we will do:

- Identify and conduct targeted outreach to BIPOC and low-moderate income populations
- Engage key stakeholders and representatives of target groups across the County
- Gather input through focus groups, surveys, forums and community conversations
- Recommend changes to Thrive 2050 based on input from BIPOC and low-income residents based on advancing racial equity and social justice
- Draft a new chapter on racial equity and social justice issues (historic and current) for Thrive Montgomery 2050

You can also learn more about Thrive 2050 by visiting our website at <https://bit.ly/Thrive2050Engage> or contact an outreach specialist at Thrive2050@gmail.com

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT!

PLEASE ADD YOUR VOICE TO THE PROCESS BY
COMPLETING OUR QUESTIONNAIRE:

[HTTPS://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ThriveSurvey](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ThriveSurvey)

[SCAN ME]



Participants will
have the chance
to win 1 of 300+
Gift Cards
(\$10 or \$50)



THRIVE
MONTGOMERY 2050
Let's Plan Our Future. Together.

RACIAL EQUITY & SOCIAL JUSTICE //

FOCUS GROUPS

What are we discussing today?

- 01. **Welcome – Project Overview**
- 02. **What is Thrive Montgomery 2050?**
- 03. **What are Complete Communities?**
- 04. **Exploring Thrive's Planning Methodology**
- 05. **Racial Equity & Social Justice**

Ground Rules

- 01. **Speak openly and honestly. One person speaks at a time.**
- 02. **Listen carefully and respectfully to each person**
- 03. **Stay focused on the topic**
- 04. **Silence your cell phone**

Project Overview

Nspiregreen is conducting a comprehensive analysis of the planning themes in Thrive Montgomery 2050 as they relate to issues of racial equity and social justice.

The goal of our public outreach efforts will seek to:

- Connect with Black, Indigenous, other 'People of Color' (BIPOC), and low-moderate income communities
- Gather input on the current draft of Thrive 2050
- Recommendations will be summarized in a summary report and new plan chapter on racial equity and social justice

What is Thrive Montgomery 2050?

What is Thrive Montgomery 2050?

Thrive Montgomery 2050 (Thrive 2050) is the new countywide general plan developed by the Montgomery County Planning Department.

Thrive 2050 is a policy document that will guide future growth and development over the next 30 years. Thrive 2050 will influence future land use, transportation, social, and economic decisions in Montgomery County.



Provides recommendations for land use decisions in the County.



Does not change zoning or other detailed land use regulations



It is flexible and adaptable to changing circumstances, such climate changes, population growth, public health issues, and emerging new technology

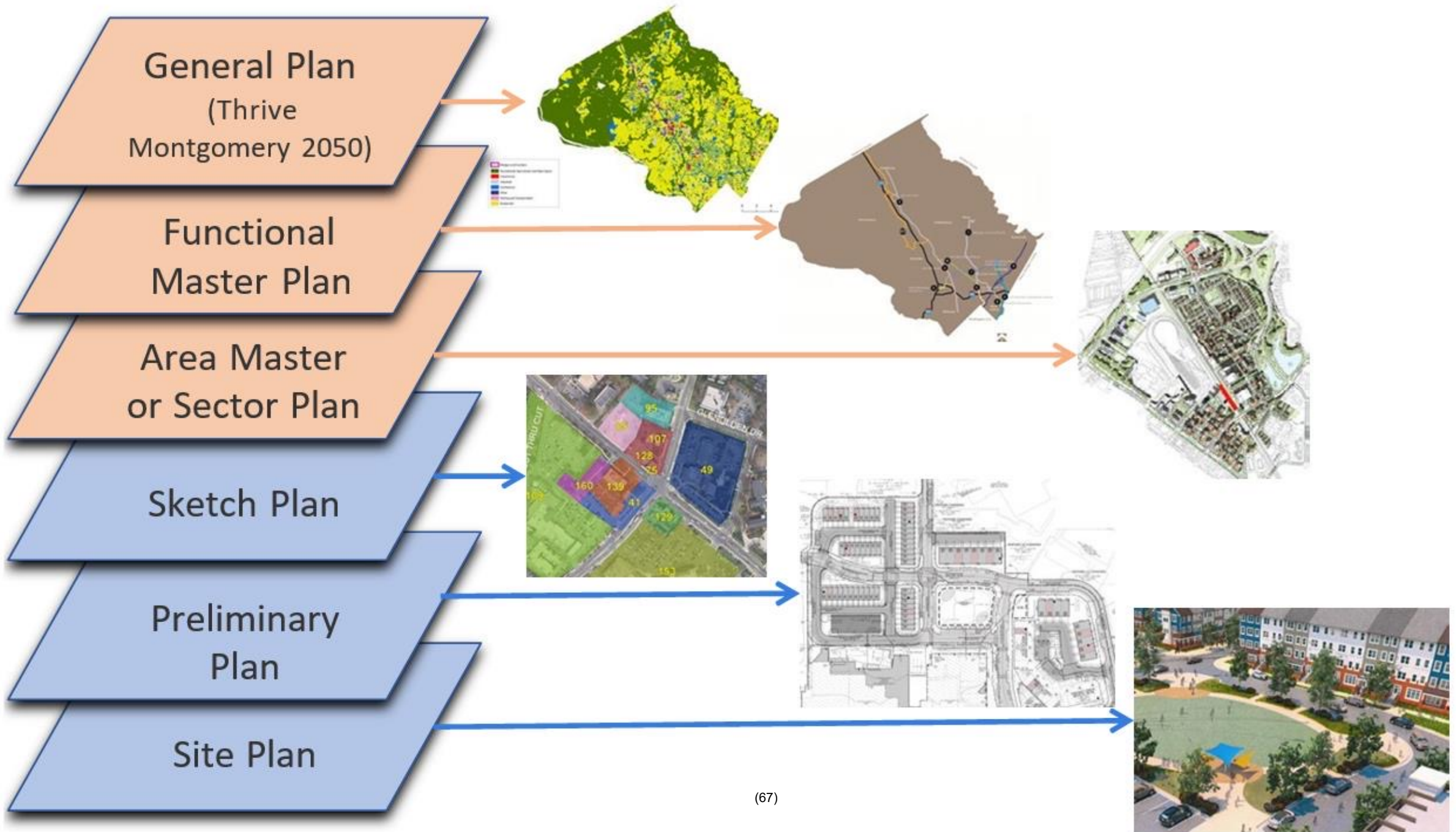


Does not abandon old planning, but seeks to modernize it to remain relevant

What is a general plan?

A general plan is a long-range guide for the development of a community; the blueprint to achieving the vision set by residents of a city or county.

This blueprint provides **broad guidance** for land-use decisions as communities face **unpredictable future opportunities** and challenges that influence growth and development such as **disruptions brought about by climate change, public health emergencies, and emerging technologies.**



Complete Communities

Complete Communities

Complete communities are places that include the range of land uses, infrastructure, services, and amenities that allow them to meet a wide range of needs for a variety of people. One of the goals is to establish “15-minute living” that allows local residents to live, work, and play in their immediate surroundings. **What makes a complete community?**

Housing

Transportation

Jobs &
Education

Public Health

Design,
Arts, &
Culture

Parks &
Recreation

Discussion Questions

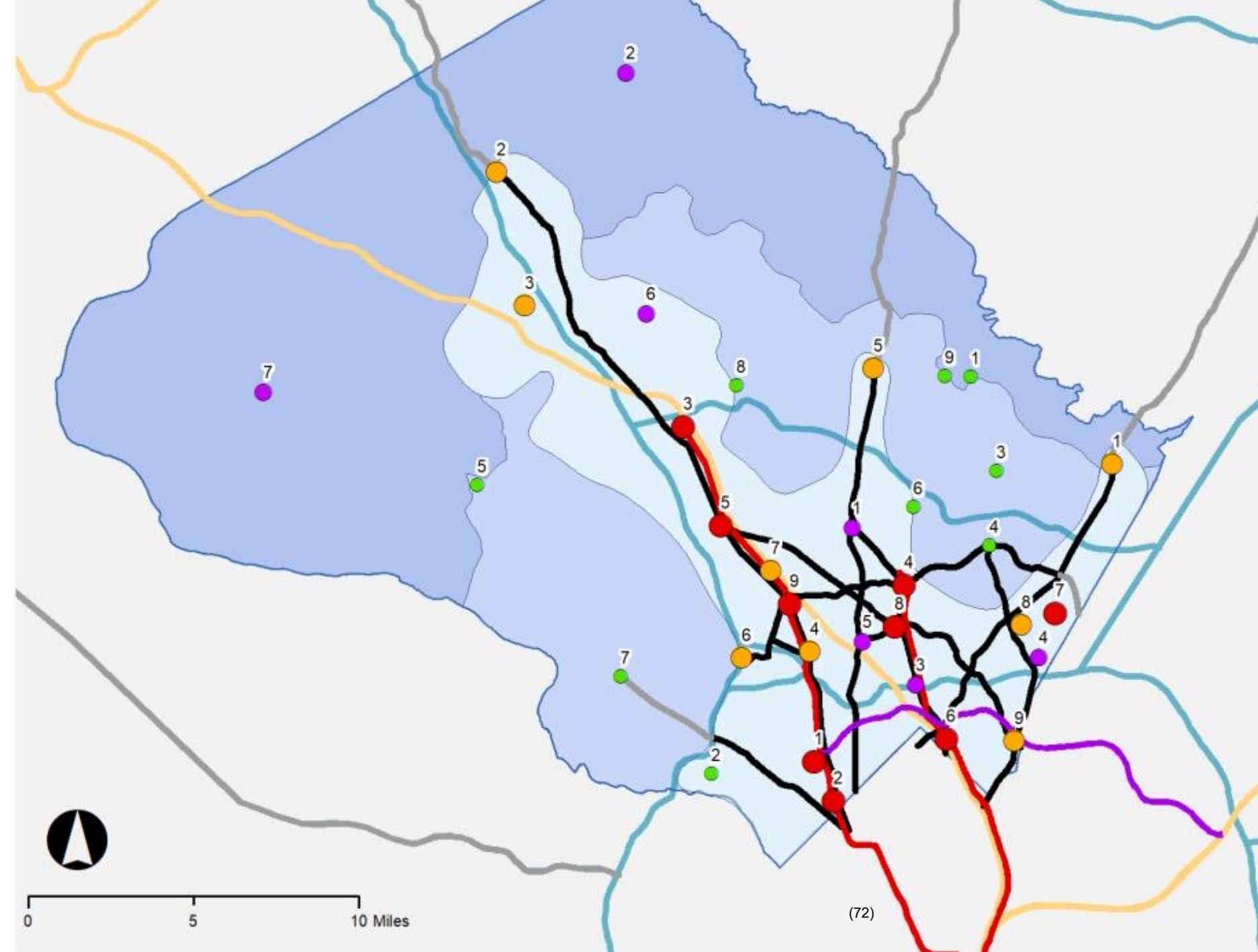
- What does a community need to be considered “complete”?
- Would you consider your community complete? Why or why not?

Compact Growth

Thrive Montgomery 2050 proposes redoubling and refining efforts to concentrate growth in downtowns, town centers, rural villages, and intensively developed centers of activity, or nodes, and a new commitment to promoting growth along major transportation corridors to maximize the efficient use of land and create Complete Communities.

Benefits of compact growth:

- Connects residents to existing and future centers of activity and complete communities.
- Create corridors that have robust transit service in place or planned or are located close to existing concentrations of jobs, services, and infrastructure in ways that lend themselves to create complete communities.



- Large Centers**
 - 1. Bethesda
 - 2. Friendship Heights
 - 3. Shady Grove
 - 4. Glenmont
 - 5. Rockville
 - 6. Silver Spring
 - 7. VIVA White Oak
 - 8. Wheaton
 - 9. White Flint
- Medium Centers**
 - 1. Burtonsville
 - 2. Clarksburg
 - 3. Germantown
 - 4. Grosvenor/Strathmore
 - 5. Olney
 - 6. Rock Spring
 - 7. Twinbrook
 - 8. White Oak/FDA
 - 9. Takoma/Langley
- Smaller Centers**
 - 1. Aspen Hill
 - 2. Damascus
 - 3. Forest Glen
 - 4. Hillandale
 - 5. Kensington
 - 6. Montgomery Village
 - 7. Poolesville
- Villages and Neighborhood Centers**
 - 1. Ashton
 - 2. Cabin John
 - 3. Cloverly
 - 4. Colesville
 - 5. Darnestown
 - 6. Layhill
 - 7. Potomac Village
 - 8. Redland
 - 9. Sandy Spring

Discussion Questions

- Do you agree that leveraging existing centers and corridors (compact development) is a good strategy for future development?

Housing - Issues

- **85% of land is already developed.**
- **Population is expected to increase by 200,000 over the next 30 years.**
- **33% is restricted to single family housing. New houses are bigger instead of smaller.**
- **High demand and low availability increase housing prices.**
- **Predominantly white people are able to access more expensive neighborhoods with better schools, jobs, and transportation.**

Do you feel that the housing issues outlined in Thrive 2050 are representative of the challenges in your home community?

Discussion Questions

- What are the biggest challenges you face with regard to housing currently in the county? (for you and those in your community)

Housing - Strategies

- Increase housing concentration around corridors with easy access to jobs, services, and transit.
- Plan for a wide variety of housing including microunits, tiny houses, duplexes, multiplexes, homeless, transitional, and supportive housing.
- Increase the number of income restricted affordable housing units
- Promote programs which increase racial and economic diversity in housing (homebuyer, foreclosure prevention, etc.)
- Minimize displacement and promote integration

Do you agree with the housing issues outlined in Thrive 2050?

Discussion Questions

- What do you want to make sure happens with regard to housing in the decades to come in Montgomery County?

Transportation - Issues

- **2/3 of all residents access work via personal vehicle**
- **Car-centric communities promote funding of road expansion projects and dependence on cars.** (discourages private investment)
- **Less investment in infrastructure that promotes safe and reliable biking, walking, rolling, and transit options.**
- **People without cars have difficulties accessing jobs which are not accessible by transit or walking/biking.**
- **Car usage contributes to greenhouse gas emissions and prevents transition to environmentally friendly transportation options.**

Do you agree with the transportation issues in Thrive 2050?

Discussion Questions

- What are the biggest challenges you face with regard to transportation currently in the county? (for you and those in your community)

Transportation - Strategies

- **Build a world class transit system connecting historically disadvantaged communities to jobs and services.**
- **Develop a safe, comfortable and appealing network for walking, biking, and rolling.**
- **Promote land use and transportation strategies that encourage walking, biking, and transit use.**
 - Congestion pricing
 - reduced parking
 - Street grid

Do you agree with the transportation strategies in Thrive 2050?



41: Connectivity is higher in a traditional grid of streets (Downtown Bethesda, left), compared to a conventional cul-de-sac pattern of streets (Olney, right).⁽⁸¹⁾

Discussion Questions

- What do you want to make sure happens with regard to transportation in the decades to come in Montgomery County?

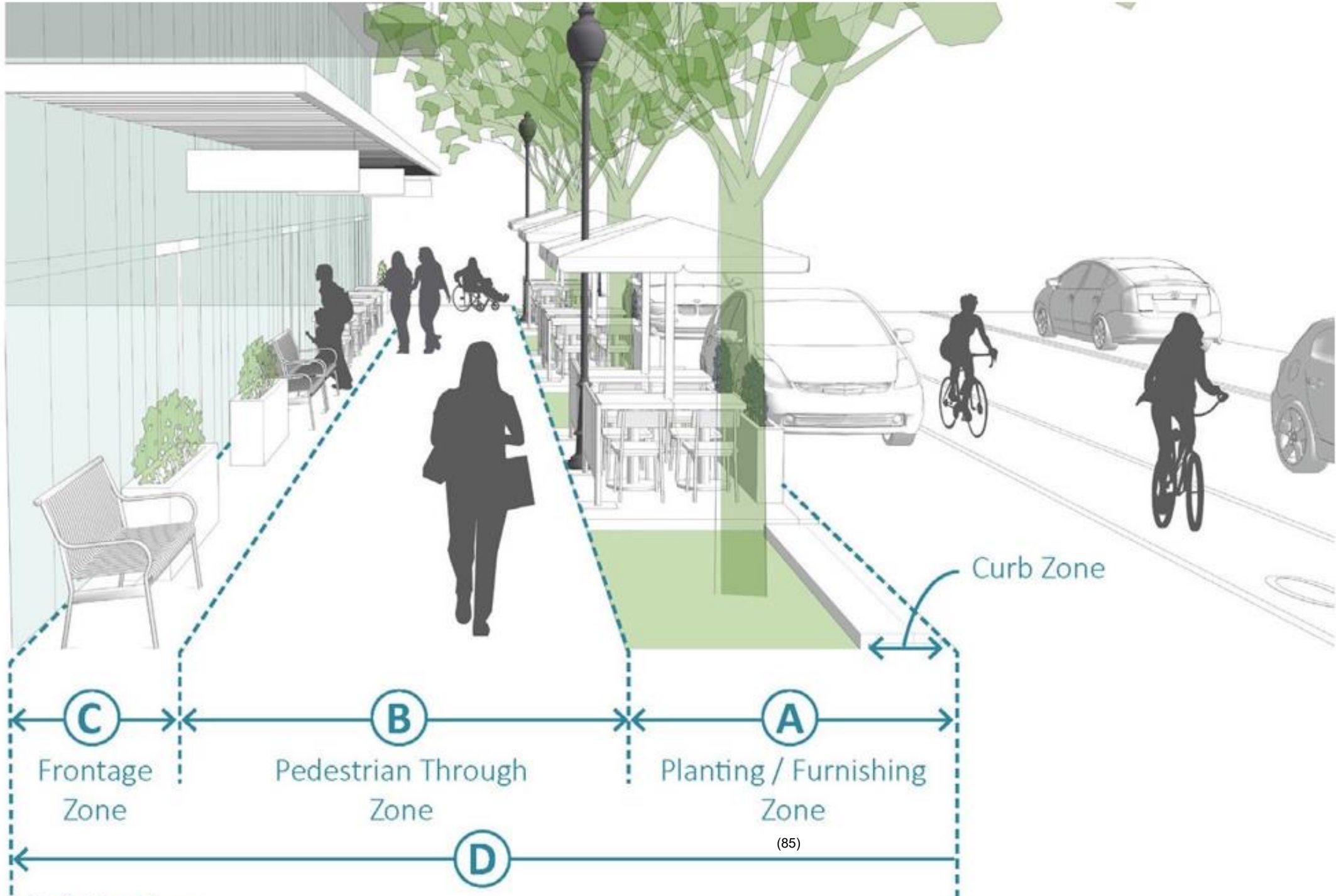
Design, Arts, and Culture

Design of the built environment strongly influences our quality of life. The pattern of development across a city, county, and region; the configuration of neighborhoods and districts; and the architecture of individual buildings collectively shape our perception of places and shape how we choose to travel, recreate and socialize.

Designs, Arts, and Culture – Issues

- **Current architecture and design priorities make it difficult for future urban design to match local geography, history, and culture of neighborhoods.**
- **Suburban Sprawl - Automobile-oriented design** has led to too dispersed buildings and sprawling parking lots = underbuilt sites that are poorly suited to repurpose or redevelop.
- Widening streets and spaces for parking discourage walking by making it less convenient and comfortable, and reduce space for sidewalks, seating, and greenery.
- **Euclidian Zoning** (separation of land use by type) – Single use districts restrict flexibility of land use

Do you agree with the design, arts, and culture issues in Thrive 2050?



Clear form-based design standards that are not overly prescriptive allow the mixing of uses, building types and architectural styles while ensuring a consistent quality of streets and public spaces

Discussion Questions

- What are the biggest challenges you face with regard to Design, Arts and Culture currently in the county? (for you and those in your community)

Designs, Arts, and Culture – Strategies

- Use design-based tools to create attractive places with lasting value that encourage social interaction and reinforce a sense of place and inclusion.
- Promote design strategies and retrofits to make new and existing buildings more sustainable and resilient to disruption and change.
- Design buildings, streets, and parking to prioritize pedestrian use, biking, and rolling.
- Support arts and cultural institutions and programming to educate, connect and build communities that celebrate our diversity and strengthen pride of place.

Do you agree with the Design, Arts, and Culture strategies in Thrive 2050?

Discussion Questions

- What do you want to make sure happens with regard to Design, Arts, and Culture in the decades to come in Montgomery County?

Parks and Recreation Issues

- Most populated areas are far from parkland, which are difficult to access without a car.
- Conservation spaces lack appropriate infrastructure for hikers and bikers.
- Parks can act as separators rather than gathering places for people.
- Park standards need to be improved, especially in underserved areas.

Do you agree with the Park and Recreation issues in Thrive 2050?

Discussion Question

- What are the biggest challenges you face with regard to parks and rec currently in the county? (for you and those in your community)

Parks and Recreation Strategies

- **Ensure parks and recreation facilities/programs are equitably distributed across racial, economic, and geographic lines.**
- **Use parks and recreation facilities/programs to promote healthy and active lifestyles**
- **Integrate parks/rec/public spaces into economic development strategies and land use planning to attract employers and workers, build connections, encourage healthy lifestyles and create vibrant places.**
- **Prioritize acquisition of land for parks and recreation facilities in urban centers and other high development areas**

Do you agree with the Park and Recreation strategies in Thrive 2050?

Discussion Questions

- What do you want to make sure happens with regard to Parks and Recreation in the decades to come in Montgomery County?

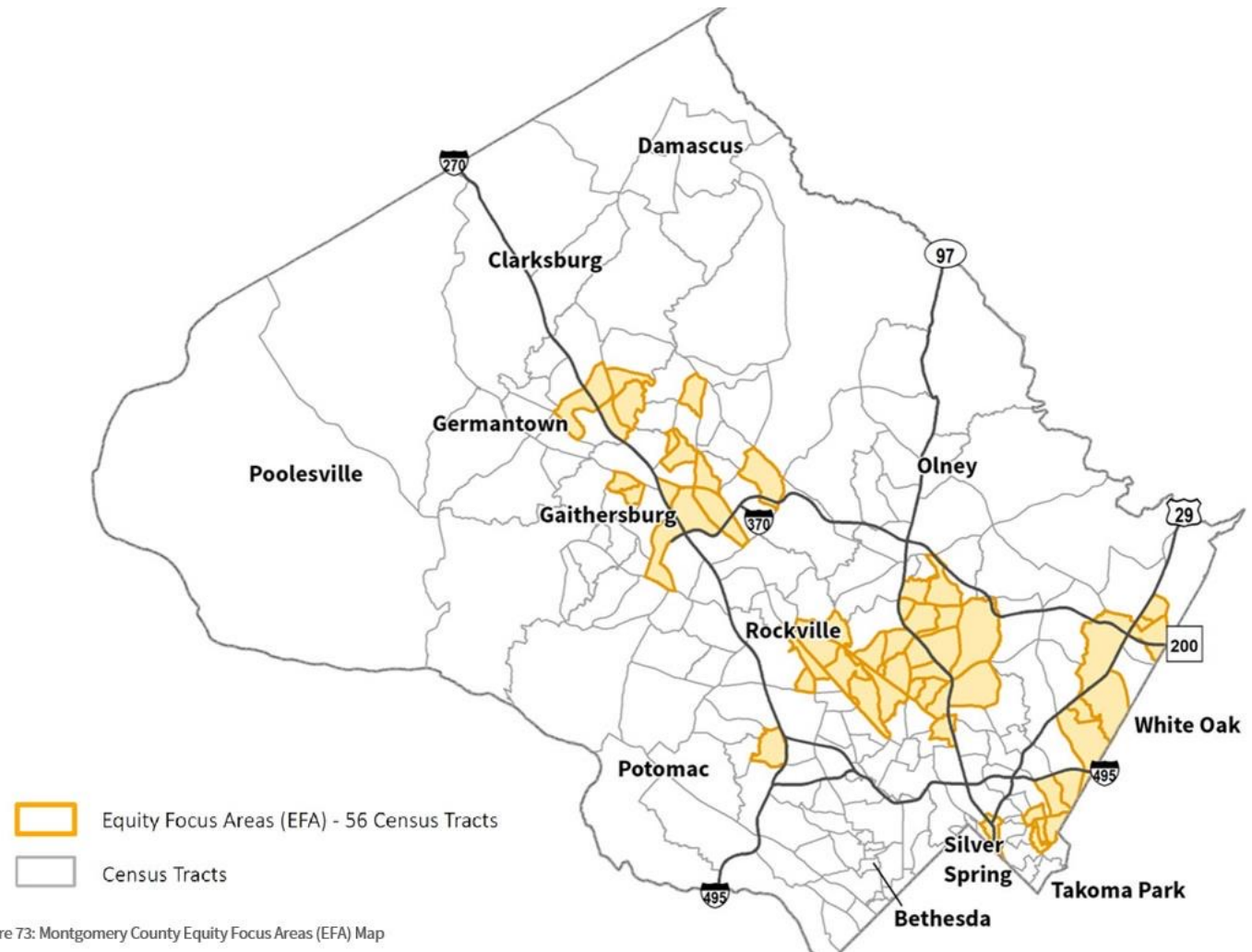
Discussion Questions: Jobs and Education

- What are the biggest challenges you face with regard to jobs and education currently in the county? (for you and those in your community)
- What do you want to make sure happens with regard to jobs and education in the decade(s) to come in Montgomery?

Discussion Questions: Public Health + Safety

- What are the biggest challenges you face with regard to public health + safety currently in the county? (for you and those in your community)
- What do you want to make sure happens with regard to public health + safety in the decade(s) to come in Montgomery?

Racial Equity and Social Justice



Themes for discussion

- Integration
- Environmental Justice
- Institutional Reparations (rebalancing)

Integration

How important do you think residential integration (including educational) and economic integration is to the future of the County? If leaning toward important, why? If leaning toward not important, why?

Environmental Justice

If we define environmental injustice as including inadequate access to healthy food, inadequate transportation, air and water pollution, and unsafe homes, etc.

- How well has the county done in recent years to address these issues in your community and other communities of color?
- What do you see as the top priorities in the next decade(s) for the county to address with regard to resolving environmental injustices in our communities?

Institutional Reparations

Given that the county's planning, housing, and economic practices have involved pervasive racial discrimination in the past, what structures, systems, and policies would you want to see the county put in place to make essential (or fundamental) change to repair the damage?



THRIVE
MONTGOMERY 2050
Let's Plan Our Future. Together.

RACIAL EQUITY & SOCIAL JUSTICE //

COMMUNITY FORUM

What are we focused on tonight?

- 01. **Welcome – Project Overview – What is Thrive Montgomery 2050**
- 02. **The Six Pillars of Thrive Montgomery 2050**
- 03. **Breakout #1: Ensuring Greater Racial Equity and Social Justice**
- 04. **Breakout #2: Improving Community Engagement**
- 05. **Polling & Next Steps**

Guidelines and Ground Rules

We will use:

- Zoom **polling** throughout the meeting to provide feedback on various issues and themes on Thrive
- The **Chat** feature periodically to gather feedback on different parts of the presentation and discussion
- **Breakout rooms** twice to allow participants to move into six smaller groups to weigh in on critical issues related to racial equity, social justice, and community engagement.
 - Each breakout will have a **facilitator** who will also capture participant comments into a Word worksheet
- The recording function to **record everything that happens in plenary**

NOTE: we will save all chat data from the plenary & breakout sessions

Opening Polling

(all responses are anonymous)

- What is your gender?
- What is your age?
- What is your income level?
- What is your race/ethnicity?

Project Overview

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The goal of our public outreach efforts will seek to:

- **Connect with Black, Indigenous, other 'People of Color' (BIPOC), and low-moderate income communities**
- **Gather input** on the current draft of Thrive 2050 from those communities
- Summarize recommendations into a summary report and **new plan chapter on racial equity and social justice**

What is Thrive Montgomery 2050?

What is Thrive Montgomery 2050?

Thrive Montgomery 2050 (Thrive 2050) is the new countywide general plan developed by the Montgomery County Planning Department.

Thrive 2050 is a policy document that will guide future growth and development over the next 30 years. Thrive 2050 will influence future land use, transportation, social, and economic decisions in Montgomery County.



Provides recommendations for land use decisions in the County.



Does not change zoning or other detailed land use regulations



It is flexible and adaptable to changing circumstances, such climate changes, population growth, public health issues, and emerging new technology



Does not abandon old planning, but seeks to modernize it to remain relevant

What is a General Plan?

A general plan is a long-range guide for the development of a community; the blueprint to achieving the vision set by residents of a city or county.

This blueprint provides broad guidance for land-use decisions as communities face unpredictable future opportunities and challenges that influence growth and development such as disruptions brought about by climate change, public health emergencies, and emerging technologies

Thrive's Organizing Principles:

Economic Performance
and Competitiveness

Racial Equity
and Social Inclusion

Environmental Resilience



COMPACT GROWTH:
Corridor Focused Development



COMPLETE COMMUNITIES:
Mix of Uses and Forms



HOUSING FOR ALL:
More of Everything



**PARKS & REC FOR AN
INCREASINGLY URBAN &
DIVERSE COMMUNITY:**
Active & Social



DESIGN, ARTS & CULTURE:
Investing & Building Community



**TRANSPORTATION
& COMMUNICATION
NETWORKS:**
Connecting People,
Places, & Ideas

Complete Communitie S

Complete communities are places that include the range of land uses, infrastructure, services, and amenities that allow them to meet a wide range of needs for a variety of people.

Policy 1: Identify and integrate elements needed to complete centers of housing, retail, and office development and plan to make 15-minute living a reality for as many people as possible.

Policy 2: Encourage co-location and adjacency of all essential and public services, especially along growth corridors and in complete communities.

Policy 3: Retrofit centers of activity and large-scale single-use developments to include a mixture of uses and diversity of housing types and to provide a critical mass of housing, jobs, services, and amenities for vibrant, dynamic complete communities.

Poll Question

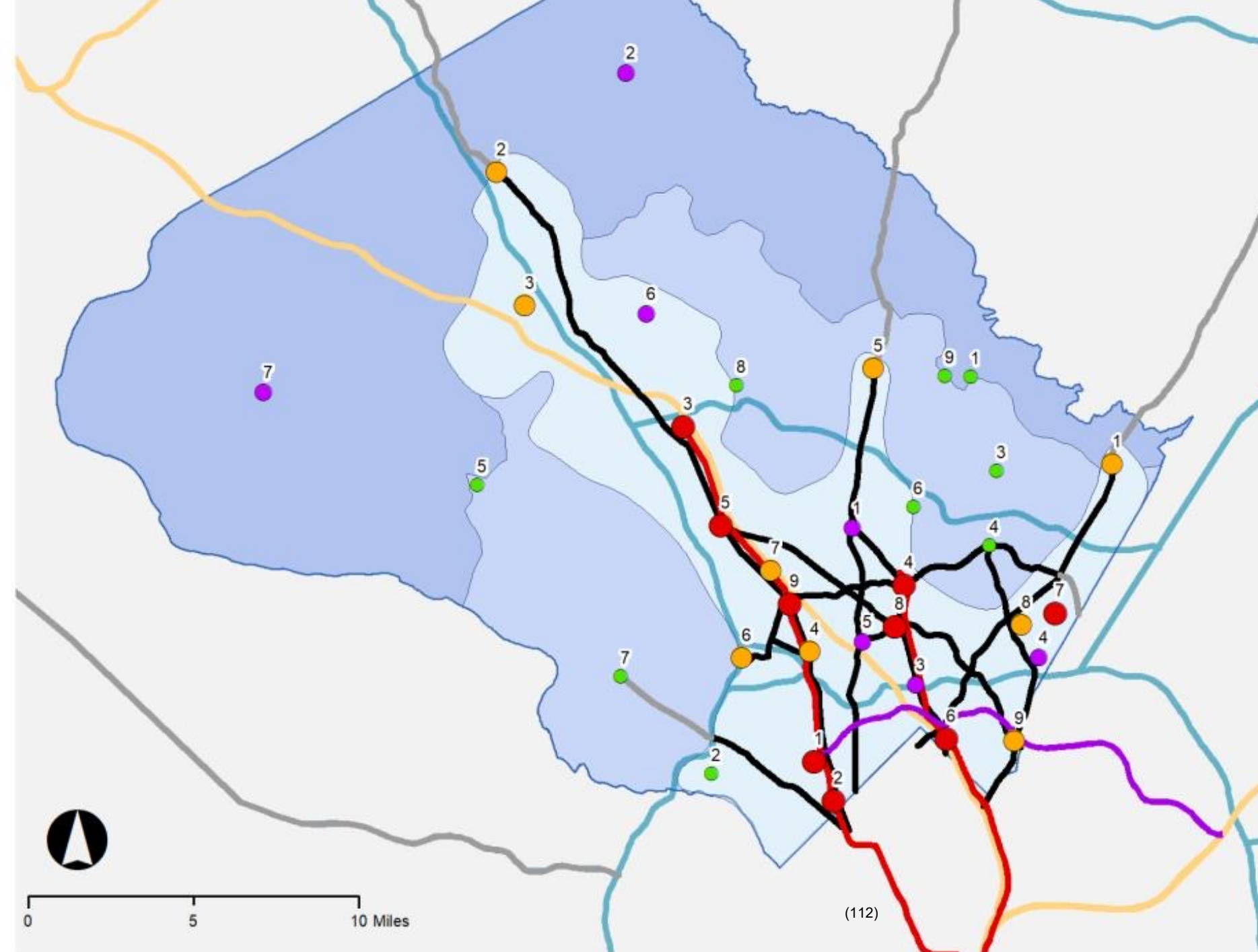
- Based on what you know, do you agree that the focus on complete communities is a good strategy for future development in the Thrive 2050 plan?

Compact Growth

Thrive Montgomery 2050 proposes redoubling and refining efforts to concentrate growth in downtowns, town centers, rural villages, and intensively developed centers of activity, or nodes, and a new commitment to promoting growth along major transportation corridors to maximize the efficient use of land and create Complete Communities.

Benefits of compact growth:

- Connects residents to existing and future centers of activity and complete communities.
- Create corridors that have robust transit service in place or planned or are located close to existing concentrations of jobs, services, and infrastructure in ways that lend themselves to create complete communities.



- Large Centers**
 - 1. Bethesda
 - 2. Friendship Heights
 - 3. Shady Grove
 - 4. Glenmont
 - 5. Rockville
 - 6. Silver Spring
 - 7. VIVA White Oak
 - 8. Wheaton
 - 9. White Flint
- Medium Centers**
 - 1. Burtonsville
 - 2. Clarksburg
 - 3. Germantown
 - 4. Grosvenor/Strathmore
 - 5. Olney
 - 6. Rock Spring
 - 7. Twinbrook
 - 8. White Oak/FDA
 - 9. Takoma/Langley
- Smaller Centers**
 - 1. Aspen Hill
 - 2. Damascus
 - 3. Forest Glen
 - 4. Hillandale
 - 5. Kensington
 - 6. Montgomery Village
 - 7. Poolesville
- Villages and Neighborhood Centers**
 - 1. Ashton
 - 2. Cabin John
 - 3. Cloverly
 - 4. Colesville
 - 5. Darnestown
 - 6. Layhill
 - 7. Potomac Village
 - 8. Redland
 - 9. Sandy Spring

Poll Question

- Do you agree that leveraging existing centers and corridors (compact development) is a good strategy for future development in the Thrive 2050 plan?

Housing



Issues

85% OF THE COUNTY LAND

is already developed or constrained while population is expected to increase by 200,000 over the next 30 years.

1/3 OF THE COUNTY LAND AREA

is zoned for single family housing, preventing ability to provide greater variety of housing units in desired locations. – new housing is larger, not smaller

Higher demand for housing and limited availability are causing increasing numbers of low-income residents to be burdened by housing costs

High cost and limited availability of housing **increase inequality and segregation by race**, with predominantly white people living in more expensive neighborhoods with better access to jobs, schools and transportation options.



Solutions

Increase residential options and concentration along different corridors with better access to jobs, services, and transit, to accommodate population growth

Plan for a wide range of housing types and sizes to meet diverse needs including microunits, cottages, tiny houses, duplexes, multiplexes, homeless and transitional housing, senior housing.

Increase the number of income restricted **affordable housing units**, especially for low-income households.

Promote racial and economic diversity and equity in housing including implementing affordable housing programs, minimize gentrification and displacement, expand home ownership programs , and promote integration and de-concentration of poverty.

HOUSING: Polling Questions

- Do you feel that the housing issues outlined in Thrive 2050 are representative of the challenges in your home community?
- Do you agree with the housing policies outlined in Thrive 2050 to address our housing issues?
- How well do these policies address the issues of racial equity and social justice?

Transportation



Issues

Auto-dependence

2/3 of all Montgomery County residents commute to work via personal vehicle.

Car-centric Communities

promote the funding of road expansion projects. These projects create unattractive and unsafe corridors that prevent communities from feeling safe, connected, and reliable. This has discouraged private investment.

Safety

Car centric communities reduce funding and effort time allocated to building infrastructure to promote safe walking, rolling, and biking, and access to public transit.

Reduced Quality of Living

Lack of alternative transportation options to driving make it difficult to access to jobs, including jobs in the West side of the county, which are not easily accessible by transit.

Reduced Climate Resilience

Single-occupancy vehicle usage contributes to increased greenhouse gas emissions and prevents transition to green transportation options.



Solutions

Adapt policies that will reflect the economic and environmental cost of driving alone

Build a world class transit system connecting historically disadvantaged to jobs, etc. by prioritizing investment in their communities.

Develop a safe and comfortable and appealing network for walking, biking, and rolling.

Develop and extend advanced communications networks that focus investments in areas of the county that lack convenient access to jobs and education

Promote land use and transportation strategies that encourage walking, biking and transit use improve environmental performance

- Prioritize establishing street grid (local street connections)
- Bike/ped/transit investments
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- Reducing parking supply



(117)



41: Connectivity is higher in a traditional grid of streets (Downtown Bethesda, left), compared to a conventional cul-de-sac pattern of streets (Olney, right).

TRANSPORTATION: Polling Questions

- Do you feel that the transportation issues outlined in Thrive 2050 are representative of the challenges in your home community?
- Do you agree with the transportation policies outlined in Thrive 2050 to address our housing issues?
- How well do these policies address the issues of racial equity and social justice?

Design, Arts, and Culture



Issues

Auto-centric urban design causes urban sprawl

That compromises the quality of living of places including community connectedness, safety, accessibility, and reliability.

Design for cars at the expense of people and adaptability

Car-centric designs that promote road expansions and surface parking discourage walking, biking, and rolling, reduce access to safe infrastructure and spaces for public use

Increasing need for investment in public art, placemaking, and organizations that serve at risk populations. Need more affordable living, work, and sales space.



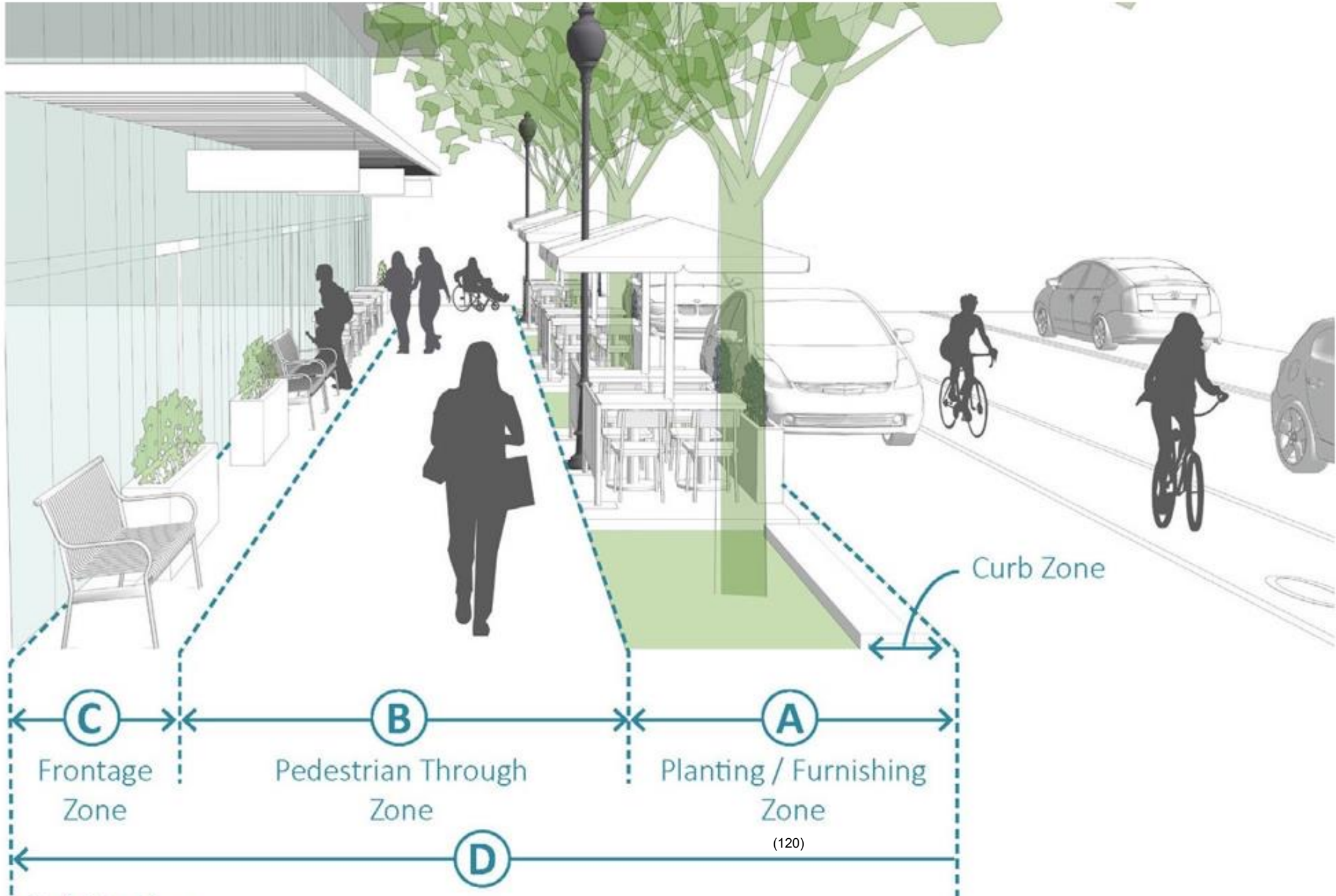
Solutions

Use designed based tools to create attractive places with lasting value that encourage social interaction and reinforce a sense of place and inclusion

Promote design strategies and retrofits to make new and existing buildings more sustainable and resilient to disruption and change

Support arts and culture institutions and programming to educate, connect, and build communities that celebrate our diversity and strengthen pride of places

Prioritize human interactions by creating places that welcome and attract people from different backgrounds.



Clear form-based design standards that are not overly prescriptive allow the mixing of uses, building types and architectural styles while ensuring a consistent quality of streets and public spaces

DESIGN, ARTS, & CULTURE: Polling Questions

- Do you feel that the design, arts, and culture issues outlined in Thrive 2050 are representative of the challenges in your home community?
- Do you agree with the design, arts, and culture policies outlined in Thrive 2050 to address our housing issues?
- How well do these policies address the issues of racial equity and social justice?

Parks & Recreation



Issues

Most populated areas are far from most parkland, which are difficult to access without a car.

Conservation spaces lack appropriate infrastructure for hikers and bikers.

Parks conceived as buffers often act as separators rather than gathering places for people.

Park facility standards and acquisition strategies are incompatible with principles to advance compact growth.



Solutions

Use park and recreation facilities/programs to promote active lifestyles

Ensure that parks and recreation opportunities are equitably distributed along racial, socioeconomic, and geographic lines.

Coordinate with county agencies to accommodate multiple needs, including recreation, education, community building, and resource stewardship – through colocation, adaptive reuse, co-programming and other combined or shared land and facilities.

Integrate parks/rec/public spaces into economic development strategies and land use planning to attract employers and workers, build connections, encourage healthy lifestyles and create vibrant places.

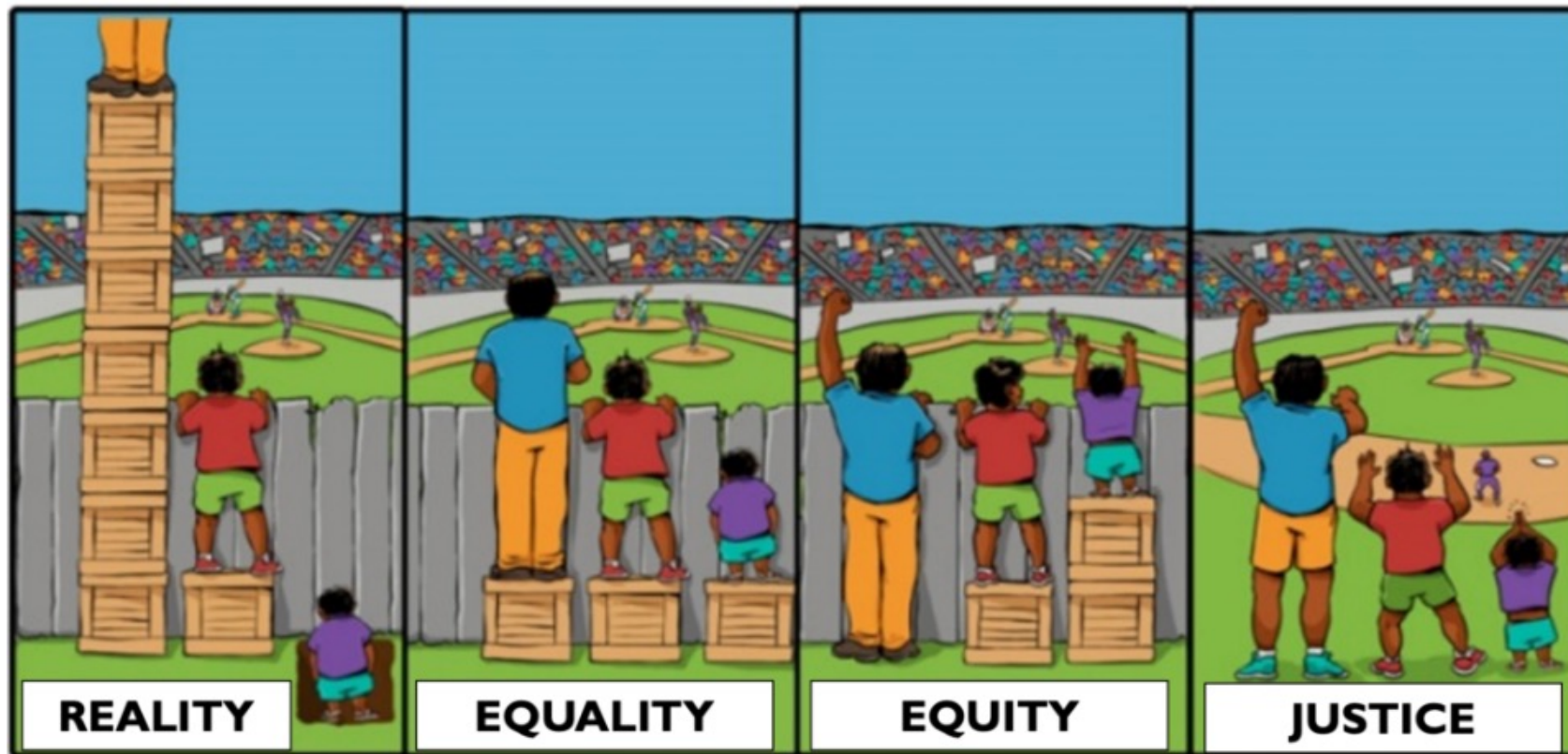
PARKS & RECREATION: Polling Questions

- Do you feel that the parks and recreation issues outlined in Thrive 2050 are representative of the challenges in your home community?
- Do you agree with the parks and recreation policies outlined in Thrive 2050 to address our issues?
- How well do these policies address the issues of racial equity and social justice?

Equity & Justice from the Thrive plan draft

Advancing racial equity through just planning policies and public investments in underserved communities, promoting the racial and economic integration of neighborhoods, and focusing on the potential for the design of communities to help **build social trust and inclusion** while encouraging civic participation are among the most significant elements of Thrive Montgomery 2050. Thrive Montgomery 2050 strives to **create racially integrated and just communities**.

Disparate Reality – Equality – Equity - Justice



One gets **more than** is needed, while the other gets **less than** is needed. Thus, a huge disparity is created.

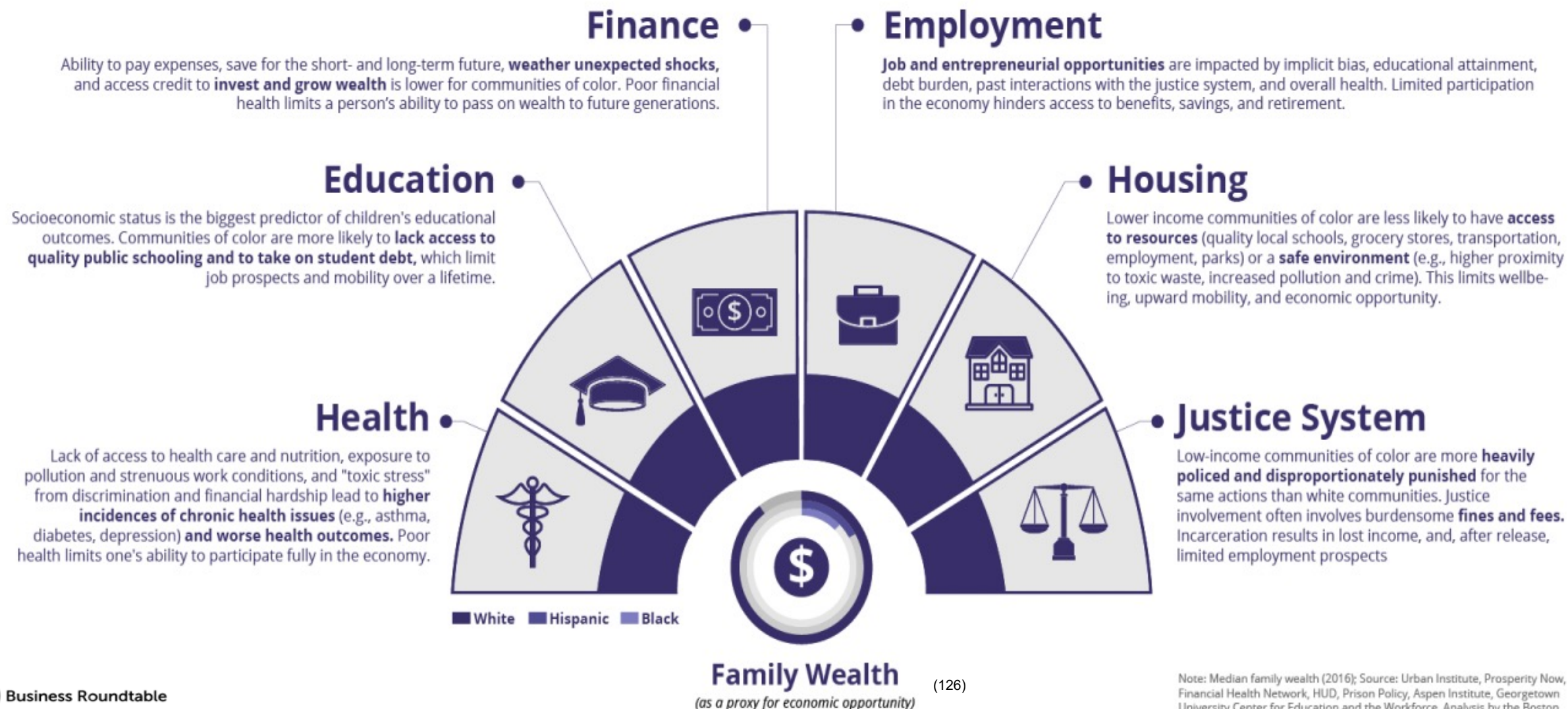
The assumption is that **everyone benefits from the same supports**. This is considered to be equal treatment.

Everyone gets the support they need, which produces equity.

(125)

All 3 can see the game without supports or accommodations because **the cause(s) of the inequity was addressed**. The systemic barrier has been removed.

Racial disparities in economic opportunity limit access to the key enablers for promoting wellbeing and prosperity



Racial Equity + Social Justice Target Areas

Target Areas

Montgomery County, MD

Legend

- Primary Target Areas
- Secondary Target Areas
- Urban Districts
- Municipalities
- Communities

Data Source: US Census American
Community Survey 5-Year 2016-2020
Block Group Level

(127)

Primary Target Area

Median Household Income
Less than or equal to County
Median Income = \$111,812

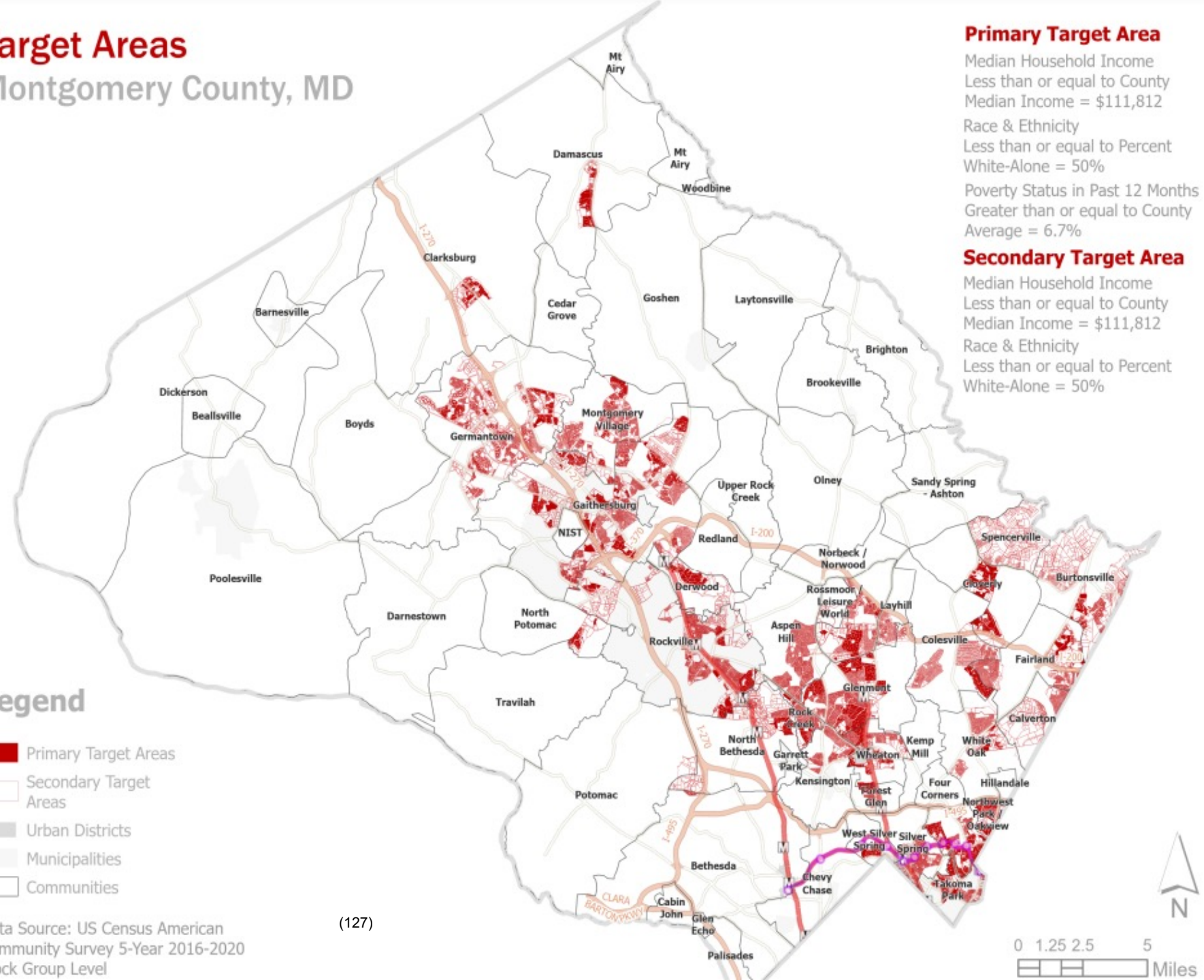
Race & Ethnicity
Less than or equal to Percent
White-Alone = 50%

Poverty Status in Past 12 Months
Greater than or equal to County
Average = 6.7%

Secondary Target Area

Median Household Income
Less than or equal to County
Median Income = \$111,812

Race & Ethnicity
Less than or equal to Percent
White-Alone = 50%



Who County Council asked us to recruit for this initiative

- Identify and conduct targeted outreach **to BIPOC and low-moderate income populations** to gather input primarily through focus groups and a community survey and conversations with community group leaders

Concerns we've heard from Focus Groups re: Racial Equity and Social Justice

1. There is a **profound East-West divide in the county** that includes disparities in job centers; school quality; shopping/restaurant options; housing quality; safety/security, and other amenities, etc.
2. The likely result of economic integration and gentrification is **BIPOC and low-income household displacement**.
3. Plan seems to assume “one size fits all,” but that is not the reality. **Needs to be context-and location-sensitive**
4. There is a **lack of accountability** in county's institutional systems ex. Public Safety + Building inspections
5. The plan **doesn't really address the needs** of working class/blue collar households
6. We must address our current **root challenges first** before making shift towards long-term goals ex. Compact Growth, Congestion pricing, etc.

DISCUSSION ONE: Rebalancing Ensuring Greater Racial Equity & Social Justice

As the County grows, what are some **specific things we can do** to ensure that it achieves social, environmental, and economic prosperity while **addressing historically established injustices** (segregation, wealth gap, etc.) and **diminishing potential socio-economic disparities** (ex. displacement, environmental justice, etc.) in the future?

Instructions for Breakout #1

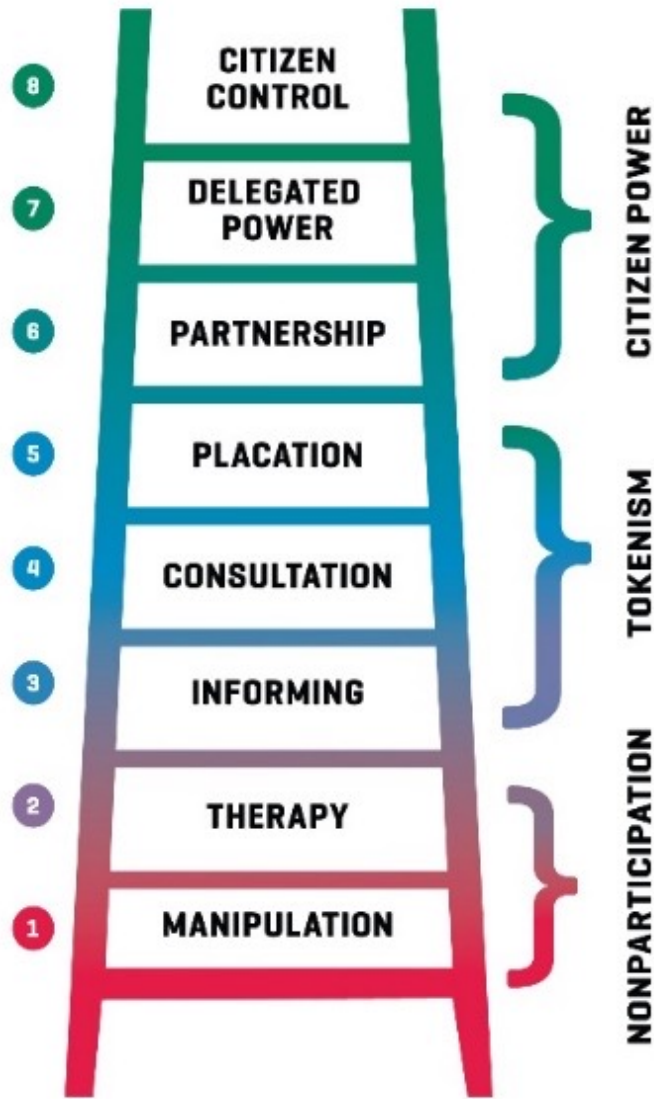
- These breakouts will each have a **facilitator**. **Six total breakout rooms** so each will have as many as 20+ participants
- We will only have **15-20 minutes** for this discussion
- Please keep your comments **succinct** and focused on answering the question posed **so as many people as possible can speak**
- Be **respectful** in your comments and **listen attentively** what each person has to say
- If **you don't want to speak** in the breakout, please put your **answer in chat**
- If there is not time for you to speak when you're in the queue, be ready to put your answer in chat

NOTE: we will save all chat data from the breakout sessions

Chat

- Please type in the Chat one insight you had in your breakout discussion.

Improving Engagement with Historically Disadvantaged and Vulnerable Communities Going Forward



Where should we land on the ladder of engagement?



Ideas to Consider for Centering Historically Disadvantaged and Vulnerable Communities in County Planning Processes

- **Empower marginalized and most-impacted** populations in the planning process
- Build **trust** by showing **respect** to communities, especially through **listening**
- Demonstrate **cultural competence** when dealing with a range of racial, cultural, and ethnic groups
- Understand historical context and **address the structural factors that** are the root causes of inequity
- **Compensate** people for their expertise and efforts
- Develop **accountability** measures for sustainable systems change around equity and justice

DISCUSSION TWO:

Improving Community Engagement

What ideas do you have that you believe would allow the planning department and the Council to **more effectively mobilize and engage people of color, immigrants, and lower-income residents** in planning and policy-making in the future?

Instructions for Breakout #2

- Please keep your comments **succinct** and focused on answering the question posed **so as many people as possible can speak**
- Be **respectful** in your comments and **listen attentively** what each person has to say
- If **you don't want to speak** in the breakout, please put your **answer in chat**
- If there is not time for you to speak when you're in the queue, be ready to put your answer in chat

NOTE: we will save all chat data from the breakout sessions

Chat

- Please type in the Chat one insight you had in your breakout discussion.

Final Polling

- How worried are you about displacement?
- What is current level of trust in the Montgomery County government, especially with regard to planning?
- What is your level willingness to engage with the county on policy-making and planning in future years?
- To what degree would you like to see racial equity and social justice incorporated into the Thrive 2050 plan?

Next Steps

- Fill out the survey – promote it among friends/colleagues (see link in Chat)
- Track the process in September and October with the County Council –
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/COUNCIL/resources/Thrive2050/index.html>

The Montgomery County Council is working with Nspiregreen and Public Engagement Associates to inform the development of Thrive Montgomery 2050 (Thrive 2050). Thrive 2050 is the countywide general plan being developed by the Montgomery County Planning Department.

This second round of engagement will focus on outreach to Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) residents and groups from low-income backgrounds. Input gathered from this round of engagement will be used to inform a racial equity and social justice review of Thrive 2050 and the development of a new racial equity and social justice chapter for the plan.

Participation in this questionnaire will be strictly confidential and completion is expected to take approximately 8 minutes. Upon completing the survey, you will have a chance to enter a raffle to win one of the 300 gift cards (\$10 and \$50)

To learn more about Thrive 2050, visit [Montgomery County Council's website](#).

* 1. Are you aware of THRIVE Montgomery 2050, general plan for the County?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Thrive 2050 is a visionary document that provides a blueprint for how and where the county will grow over the next 30+ years. Thrive 2050 touches on issues of housing, land use, transportation, parks, economic development, and the environment.

* 2. When did you first become aware of Thrive 2050?

- ☐ From plan kick off in 2019
- ☐ During first round of engagement 2019-2021
- ☐ I saw a news article about the draft plan in 2021
- ☐ When County revised the plan earlier in 2022
- ☐ I just heard about it this summer of 2022
- ☐ None of the above

* 3. Have you participated in any of the following engagement activities in the past?

- ☐ I signed up to receive emails from Thrive 2050
- ☐ I follow Montgomery Planning's Social Media
- ☐ I participated in virtual/in-person meetings
- ☐ I provided public testimony
- ☐ I participated in community pop-up events
- ☐ I received a "meeting in a box" toolkit
- ☐ I participated in previous questionnaires
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Other (please specify)

The following questions will ask you about your thoughts on the primary areas discussed in Thrive 2050. If any of these concepts are unfamiliar to you, we encourage you to review the draft plan for more information. You can find the draft plan [here](#).

* 4. Thrive 2050 prioritizes developing a strong economy, protecting the environment, and advancing racial equity and social justice as its primary themes. **Do you agree that these issues should be prioritized throughout the entire THRIVE 2050 plan?**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	I don't understand
Strong Economy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Protecting the Environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Racial Equity and Social Justice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 5. Do the following six focus areas outlined in THRIVE 2050 fit your vision for where the County should be going?

	It doesn't fit my vision at all	It doesn't fit my vision	Neutral	It fits my vision	It absolutely fits my vision	I don't understand what this is about
Compact Growth	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Complete Communities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Design, Arts, and Culture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transportation and Communication Networks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Affordable and Attainable Housing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parks and Recreation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. Are there other themes that are important to you but are not included in the question above?

* 7. What are 1-3 words that describe your hopes for Montgomery County's future?

Complete Communities

THRIVE 2050 sets a vision for Montgomery County to prosper in the areas of Jobs and Economic Opportunities, Housing, Transportation, Parks & Public Spaces, and Arts & Culture. We want to hear about how you feel about these issues. **For the following topics, please indicate if you have any concerns:**

*** 8. Concerns about Jobs and Economic Opportunities (Check all that apply).**

- ☐ Length of commute
- ☐ Transportation costs
- ☐ Training and educational opportunities
- ☐ Wages
- ☐ Access to local jobs
- ☐ Information about opportunities
- ☐ Competition
- ☐ None of the above

*** 9. Housing Concerns (Check all that apply).**

- ☐ Cost
- ☐ Access
- ☐ Living space
- ☐ Housing quality
- ☐ Safety
- ☐ Location
- ☐ Information/Resources
- ☐ Displacement/Gentrification (being pushed out of your home or neighborhood because of housing prices)
- ☐ Maintenance
- ☐ Proximity to shopping/dinning/recreation
- ☐ None of the above

*** 10. Transportation Concerns (Check all that apply).**

- ☐ Cost
- ☐ Reliability
- ☐ Convenience
- ☐ Parking
- ☐ Safety
- ☐ Signage
- ☐ Accessibility for persons with disabilities
- ☐ None of the above

* 11. Parks and Public Spaces Concerns (Check all that apply).

- ☐ Safety
- ☐ Pollution / Environmental Quality
- ☐ Lack of amenities
- ☐ Difficulty getting to parks/public spaces (Accessibility)
- ☐ Restricted Access
- ☐ Cost
- ☐ Lack of recreational opportunities
- ☐ Proximity to home
- ☐ None of the above

12. Are there any concerns that you have that are not listed above?

Equity, Race, and Discrimination

* 13. To what extent do you agree that Montgomery County has offered good opportunities for you to get ahead economically?

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

* 14. In comparison to other neighborhoods in the County, how do you rate your neighborhood's availability of County services, such as libraries, parks, community centers, schools, and public safety (police, fire, EMS)?

- ☐ Very poor
- ☐ Poor
- ☐ Average
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Very good

* 15. Do you agree with the following statement? **My neighborhood can safely and conveniently meet all of the needs of our household.**

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

* 16. How would you rate race relations in Montgomery County?

- ☐ Not tense at all
- ☐ A little tense
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Somewhat tense
- ☐ Very tense
- ☐ I'm not sure

* 17. Have you ever experienced discrimination based on your ethnicity in Montgomery County?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

* 18. Please check the box for each area that you or a member of your immediate household experienced discrimination or unfair treatment with (check all that apply):

- ☐ Employment
- ☐ Rental housing
- ☐ Home ownership
- ☐ Utility services
- ☐ Policing and court system
- ☐ Consumer, financial services, and credit
- ☐ Health care
- ☐ Access to governmental assistance, programs, or services
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Private business
- ☐ Code enforcement
- ☐ Not Sure
- ☐ Other (please specify)

- ☐ None of the above

* 19. How high of a priority should it be for government to address the racial equity gaps in education, criminal justice, jobs, health, housing and other areas? With 0 being the lowest priority and 10 being the highest priority.

0

5

10

Demographics

Lastly, we are requesting demographic information in order to ensure that our planning process prioritizes the needs and desires of communities of color that are most impacted by racism and inequality. This information will be confidential and will only be used to identify who we talked to in the County.

* 20. How did you hear about this questionnaire?

- ☐ Montgomery Council website
- ☐ Thrive 2050 social media / newsletter
- ☐ Mailing sent to my house
- ☐ Pop up event
- ☐ Flyer/postcard at community center, library, restaurant, etc.
- ☐ Community organization sent information about the survey
- ☐ I spoke to a Thrive 2050 representative over the phone or in-person
- ☐ If you received information through a community organization, please let us know which one:

- ☐ None of the above

* 21. In what city/town do you live?

* 22. In what zip code do you live?

* 23. What's your age group?

- ☐ Under 18
- ☐ 18-24
- ☐ 25-34
- ☐ 35-44
- ☐ 45-54
- ☐ 55-64
- ☐ 65+

* 24. Which gender do you identify with the most?

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Transgender
- ☐ Non-binary/ Non-confirming
- ☐ Prefer not to respond

* 25. Which of the following best describes you? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- ☐ Hispanic, Latino/a/x, Spanish origin
- ☐ White

* 26. What are the primary languages spoken in your household? (Select all that apply.)

- ☐ English
- ☐ Spanish
- ☐ Chinese (including Mandarin, Cantonese and Hokkien)
- ☐ Tagalog (including Filipino)
- ☐ Vietnamese
- ☐ Arabic
- ☐ French
- ☐ Korean
- ☐ Farsi
- ☐ Amharic
- ☐ Swahili
- ☐ Other (please specify)

* 27. What's your country of origin?

* 28. Not counting yourself, how many adults age 18 or older live in your household?

* 29. How many children under the age of 18 live in your household?

* 30. What was your total household income from all sources in 2020 before taxes?

- ☐ Under \$15,000
- ☐ Between \$15,000 and \$29,999
- ☐ Between \$30,000 and \$49,999
- ☐ Between \$50,000 and \$74,999
- ☐ Between \$75,000 and \$99,999
- ☐ Between \$100,000 and \$150,000
- ☐ Over \$150,000

* 31. Please select your highest level of education achieved.

- ☐ Some high school
- ☐ High School or GED
- ☐ Some college or trade school
- ☐ Bachelor degree
- ☐ Master's degree or higher

* 32. What is your current housing status?

- ☐ Rent
- ☐ Own
- ☐ Living with family/friends
- ☐ Living in a shelter
- ☐ Unhoused
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Raffle Information

33. Are you interested in receiving one of the \$10 gift cards and entering a raffle to win one of the \$50 gift cards?

☐ Yes

☐ No

34. What's your email? This information will be used to contact you if you qualify for one of the gift cards.

35. What's your phone number? This information will be used to contact you if you qualify for one of the gift cards.

Future Engagement

36. We are planning focus groups in July and August. Are you interested in participating?

- ☐ Yes, i'm interested
- ☐ No, i'm not interested

To sign up for a focus group, please visit this [page](#).

Overview

The Thrive Montgomery 2050 Community Questionnaire was conducted from July 19, 2022, to August 20, 2022. A total of 1860 participants took the questionnaire, with 37 people taking the questionnaire completely in Spanish. Out of 1860 participants, 71% reported that they were already aware of Thrive Montgomery 2050 plan, while 28% reported never having heard about Thrive Montgomery 2050.

Purpose

The Thrive Montgomery 2050 Community Questionnaire was designed to gather feedback on 3 primary areas:

- Measure the level of public understanding of the focus planning areas on plan, including compact growth, complete communities, housing, transportation, design, arts & culture, parks & recreation.
- Incorporate racial equity and social justice-based questions to understand residents' perception on issues of race, discrimination, segregation, and equitable access to county resources.
- Understand the level of engagement and demographic background from participants previously engaged in Thrive 2050 public involvement work coordinated by the Montgomery County Planning Department.

Methodology

The Thrive Montgomery 2050 Community Questionnaire was conducted to gather input about the current focus planning areas identified on Thrive 2050. The questionnaire also gathered information about other systemic issues of race, segregation, and equity that are not explicitly mentioned in the plan, but that nonetheless can impact how underrepresented community members experience housing, transportation, design, arts, culture, and parks and recreation.

The questionnaire was conducted through the QuestionnaireMonkey and was open to any resident of Montgomery County who wanted to take the questionnaire. The decision to make this questionnaire an open questionnaire was explicit. An open questionnaire would allow the consultant team to share the link with community organizations that already have the trust and an established working relationships with members from BIPOC communities and would allow them to disseminate the questionnaire through their networks. While statistically significant questionnaires continue to be the preferred way to gather representative data in planning studies, such a methodology also comes with issues that impact racial equity and inclusion. Statistically significant questionnaires often draw eligible participants and/or addresses from Census data that do not provide a fair representation of a community. Additionally, when

reaching out to BIPOC communities, organizers must consider the systemic barriers in accessing owning and gaining access to long term housing . As a result, data that can tell us that we are reaching out to underrepresented communities might be outdated.

Consultants incentivized people to participate on the questionnaire by offering them the chance to enter a raffle to win either a \$10 or \$50 gift cards. Because of the racial equity and social justice emphasis of this project, answers were required for all questions on the questionnaire, including the demographic questionsto enter the raffle officially. However, if people chose to end the questionnaire without responding to the demographic information, their answers to the main questions were still saved without their demographic information.

Section 1: Public Awareness of Thrive Montgomery 2050 [Q1-Q3, Q20]

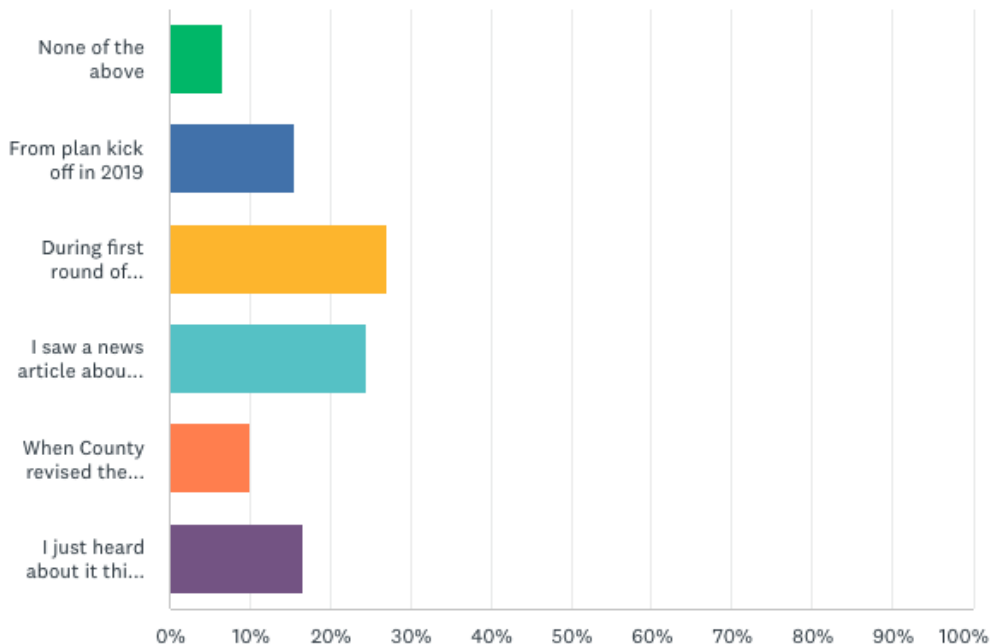
As advised by the Advisory Committee, the first section of the questionnaire focused on evaluating public awareness of the Thrive Montgomery planning process. This section was composed of asking three primary questions:

Q1: Are you aware of Thrive Montgomery 2050, the general plan for the County?

Q2 [If answer was yes to Q1]: When did you first become aware of Thrive 2050?

Q3: Have you participated in the any of the following engagement activities in the past?

Answers to these questions show that 71% of participants who took the questionnaire were already aware about Thrive Montgomery 2050, while 29% had not heard about Thrive 2050 before. Out of the 71% of people with knowledge about Thrive 2050, 27% of people identified having heard about Thrive 2050 during the first round of engagement from 2019-2021 and 15% said they have followed the Thrive 2050 process since the plan kick-off. The second group of people were participants who became aware of Thrive 2050 after Council revised the plan, with 24% saying they learned about it through a news article about the draft plan being reviewed by council and 10% when the County Council revised the plan. The final group of participants (17%) were those who had just learned about Thrive 2050 during the summer of 2022.



The source of information about Thrive 2050 varied throughout the respondents that indicated they already knew about Thrive 2050. About half of the people learned about Thrive 2050 through previous engagement work done by Montgomery Planning. This includes 11% of participants who heard about it from Montgomery Planning’s Social Media, 8% from the Thrive 2050 distribution list, 12% from public meetings held in the first round of the engagement process, 4% who provided public testimony, 3% from pop-up events, 0.24% from meetings in a box toolkit, and 5% from previous questionnaires.

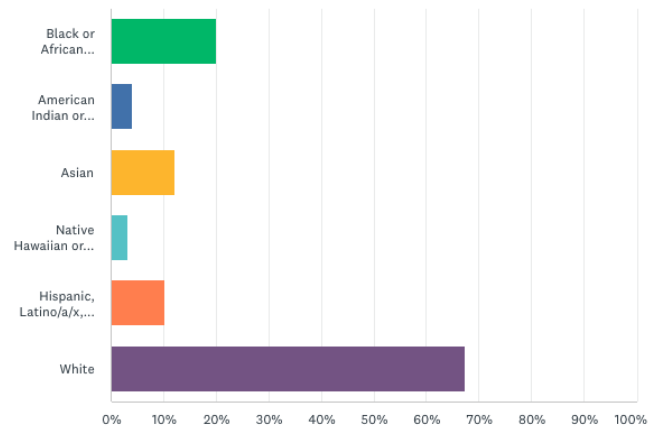
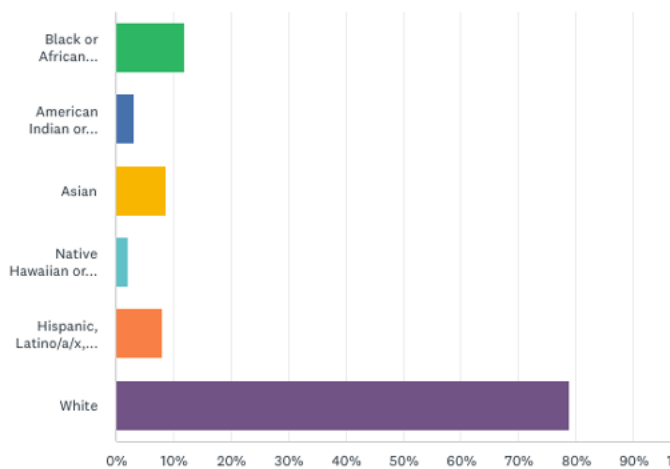
The other 46% reported having heard about Thrive through other methods. Other platforms that were mentioned included receiving information from their county council member, community listserves, individual advocacy work, and other advocacy groups, such as Coalition for Smarter Growth, Epic of MoCo, GB Youth Media filmmakers, League of Women Voters of Montgomery County, Responsible Growth 4 MoCo.

Participants without awareness about Thrive 2050 reported knowing about the questionnaire through the following platforms **[Q20]**:

Montgomery Council Website	8%
Thrive 2050 social media/newsletter	11%
Postcard sent home	26%
Pop-up event	1%
Flyer at community center, library, etc.	1%
Community organization sent information about questionnaire:	25%
• CHEER	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Springfield Neighborhood Association • MoCo DSA • IMPACT Silver Spring • South Four Corners • CSG • MCDOT Newsletter • Town of Chevy Chase Listserv • Technical Solutions • MoCo Show • Source of the Spring • Neighborhoods listserves • Silver Spring Village • Dan Reed's Twitter • Reddit Group • MoCo SafeG • MoCo Green Party • Kensington View Civiv Association • Bethesda UCC • Council Newsletter • Cloverly Civic Association 	
I spoke to a Thrive 2050 representative over the phone or in person	2%
None of the above	26%

The demographic background between those involved and aware of Thrive 2050 before this questionnaire and those recently learning about it, show some differences. For those who were previously aware of Thrive 2050, the majority of them (79%) identified as White, while 21% identified as BIPOC. For those who had not heard about Thrive 2050, 67% identified as white and 33% as BIPOC.



Section 2: Thrive Montgomery 2050 Planning Areas [Q4 – Q12]

Section 2 of the questionnaire asked participants to describe their hopes for Montgomery County's future in 1-3 words. A word cloud of the most mentioned words can be found below:

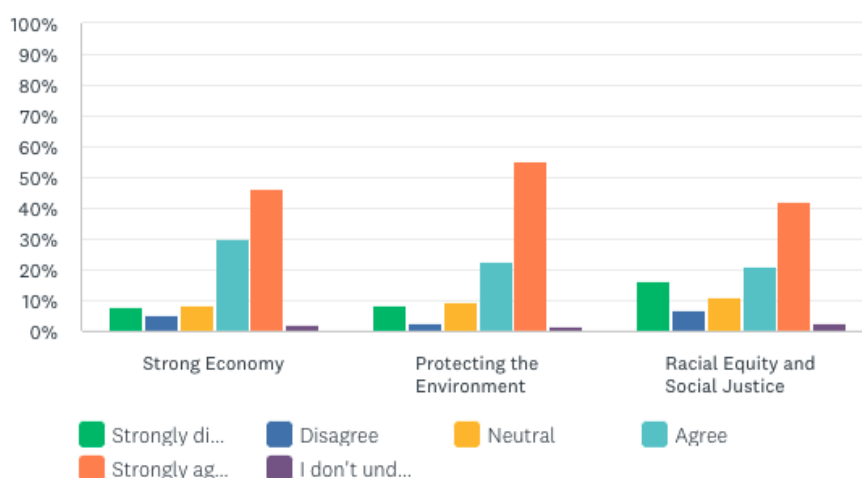
Q7 What are 1-3 words that describe your hopes for Montgomery County's future?



For Q7, affordability, safety, sustainability, diversity, equity, and affordable housing, jobs, walkable/walkability, and education were some of the most mentioned words.

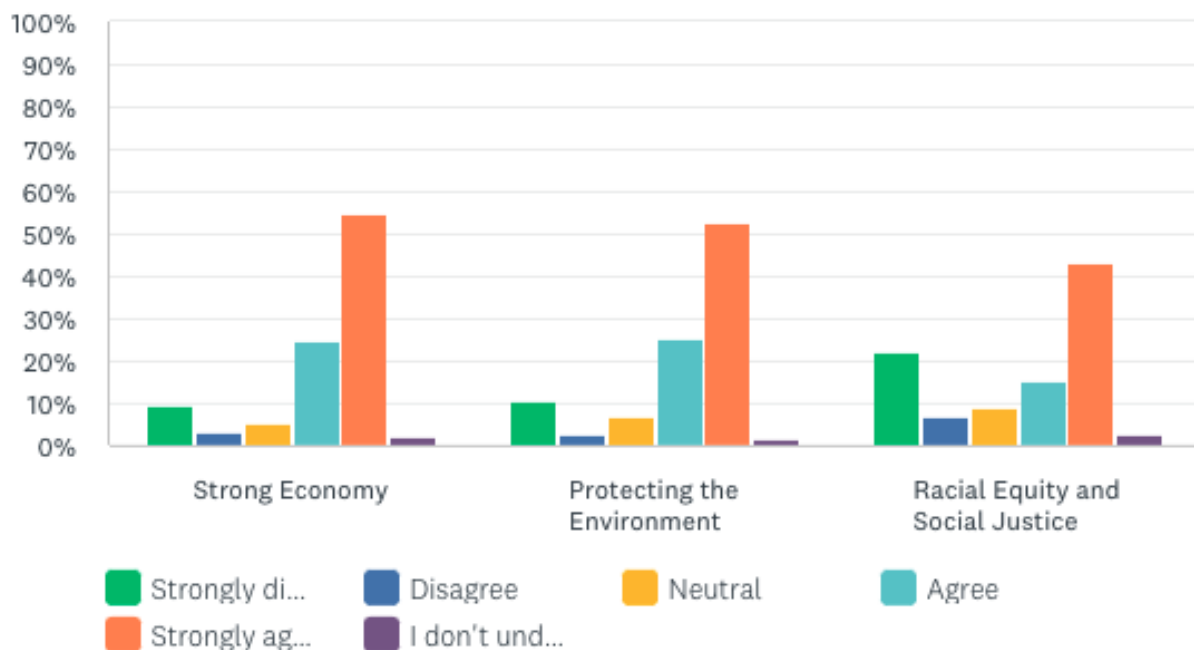
Section 2 then proceeded to ask participants about Thrive Montgomery 2050's priorities to develop a strong economy, protect the environment, and advance racial equity and social justice.

Q4: Thrive 2050 prioritizes developing a strong economy, protecting the environment, and advancing racial equity and social justice as its primary themes. Do you agree that these issues should be prioritized throughout the entire THRIVE 2050 plan?



Out of the three priorities, protecting the environment received the most support with majority of people agreeing that it should be a priority (55% strongly agreeing and 23% agreeing). Fostering a strong economy came in second (47% strongly agreeing and 30% agreeing), and racial equity and social justice came in third (42% strongly agreeing and 21% agreeing). Both fostering a strong economy and protecting the environment had fewer than 10% of participants who disagreed or strongly disagreed with these topics as priorities. However, a higher percentage of people disagreed with racial equity and social justice having to be a priority, with 23% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that it should be a priority.

Within BIPOC respondents, the priorities slightly changed in preference. Fostering a strong economy came in first with 80% agreeing or strongly agreeing that it should be a priority; protecting the environment came in second with 70% of participants agreeing or strongly disagreeing that it was a priority. For racial equity and social justice, 58% of BIPOC participants agreed or strongly agreed with social justice and racial equity as priorities for Thrive 2050 . However, 28% also disagreed or strongly disagreed that racial equity and social justice should be considered priorities.



This section also focused on measuring public awareness and agreement surrounding Thrive 2050's focus planning areas, compact growth, complete communities, housing, transportation, design, arts & culture, parks & recreation. To gather this input, Question 5 (Q5) of the questionnaire asked:

Do the following six focus areas outlined in Thrive 2050 fit your vision for where the County should be going?

Planning areas	Doesn't fit my vision at all	Doesn't fit my vision	Neutral	Fits my Vision	Absolutely fits my vision	I don't understand what this is about
Parks and Recreation	4%	4%	13%	33%	45%	3%
Transportation and	7%	6%	13%	29%	43%	3%

Communications Network						
Housing for All	13%	11%	13%	19%	40%	4%
Design Arts and Culture	7%	6%	20%	35%	27%	4%
Compact Growth	15%	14%	14%	23%	25%	10%
Complete Communities	11%	14%	14%	22%	29%	13%

The top 3 areas that were identified as absolutely meeting participants' visions were Parks and Recreation, Housing for All, and Transportation and Communications Networks. Compact Growth, Complete Communities, and Housing for all received the highest percentage of participants labeling as not fitting their vision.

However, both compact growth and complete communities had the most responses for the option "I do not understand what this is about" (10% for compact growth and 13% for complete communities). For most participants that identified compact growth and complete communities as fitting their vision for the county, they usually paired their response with comments such "I don't understand what this is about, but I assume you mean more density" "complete communities are all these areas combined" "I think I know what you mean by this."

When designing the questionnaire, the planning concepts outlined on the plan were purposely used on the questionnaire because it sought to evaluate general understanding of the terminology used in the plan. Information from the focus groups [see section X], would supplement questionnaire responses in showing that Compact Growth, Complete Communities, and Design were concepts that were important to residents, but that were difficult to understand with the established language from the plan.

For this section, responses received from BIPOC participants match the consensus that Parks and Recreation, Transportation, and Housing for All are the planning concepts that most aligned with BIPOC participants' vision for the county. These participants also identified compact growth and complete communities as terms that they did not understand the most.

Planning areas	Doesn't fit my vision at all	Doesn't fit my vision	Neutral	Fits my Vision	Absolutely fits my vision	I don't understand what this is about
Parks and Recreation	5%	4%	12%	32%	45%	3%
Transportation and Communications Network	9%	8%	10%	26%	44%	4%
Housing for All	15%	12%	12%	19%	44%	4%
Design Arts and Culture	11%	8%	17%	31%	30%	4%
Compact Growth	20%	9%	13%	23%	24%	11%
Complete Communities	15%	8%	12%	23%	30%	13%

To

supplement this question, the following open-ended question (**Q6**) was asked to give participants the opportunity to talk about issues that Thrive 2050 might have missed:

Q6. *Are there other themes that are important to you but are not included in the question above?*

The most reoccurring answers to this question included:

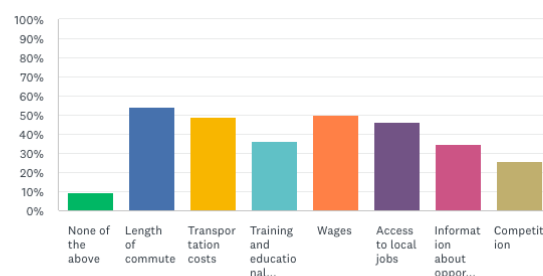
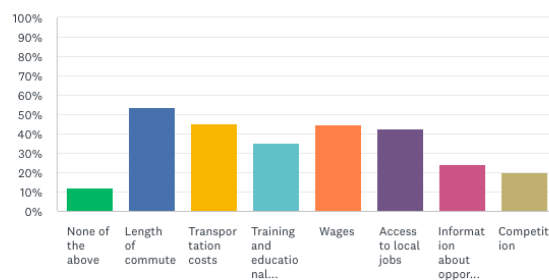
- Schools/education (78 responses)
- Equitable development throughout the county (38 mentions)
- Protecting current neighborhoods (37 responses).

Concerns within Thrive 2050 Focus Planning Areas:

In addition to asking participants how the planning concepts aligned with their vision of the county, the questionnaire incorporated 5 follow up questions (Q8 – Q12) to go more in-depth about

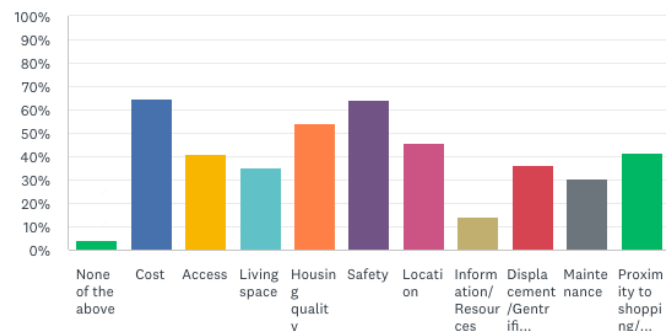
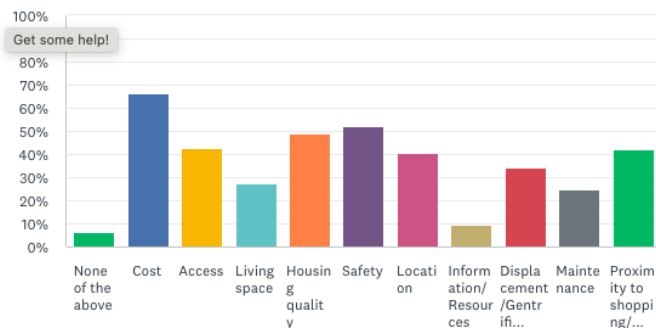
Jobs and Economic Opportunity

The primary concerns include length of commute (54%), Transportation Costs (45%), and Wages (45%), and Access to Local Jobs (42%). These concerns to be the ones of concern within BIPOC participants, however information about job opportunities and competition for jobs increased in prevalence within this population group with 35% and 26% of BIPOC participants reporting as an issue in comparison of the general 24% and 20% reported in the general findings.



Housing Concerns

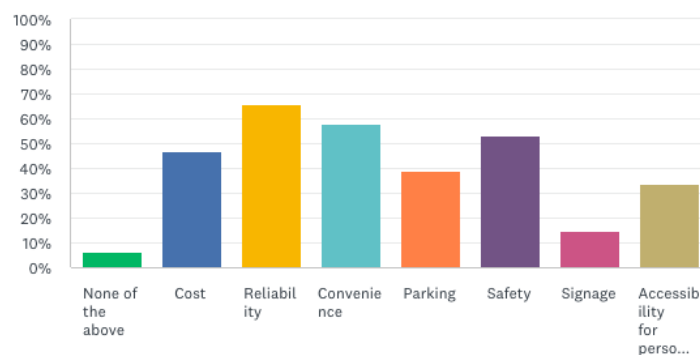
The primary housing concerns included cost (66%), Safety (52%), Housing Quality (48%), Access (43%). There were no significant differences in responses provided by BIPOC communities.



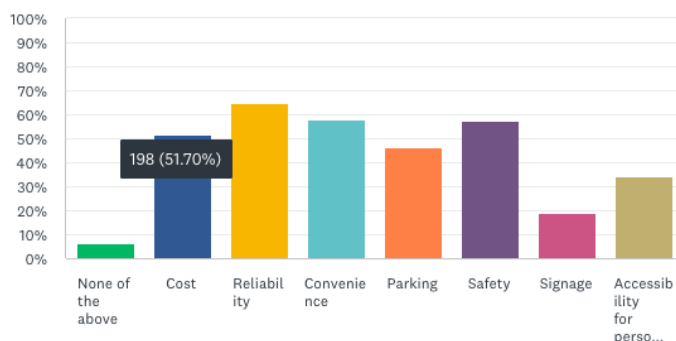
While displacement and gentrification were not in the top 4 concerns for housing, it continued to be a prominent issue identified by participants. In general, 32% of participants identified displacement as housing issue. Within participants from low-income backgrounds (Under \$15,000 and \$15,000-49,999) this number increased to 36% and 37% within participants with incomes between \$50,000 – \$74,999. For those with higher incomes, 31% saw displacement and gentrification as housing concerns.

Transportation Concerns

The top transportation concerns included reliability (66%), Convenience (58%), Safety (53%), and Cost (47%). It is important to emphasize that while accessibility for people with disabilities was not within the top 4 concerns in this area, 33% of participants (459 people), identified this being a primary issue for them when using transportation.

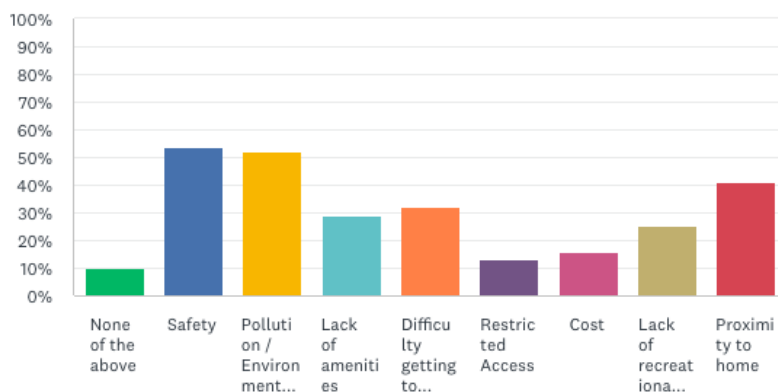


Responses from BIPOC communities identify the same top concerns of reliability (65%), convenience (58%), safety (57%), and cost (52%). However, parking seems to be a more significant issue within BIPOC communities (47% in comparison to 38% from the general responses).

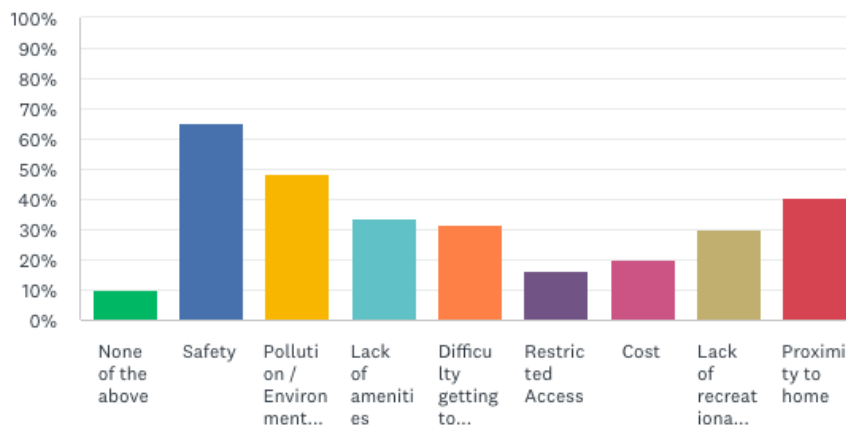


Parks and Public Spaces

For parks and public spaces, the top concerns included safety (54%), pollution (52%), proximity to home (41%) and difficulty getting to parks/public spaces (32%).



The concerns for BIPOC participants are similar, but this was the area where there was the most difference in responses provided by BIPOC participants. Safety was identified as a concern by 65% of BIPOC participants, an 11% percentage difference from the general results findings. Pollution (49%) and proximity to home (41%) continued to be big problems, however, lack of amenities became fourth top concern in this group.



Q12 asked participants to add any other concerns that were critical for them but that were not listed in any of the areas above. Responses included:

- Increasing lack of parking
- Lack of safe and convenient biking infrastructure and amenities
- Climate Resilient Parks (more shade, more splash parks, more seating)
- Lack of Park Maintenance
- Homes and Reliable infrastructure for people with disabilities
- Lack of Housing
- Moving away from single-family housing/neighborhoods
- Crime and Safety
- Overcrowded Schools

For this question, responses from BIPOC communities primarily focused on:

- Crime
- Safety
- Overcrowded neighborhoods
- High Taxes
- Increasing access to housing

In this section, **affordability and safety** continue to be the issues that were prominent throughout all these areas and the open-ended responses. Open ended responses show that participants are getting more uncomfortable being outside their homes for recreational or commuting purposes. These questionnaire responses correlate with information received during the focus groups, which identified participants feeling less confident about their transportation and recreational resources because of lack of safety. Safety issues also continue

to be the primary topic within BIPOC responses in this section of the questionnaire, as well as a guiding topic in the focus group discussions.

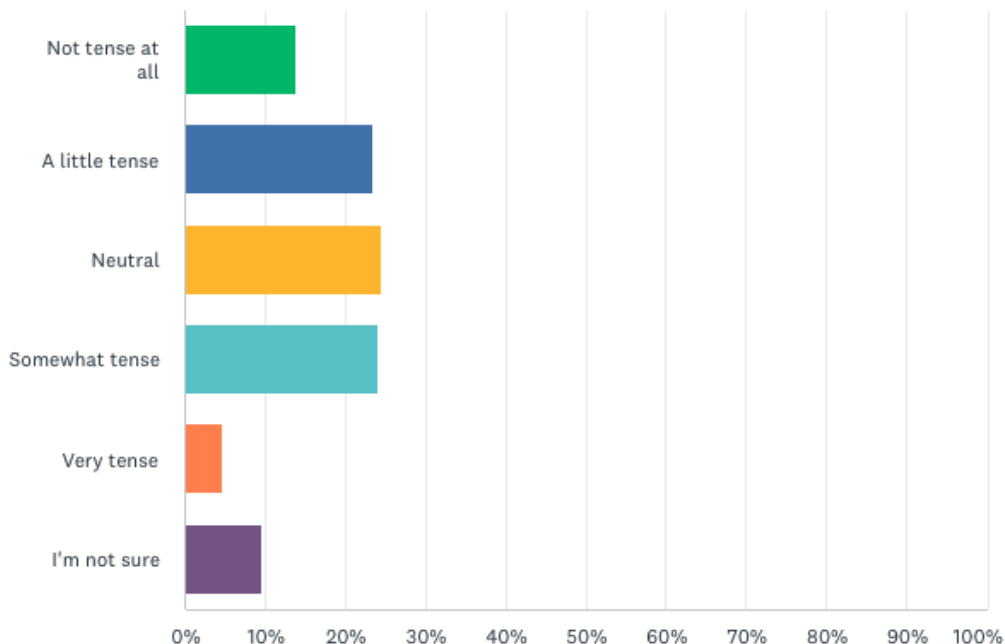
Section 2: Race, Discrimination, and Equity Section [Q14 – Q19]

The Race, Discrimination, and Equity section asked participants to rate race relationships in Montgomery County, share their experience with discrimination in the county, and offer input about the level of public services that their neighborhoods provide to them. The questions that were part of these section included:

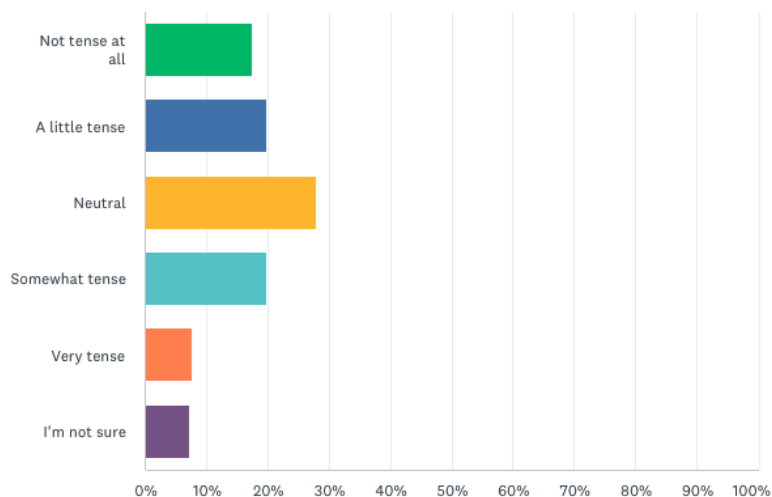
- *Q13: To what extent do you agree that Montgomery County has offered good opportunities for you to get ahead economically?*
- *Q14: In comparison to other neighborhoods in the County, how do you rate your neighborhoods' availability of County services, such as libraries, parks, community centers, schools, and public safety.*
- *Q15: Do you agree with the following statement? My neighborhood can safely and conveniently meet all of the needs of our household.*
- *Q16: How would you rate race relations in Montgomery County?*
- *Q17: Have you ever experienced discrimination based on your ethnicity in Montgomery County?*

Responses from Q19 (From 1-10, how high of a priority should it be for government to address racial equity gaps in education, criminal justice, jobs, health, housing, and other areas?), the average response was 6. This was the average number across the general response pool and responses from BIPOC participants.

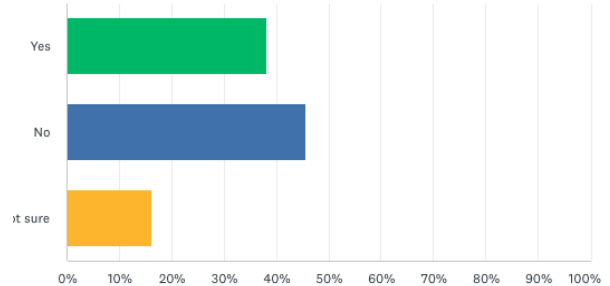
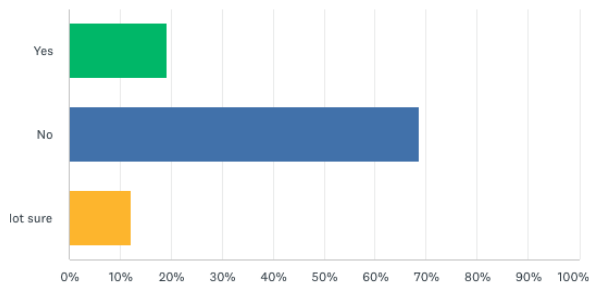
Regarding race relations, participants were asked the question *How would you rate race relations in Montgomery County?* (Q16). 24% of participants identified feeling neutral when asked to rate race relations in Montgomery County, while 23% of participants identified race tensions being a little tense and 24% identified that race relations were somewhat tense. 14%



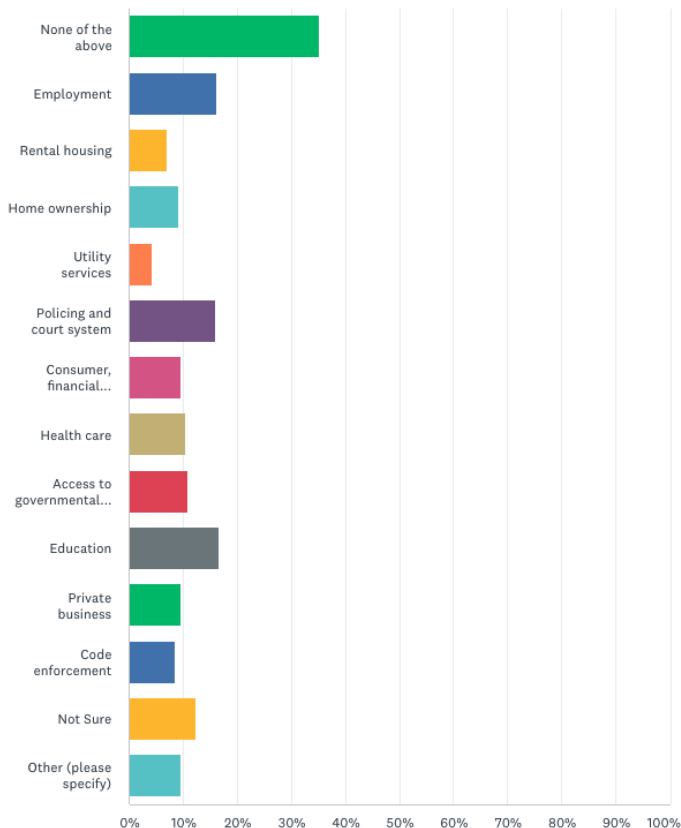
of participants identified race relations not being tense at all and only 5% identified being very tense. Responses within the BIPOC respondents do not show significant differences in this area. 17% of these respondents identified race relations not being tense at all and 8% reporting that race relations were very tense.



However, when asked if participant had experienced discrimination in the county based on their ethnicity or race **[Q17]**, responses from BIPOC communities show more significant differences than the general response numbers from the questionnaire. Overall, 19% identified having experienced discrimination in the county, while 69% said no. These numbers change within BIPOC respondents 38% responding yes and 46% responding no.

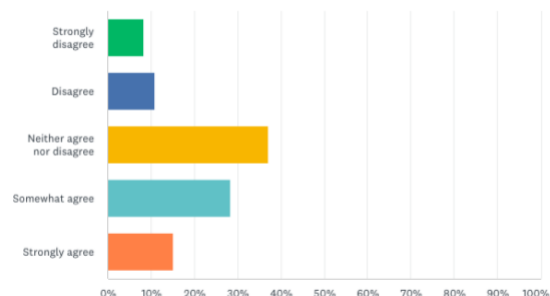
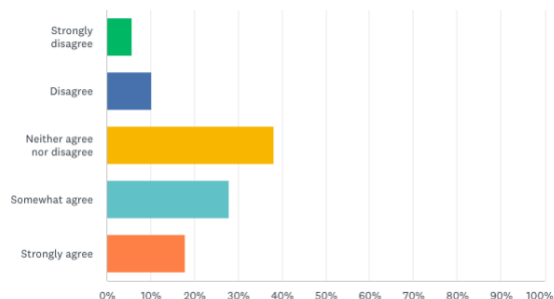


When asked the areas where participants have faced discrimination **[Q18]** BIPOC participants identified employment (16%), Education (17%), policing and court system (16%), and access to governmental resources (11%) as the primary areas.

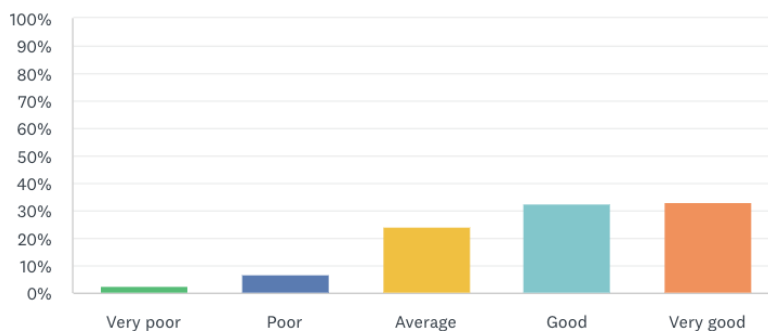


Other questions were asked to identify other equity issues that would directly or indirectly impact the primary planning focus areas identified on Thrive 2050.

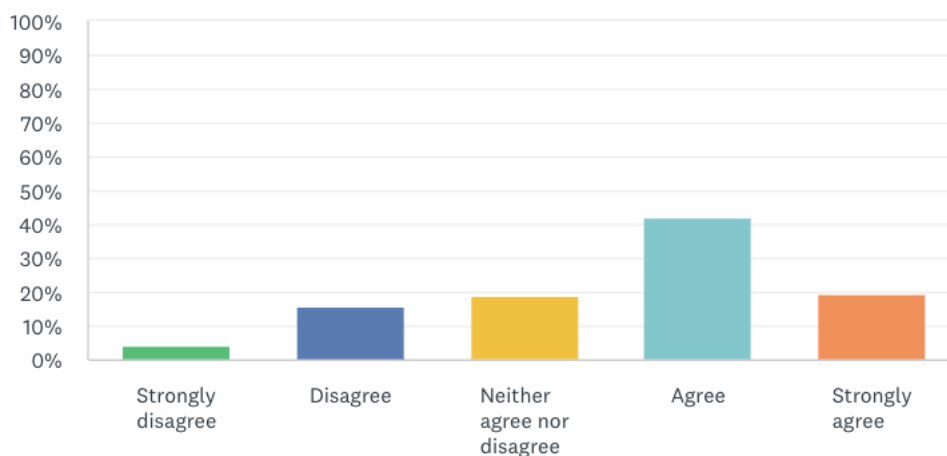
[Q13] asked participants to what extent they agreed that Montgomery County had offered them good opportunities to get ahead economically. For this question, 38% felt neutral about the statement, 18% strongly agreed, 28% strongly agreed, 11% disagreed, and 6% strongly disagreed. Within the BIPOC respondents, the significance was not different. 38% of BIPOC respondents felt neutral about this question. But 15% strongly agreed with the statement and 28% somewhat agreed. 11% of participants disagreed with the statement and 8% strongly disagreed.



Participants were also asked about their experience receiving public resources in their neighborhoods. Q14 asked participants “in comparison to other neighborhoods in the county, how do you rate your neighborhoods’ availability of County services, such as libraries, parks, community centers, schools, and public safety?” Responses showed 38% feeling neutral about this question, while 46% either somewhat agreed or disagreed with the statement. Only 15% disagreed with the statement.



Similar responses were shared for question Q15 which asked if their neighborhood safely and conveniently met all their needs. 62% agreed with this statement.



Section 3: Demographic Information

The Thrive 2050 Community Questionnaire was taken by 1860 people. The questionnaire asked a series of demographic questions to help identify the background of participants. While all participants completed the questions sections of the questionnaire, only 1308 participants completed the demographic section of the questionnaire. The self-reporting demographic information shows the following demographic breakdown for participants.

City and Town

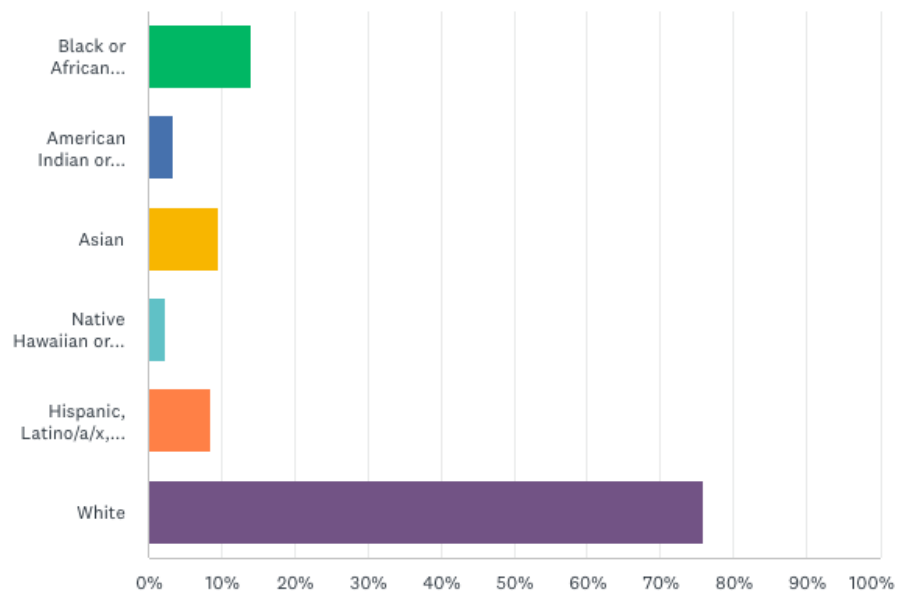
<i>Silver Spring</i>	<i>410</i>
<i>Bethesda</i>	<i>133</i>
<i>Rockville</i>	<i>114</i>
<i>Chevy Chase</i>	<i>89</i>
<i>Gaithersburg</i>	<i>85</i>
<i>Wheaton</i>	<i>49</i>
<i>Takoma Park</i>	<i>64</i>
<i>Kensington</i>	<i>37</i>
<i>Germantown</i>	<i>34</i>
<i>Olney</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>Montgomery Village</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>MD</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Aspen Hill</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>North Bethesda</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Potomac</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Burtonsville</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Clarksburg</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Town Chevy</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Brookeville</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>North Potomac</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Colesville</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Damascus</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Derwood</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Somerset</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Glenmont</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Leesport</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Boyds</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Poolesville</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Town</i>	<i>6</i>

Race and Country of Origin

A totally of 1282 people decided to report their race. The breakdown by race was the following:

White: 976
 Black or African American: 181
 American Indian or Alaska Native: 45
 Asian: 124
 Native Hawaiian or another Pacific Islander: 31
 Hispanic: 111
 No Race given: 514

Total BIPOC: 492



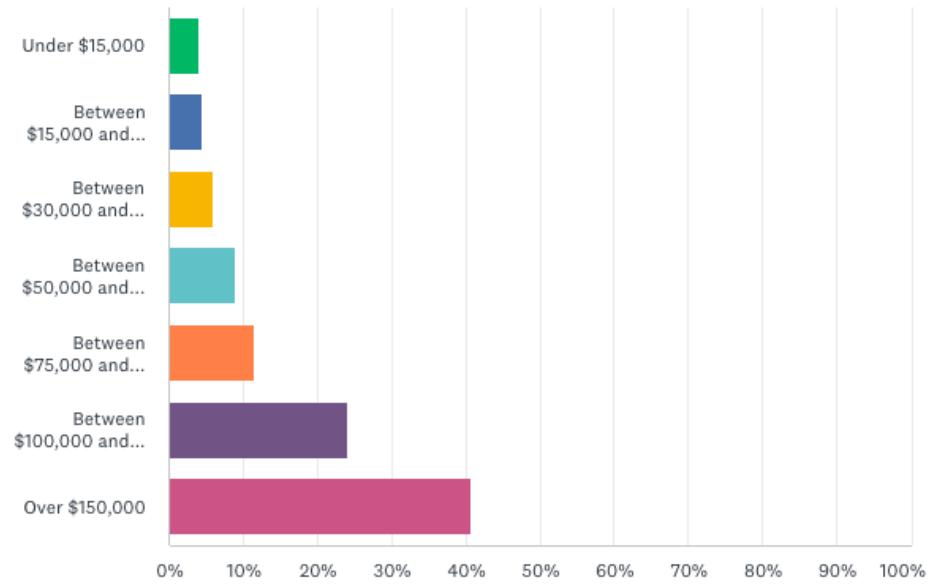
Countries of Nationality

USA
 Peru
 El Salvador
 Ethiopia
 Vietnam
 Colombia
 Venezuela
 Greece
 Cuba
 Russia
 Mexico
 Pakistan
 Scotland
 India

France
Honduras
Brazil
China
United Kingdom
Ukraine
Canada
Czech Republic
Latin American Country immigrant
Somewhere in the Caribbean
Guatemala
Haiti
Iran
Guinea Conarky
Sierra Leonek
Somalia
Japan
Germany
Italy
Eritrea
Trinidad

Income

1287 participants reported their income from 2020.



Under 15,000: 53

Between \$15,00 and \$29,999: 58

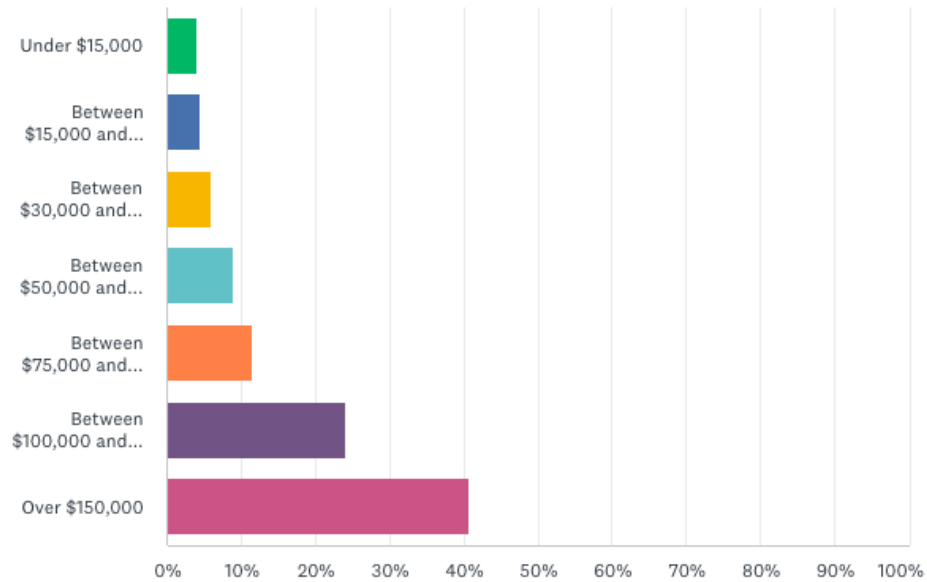
Between \$30,00 and \$49,00: 78

Between \$50,000 and \$74,999: 115

Between \$75,000 and \$99,999: 149

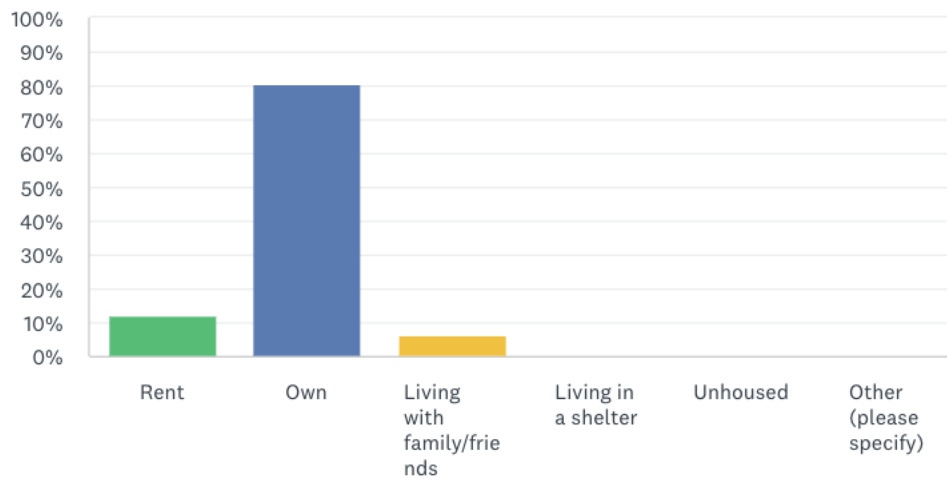
Between \$100,000 and \$150,000: 310

Over \$150,000: 524



Housing status:

1287 participants reported their housing status. 157 reported renting, 1034 owning, 83 living with family and friends, 3 being unhoused, and 10 reporting Other/living in assisted living or retirement community.





Committee: PHED
Committee Review: Completed
Staff: Pamela Dunn, Senior Legislative Analyst
Purpose: Briefing/Discussion – no vote expected
Keywords: #Thrive, Montgomery 2050, M-NCPPC

ADDENDUM
AGENDA ITEM #15
September 20, 2022
Discussion

SUBJECT

The Council will receive a continuation of the consultant briefing on the racial equity and social justice review of the Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee Draft of Thrive Montgomery 2050.

EXPECTED ATTENDEES

Jordan Exantus, Managing Associate, Nspiregreen
Casey Anderson, Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board
Gwen Wright, Director, Montgomery Planning Department
Tanya Stern, Deputy Director, Planning Department

COUNCIL DECISION POINTS & COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

- N/A

DESCRIPTION/ISSUE

- N/A

SUMMARY OF KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

- N/A

This Report Contains:

Addendum
Table: Council Staff Suggested Response to RESJ Report Recommendations
Memo: Planning Department Response to RESJ Report Recommendations

Pages

1
©1-19
©20-37

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MEMORANDUM

September 19, 2022

TO: County Council

FROM: Pamela Dunn, Senior Legislative Analyst

SUBJECT: Thrive Montgomery 2050

PURPOSE: Continuation of briefing by Nspiregreen on the PHED Committee Draft of Thrive Montgomery 2050

This addendum includes two documents prepared in response to the recommendations contained in the Racial Equity and Social Justice Report. The first is a table created by Council staff. It includes the proposed recommendation, a potential edit to the PHED Committee Draft to address the recommendation, and/or an action item that could be added to the Action Appendix, if applicable. In some cases, staff notes existing policies and/or practices in the Draft that address the recommendation.

The second document is a memo prepared by Planning staff that responds to each recommendation in the consultant report. It provides references to text in the Draft related to or addressing the recommendation, it does not suggest edits to the Draft in response to the recommendation. The Planning memo also notes whether a recommendation is currently an item in the Action Appendix or could be added to it.

It is not expected that the Council will have time to review these documents in detail as part of the briefing by Nspiregreen on the recommendations and new racial equity and social justice chapter. They are provided as a suggested path forward, illustrating tangible changes to the PHED Committee Draft in response to the consultant's report.

Attached to this Addendum, on © 1-19, is the Council staff response to the RESJ Report recommendations, and on © 20-37 is the Planning staff response memorandum.

Council Staff Response to Recommendations in the Racial Equity and Social Justice Review Report

General		
Recommendation	Potential Edit to the Draft	Action through Implementation
For all plan chapters, the “How will we evaluate progress?” sections need to include establishing specific targets for equity outcomes - for example: Establish criteria to support black owned businesses recruitment and retention	The PHED Committee Draft includes a list of metrics that may be used to monitor and evaluate progress on the Plan. These lists, at the end of each chapter, are intended as informational and not an exhaustive list of the metrics that will be developed and evaluated on a regular basis.	The Action Appendix currently addresses implementation actions proposed to implement the Plan policies and practices. This Appendix should be updated based on the adopted Plan and include detailed information on metrics and evaluation procedures, including metrics to measure equity outcomes moving forward.
After revising Thrive: Revisit with low-income and BIPOC communities to make sure communities can support the policies before passing the document		Reconnect with low-income and BIPOC communities as well as the focus group members to help revise Implementation/Action Appendix.
Conduct a housing study that will seek to address displacement fears by community, determine how to achieve growth targets, and identify barriers to successful implementation		As part of the Action Appendix review assess the extent to which recent and ongoing work/studies undertaken by the Planning Department include evaluation of displacement, growth targets, and barriers to policy implementation.

Establish working relationships with Communities that prioritize participatory planning and delegate power to vulnerable communities	Edit text in the Introduction on page 9 as follows: “We also must facilitate the integration of neighborhoods by race and income, across all ages. Increasing the share of racially and economically mixed neighborhoods and schools across all parts of the county is critical to ensure that the inequities of the past will not be perpetuated in the future. <u>To this end, planning must establish working, on-going relationships with communities that prioritize participatory planning and must delegate more power to vulnerable communities to bring their voices forward.</u> ”	
Compact Growth		
Recommendation	Potential Edit to the Draft	Action through implementation
Focus density near transit stations	<p>No edit necessary, the Plan includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed growth map on page 20 and the explanation of different tiers (on page 21) is all about concentrating density near transit stations. • Page 19: The intensity of development along these corridors should be aligned with the urban, suburban, and rural context and calibrated to account for existing or planned transit and other transportation infrastructure. • Page 22: Under the “Concentrate growth in centers of activity and along corridors through compact, infill development and redevelopment to maximize the efficient use of land” policy is the following practice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “Amend land use, design, and zoning regulations, including the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations, to support corridor-focused compact development. Appropriate densities will vary but should be sufficient to support, at a minimum, the efficient provision of transit service along these corridors.” 	

When new development comes, efforts need to be made to ensure that the existing community benefits in a significant and meaningful way. Community Benefit Agreements need to have accountability mechanisms and follow up to measure outcomes	Edit text on page 32 as follows: “Specific strategies will be needed to recognize and minimize the negative impacts of gentrification on communities and businesses at risk of displacement, including the recommendations described in the chapter on housing together with policies outside the scope of this plan, such as direct assistance to small and minority-owned businesses <u>and Community Benefit Agreements</u> . <u>It is important to note that these strategies should include accountability mechanisms and metrics to track outcomes.</u> ”	
Partner compact growth with social work that helps residents access housing affordability resources		Add to the Action Appendix: Partner with the Department of Housing and Community Affairs and other not-for-profit housing entities to ensure that residents are informed and provided assistance in accessing housing affordability resources.
Create policy framework to ensure that BIPOC businesses are accessing opportunities in new development(s)	Add a practice under the following policy: “Promote and prioritize public investment in infrastructure along growth corridors and leverage it to attract future private investment in a compact form. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a policy framework to ensure that BIPOC businesses are accessing opportunities in new development(s).” 	Also add to Action Appendix: Create policy framework to ensure that BIPOC businesses are accessing opportunities in new development(s).
In existing low-income areas, prioritize development of parks, open-space and institutional uses to support improved property values	No edit necessary, the Plan includes the following: Ensure that parks and recreation opportunities are equitably distributed along racial, socioeconomic, and geographic lines. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amend the EPS Plan study area to incorporate a more refined analysis of equity in its methodology. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand and improve the use of racial and socioeconomic equity measures in developing capital budgets for park and recreation facilities. • Gather data on – and address – barriers to participation in park and recreation programs. • Improve accessibility of park and recreation facilities via walking, biking and transit. • Ensure that urban, suburban, and rural areas all have access to great parks. 	
If market rate housing is going to be built in areas with naturally occurring affordable housing, strong tools to prevent displacement are needed	Edit practices on page 32 as follows: Prioritize neighborhood-level land use planning as a tool to enhance overall quality of community life and avoid reinforcing outdated land use patterns, <u>with particular attention to preventing displacement.</u>	
Design a clear growth management strategy to protect communities of color from displacement and overcrowding	No edit necessary, under the policy “ Promote racial and economic diversity and equity in housing in every neighborhood ” on page 66, is the practice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop targeted strategies to minimize gentrification and displacement while promoting integration and avoiding a concentration of poverty. 	
Neighborhood stabilization and conservation strategies for communities of color	While the Plan has text to this effect and a practice in the Transportation and Communication Networks chapter, a practice under the “ Identify and integrate elements needed to complete centers of housing, retail, and office development and plan to make 15-minute living a reality for as many people as possible ” policy on page 32 could be added as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Support the creation of neighborhood stabilization and conservation strategies for communities of color.</u> 	

Complete Communities		
Recommendation	Potential Edit to the Draft	Action through implementation
Planning must seek to strengthen existing communities to make them complete. Social networks should be leveraged, and institutions strengthened.	Edit a practice under the “Identify and integrate elements needed to complete centers of housing, retail, and office development and plan to make 15-minute living a reality for as many people as possible” policy on page 32 as follows: Adopt planning approaches that prioritize providing more Complete Communities in service to improving the quality of community life throughout the county <u>that also strengthen existing communities through support of social networks and local institutions.</u>	
Work with County to set up incentives for workforce development youth + adult		Add to Action Appendix: Work with County to create incentives for workforce development for youth and adults.
Leverage partnerships to increase education access		Add to Action Appendix: Leverage public and private partnerships to increase education access.
Design, Arts, and Culture		
Recommendation	Potential Edit to the Draft	Action through implementation
Leverage rich diversity in the County, especially in places like Silver Spring, Rockville, Gaithersburg, and Germantown.	Edit a practice under the “Support arts and cultural institutions and programming to educate, connect and build communities that celebrate our diversity and strengthen pride of place” policy on page 40 as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote public art, cultural spaces, and cultural hubs along corridors and in Complete Communities, <u>leveraging the County’s rich cultural and socio-economic diversity.</u> 	

Explore ways to celebrate “Diversity Hubs” in Montgomery County as places to reinforce inclusion.	<p>Add a practice under the “Support arts and cultural institutions and programming to educate, connect and build communities that celebrate our diversity and strengthen pride of place” policy on page 40 as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Explore ways to celebrate “Diversity Hubs” in Montgomery County as places to reinforce inclusion.</u> 	
Invest in urban design and architecture that promotes safe communities and civic pride	<p>Add a sub-practice under “Use design-based tools to create attractive places with lasting value that encourage social interaction and reinforce a sense of place and inclusion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider changes to codes, design guidelines, and regulatory tools as well as broader use of form-based zoning that focuses on the physical forms of buildings, streets, and spaces to ensure development across the county satisfies the following:” on page 38 as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Encourage investment in urban design and architecture that promotes safe communities and civic pride.</u> 	
Consider CPTED or other standards to encourage safe/welcoming public spaces	<p>Add a sub-practice under “Use design-based tools to create attractive places with lasting value that encourage social interaction and reinforce a sense of place and inclusion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider changes to codes, design guidelines, and regulatory tools as well as broader use of form-based zoning that focuses on the physical forms of buildings, streets, and spaces to ensure development across the county satisfies the following:” on page 38 as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Evaluate the use of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) or other standards in the development of Design Guidelines to encourage safe/welcoming public spaces.</u> 	

Discourage walls and buffers which keep communities disconnected	<p>Edit a sub-practice under “Use design-based tools to create attractive places with lasting value that encourage social interaction and reinforce a sense of place and inclusion.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider changes to codes, design guidelines, and regulatory tools as well as broader use of form-based zoning that focuses on the physical forms of buildings, streets, and spaces to ensure development across the county satisfies the following:” on page 39 as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link individual architectural projects seamlessly to their surroundings irrespective of style, <u>discouraging walls and buffers that can separate or disconnect communities</u>. Civic buildings and public gathering places must be treated as important sites whose design reinforces community identity and a culture of inclusion and democracy. 	
Create official channels for BIPOC artists, neighbors, and businesses owners to come together to provide input on arts and culture		Add to Action Appendix: Create official channels for BIPOC artists, neighbors, and businesses owners to come together to provide input on arts and culture.
Create training, internship, and jobs programs for local artists, specifically local BIPOC artists, to get jobs in advancing public arts and culture		Add to Action Appendix: Create training, internship, and jobs programs for local artists, specifically local BIPOC artists, to get jobs in advancing public arts and culture.
Prioritize inclusion of racial minorities and immigrants in public placemaking to help nurture a sense of culture which celebrates all residents	<p>Add a practice under the “Support arts and cultural institutions and programming to educate, connect and build communities that celebrate our diversity and strengthen pride of place.” policy as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Prioritize inclusion of racial minorities and immigrants in public placemaking to help nurture a sense of culture which celebrates all residents.</u> 	

<p>Invest in urban design that allows communities to adapt to climate change and extreme weather patterns. Pair these plans with long-term maintenance plans to detail plans for maintenance, key players involved, and populations impacted by these plans</p>	<p>No edit necessary, under the policy “Promote design strategies and retrofits to make new and existing buildings more sustainable and resilient to disruption and change.” on pages 39-40 are the following practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage state-of-the-practice sustainability features such as net-zero/carbon-positive buildings, biophilic design and on-site energy generation for new public buildings and large private developments on sites across the county. • Implement policies to ensure that new buildings and parking structures are adaptable to changing technologies and market preferences and are able to mitigate effects of climate change over time. 	<p>In the Action Appendix is the follow suggested action: “Develop guidelines and standards for climate-sensitive design principles and materials for new public and private development projects. Ensure these standards include strategies to maximize greenhouse gas reductions in the built environment, including generating clean renewable energy and reducing heat island effect.”</p>
<p>Sustainable Urban Design needs to be accompanied by formal guidance that ensures equitable use of design technique, sustainable materials, and investment in sustainable infrastructure in all neighborhoods, regardless of the demographic composition of a neighborhood</p>	<p>(See above)</p>	<p>(See above)</p>
<p>Create plans to specifically reuse existing viable buildings to support BIPOC entrepreneurs access affordable spaces for small local businesses</p>	<p>No edit necessary, under the policy “Promote design strategies and retrofits to make new and existing buildings more sustainable and resilient to disruption and change.” on page 39 is the following practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote cost-effective infill and adaptive reuse design strategies to retrofit single-use commercial sites such as retail strips, malls, and office parks into mixed use developments. • Incentivize the reuse of historic buildings and existing structures to accommodate the evolution of communities, maintain building diversity, preserve naturally occurring 	<p>Add to Action Appendix: Create plans to specifically reuse existing viable buildings to support BIPOC entrepreneurs access affordable spaces for small local businesses.</p>

	affordable space, and retain embodied energy of structures.	
Transportation and Communication Networks		
Recommendation	Potential Edit to the Draft	Action through implementation
Improve access to the Ag reserve and urban centers, from neighborhoods through Multi-Modal Transit	<p>Edit a practice under the “Preserve and enhance the Agricultural Reserve and manage it to maintain a rural pattern of development for the benefit of the entire county.” policy on page 23 as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Improve awareness of and <u>multi-modal</u> access to the Agricultural Reserve for the public to experience and directly benefit from this valuable resource for locally grown food, outdoor recreation, and tourism.” 	
Subsidize the cost of shared mobility options for residents with limited access to train stations or bus stops		Add to the Action Appendix: Develop a program to subsidize the cost of shared mobility options for residents with limited access to train stations or bus stops
Encourage mixed-use zoning to integrate a balance of parking options to accommodate car-dependent residents	<p>Edit the following policy and practices on page 50 of the PHED Draft as follows: “Adapt policies to reflect the economic and environmental costs of driving alone, <u>recognizing car-dependent residents and industries remain.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employ pricing mechanisms, such as congestion pricing or the collection and allocation of tolls, <u>equitably</u> to support walking, rolling, bicycling, and transit. • Manage parking efficiently <u>and equitably</u> by charging market rates and reducing the supply of public and private parking. 	
Encourage Antiracism, accessibility, and implicit bias training for		Add to the Action Appendix: Encourage Antiracism, accessibility, and implicit

transportation officials, including decision makers, planners, agency leaders, and bus and train conductors.		bias training for transportation officials, including decision makers, planners, agency leaders, and bus and train conductors.
Address issues faced by commuters travelling to/from outside of the County for work through regional collaboration	<p>Edit the following policy, adding a practice related to regional collaboration, <u>“Develop a safe, comfortable and appealing transportation network for walking, biking, and rolling.”</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support regional collaboration to address challenges faced by commuters travelling to/from outside of the County. 	
Consider exemptions for policies such as congestion pricing and reduced parking for low-income and BIPOC communities	<p>Further edit the following policy and practices on page 50 of the PHED Draft as follows: <u>“Adapt policies to reflect the economic and environmental costs of driving alone, recognizing car-dependent residents and industries will remain.”</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employ pricing mechanisms, such as congestion pricing or the collection and allocation of tolls, <u>equitably</u> to support walking, rolling, bicycling, and transit. • Manage parking efficiently <u>and equitably</u> by charging market rates and reducing the supply of public and private parking. • <u>Consider exemptions for policies such as congestion pricing and reduced parking for low-income individuals.</u> 	
Look at ways to address the costs of transit		Add to the Action Appendix: Investigate mechanism to reduce the cost of transit.
Consider creating land uses such as lots for essential vehicles		Add to the Action Appendix: Consider creating land uses such as lots for private essential vehicles, such as service trucks and shared use vehicles.

Improve communication to address anxiety over changes		Add to Action Appendix: Develop a communication plan to inform and educate changes in policies and regulations in land use.
Identify strategies and partnerships to help address the “digital divide” bringing free networked resources to vulnerable communities	<p>Add a practice under the following policy on page 51 as follows:</p> <p>“Develop and extend advanced communications networks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Support strategies and partnerships to address the “digital divide” and bring network resources to vulnerable communities.</u> 	Add to the Action Appendix: Identify strategies and partnerships to help address the “digital divide”.
Housing for All		
Recommendation	Potential Edit to the Draft	Action through implementation
Encourage establishment of rent to own programs and create systems to educate homeowners on how to protect and enhance their investments.	<p>No edit necessary, under the policy, “Promote racial and economic diversity and equity in housing in every neighborhood” is the following practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand existing programs designed to increase access to homeownership, especially among low-income residents, people of color, and young adults; create new programs and entities such as community land trusts to maintain long term affordable homeownership opportunities. 	Add to Action Appendix: Increase outreach and education to renters on rent to own programs and create or expand educational programs for homeowners on how to protect and enhance their investments.
Make home improvement and maintenance incentives available to low income property owners who spend a certain proportion of their income on housing costs.		Add to the Action Appendix: Expand home improvement and maintenance incentives available to low income property owners who spend a certain proportion of their income on housing costs, including potential modifications to the single-family rehabilitation loan program administered by the Department of Housing and Community Affairs.

Weatherization programs will help with County's sustainability goals and improve health outcomes for residents. Prioritize making grant dollars and incentives available to low income families to improve their indoor environmental quality and overall resource management.		Add to the Action Appendix: Prioritize incentives available to low income families to improve their indoor environmental quality and overall resource management, including grants and educational resources.
Integrate high-income neighborhoods by identifying a threshold of low-income housing which supports the local economy – enough housing should be provided to ensure that people who work in retail, service and other low wage earning employment sectors have the option not to commute.	<p>Edit a practice under the “Encourage the production of more housing to better match supply with demand” policy as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of income-restricted affordable housing units, especially for low-income households <u>with particular attention to high-income neighborhoods to ensure that people who work in retail, service and other low wage earning employment sectors have the option not to commute.</u> 	
Develop a zoning and design strategy which allows different housing types to be built and high income (primarily single family) areas that will preserve existing property values through careful design and allow for low income residents to live with dignity.	<p>Edit a practice under the “Plan for a wide range of housing types and sizes to meet diverse needs” policy as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support creative housing options including personal living quarters and/or micro units; “missing middle” housing types such as tiny houses, cottages, duplexes, multiplexes, and small apartment buildings; shared housing, cooperative housing, co- housing, and accessory dwelling units (ADUs), to help meet housing needs and diversify housing options <u>throughout the County.”</u> 	
Missing Middle: Based on the observed trend over time of the widening wealth gap between economic elites and the working		Add to Action Appendix: Study the potential for expansion and/changes to the County's Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit and Workforce Housing Programs.

class, it is doubly important to ensure that future development makes room for the growing low to moderate income class. New development should preserve at least 15 to 20% of units for the lowest income earners, but also set aside at least 20% for low to moderate income households i.e. Workforce housing that people earning standard wage jobs can afford.		
Promote and expand inclusionary zoning with tools such as density bonuses and reduced parking requirements for developers that build affordable housing		Add to Action Appendix: Evaluate the success and/or possible modifications to the current inclusionary zoning tools such a density bonuses and reduced parking requirements.
Develop system for measuring outcomes to ensure that initiatives put in place to help communities of color are having intended outcomes.		Add to Action Appendix: Develop system for measuring outcomes to ensure that initiatives put in place to help communities of color are having intended outcomes.
Increase checks and balances to offset the personal bias that impacts programs meant to help people of color but end up causing problems due to inadequate safeguards.		Add to Action Appendix: As part of the continued implementation of the Racial Equity and Social Justice Act, increase checks and balances to offset the personal bias that impacts programs meant to help people of color but can end up causing harm due to inadequate safeguards.
Reestablish the River Road Growth Corridor to provide opportunities	River Road from the Beltway to Potomac Village was removed in the PHED Committee Draft as a corridor since this portion of River Road does not meet the definition of a corridor. This	

for low-moderate income housing development.	<p>recommendation is focused on housing opportunities. The following policy and revised practice further the goal of more housing in higher-income areas: “Encourage the production of more housing to better match supply with demand” policy as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of income-restricted affordable housing units, especially for low-income households <u>with particular attention to high-income neighborhoods to ensure that people who work in retail, service and other low wage earning employment sectors have the option not to commute.</u> 	
Identify new mechanisms to provide supportive housing for vulnerable residents, with a special focus on those who may be aging out of youth programs (18-24)	<p>Edit a practice under the “Encourage the production of more housing to better match supply with demand.” policy as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of the commitment to the Housing First approach, develop strategies to build deeply affordable housing and provide permanent supportive housing, <u>with a special focus on those who may be aging out of youth programs.</u> 	
Advocate on the state and federal level of funding to support development of low-income housing		Add to Action Appendix: Advocate on the state and federal level for funding to support development of low-income housing.
Identify and inventory existing areas that have private restrictive covenants and work with state to address		Montgomery Planning is already working on the <i>Mapping Segregation</i> project to identify racial restrictive covenants. Could add to the Action Appendix an item to address restrictive covenants by homeowners’ associations at the state level.

<p>Work with lenders to make capital available to BIPOC and low-income first-time home buyers to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identify subsidies to support down payment and weatherization and - integrate green systems opportunities (solar, water, etc.) 		<p>Add to Action Appendix: Work with lenders to make capital available to BIPOC and low-income first-time home buyers to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identify subsidies to support down payment and weatherization and - integrate green systems opportunities (solar, water, etc.)
<p>Identify Affordable housing targets and create realistic measures to reach them</p>		<p>N/A: The County supports the Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments' regional housing targets, including targets for Montgomery County. And the Action Appendix currently includes an action to "Create a Housing Functional Master Plan to provide measurable housing goals and strategies for different market segments in Montgomery County as well as an analysis of affordability gaps and impediments to the housing supply."</p>
<p>Preserve naturally occurring affordable housing</p>	<p>No edit necessary, under the "Promote racial and economic diversity and equity in housing in every neighborhood" policy on page 65 is the following practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refine regulatory tools and financial and other incentives with the goal of avoiding a net loss of market-rate and income-restricted affordable housing stock without erecting disincentives for the construction of additional units. 	
<p>Develop social and cooperative housing</p>	<p>No edit necessary, under the "Plan for a wide range of housing types and sizes to meet diverse needs" policy is the following practice:</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider features of other housing models such as social housing that, in addition to providing long-term affordability for low and moderate-income households, emphasizes architectural quality, environmental performance, and social stability. 	
Strengthen strategies to deal with unsheltered populations	<p>Edit the following practice under the “Encourage the production of more housing to better match supply with demand” policy as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of the commitment to the Housing First approach, develop strategies to build deeply affordable housing and provide permanent supportive housing <u>in support of unsheltered populations.</u> 	
Strengthen strategies aimed at foreclosure prevention		Add to Action Appendix: Evaluate and strengthen strategies aimed at foreclosure prevention.
Increase developer impact fees if the economic case can be made		Council is required to review the Growth and Infrastructure Policy on a quadrennial basis which often includes an evaluation of development impact fees. It is not needed in the Action Appendix for the General Plan.
Parks, Recreation, and Natural Resources		
Recommendation	Potential Edit to the Draft	Action through implementation
Establish clear environmental thresholds and targets with a focus on improving access to parks and enhancing environmental quality and resource management in communities of color	<p>No edit necessary, under the “Ensure that parks and recreation opportunities are equitably distributed along racial, socioeconomic, and geographic lines.” are the following two practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amend the Energized Public Spaces Plan study area to incorporate a more refined analysis of equity in its methodology. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand and improve the use of racial and socioeconomic equity measures in developing capital budgets for park and recreation facilities. 	
Inventory and establish plan to address environmental justice issues		<p>Two actions already included in the Action Appendix:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Develop guidance to conduct a racial equity and social justice impact analysis when planning, designing and budgeting for new community facilities such as libraries, recreation centers, schools, parks, and public infrastructure to determine whether the new amenity will be accessible to nearby residents of all backgrounds and will reduce any existing inequities in access.” “Ensure environmental and sustainability services improve public health, allow for opportunities for nature interpretation and education, and corrects environmental justices within equity and/or densely populated areas.”
Racial Equity and Social Justice		
Recommendation	Potential Edit to the Draft	Action through implementation
Conduct analysis to determine social and economic costs of past discriminatory practices to develop an implementation plan to address the legacies of racism. This should		Add to Action Appendix: however, should be noted that a thorough analysis should include multiple county departments and agencies.

serve as a baseline for determining what reparations might look like.		
Capital Improvement Program should be aligned with Thrive		There is language in the economy chapter recommending the Capital Improvements Program be aligned with Thrive; however, an item could be added to the Action Appendix requiring a systematic review.
Ensure that priority is given to projects that show benefit to vulnerable communities. Address the most serious 'wounds' first.		If there is to be a systematic review of the alignment of the CIP with Thrive, use of the Equity Focus Areas (already developed by Planning), and the Community Equity Index (currently being developed) could help with prioritization of project with the most benefit to vulnerable communities.
Protect and preserve historic African American and Indigenous sites	<p>Add a practice under the "Use design-based tools to create attractive places with lasting value that encourage social interaction and reinforce a sense of place and inclusion." policy as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Support the preservation of historic African American and Indigenous cultural sites and resources.</u> 	In the current Action Appendix is the following action item: "Partner with local, statewide, and federal cultural heritage organizations to seek grants that promote and preserve historical and cultural sites county wide."
Encourage distribution of assets and resources that reflects a prioritization of historically disadvantaged residents, giving them a chance to "catch-up" and level the proverbial playing field.		This would be supported by the earlier recommendation to add a systematic review of the alignment of CIP with Thrive using the Equity Focus Areas and a soon to be complete, Community Equity Index, as tools in the evaluation.
Establish programs and policies which create opportunities for vulnerable groups to participate more fully in business opportunities		Add to Action Appendix for the Executive Branch or MCEDC: Establish programs and policies which create opportunities for vulnerable groups to

		participate more fully in business opportunities.
Look for opportunities to improve outcomes for vulnerable communities through regional partnerships and collaboration		Add to the Action Appendix: Explore opportunities to improve outcomes for vulnerable communities through regional partnerships and collaboration.
Hospitality and Life Sciences cluster - Work to achieve a way in for low-income and minority residents through partnerships and workforce development opportunities		Add to the Action Appendix for the Executive Branch, MCEDC or WorkSource Montgomery: Explore avenues of entry into the Hospitality and Life Science sector for low-income and minority residents; consider partnerships and workforce development opportunities.
Identify opportunities for Capacity Building to increase the capacity for target communities to have meaningful participation - Create pathways into the planning profession for local people of color from diverse communities		Add to Action Appendix: Identify opportunities for Capacity Building to increase the capacity for target communities to have meaningful participation. Currently in the Action Appendix is the following proposed action: "Partner with Montgomery County Public Schools to introduce students to Thrive Montgomery 2050 and local land use planning as a part of the standard educational curriculum."



Montgomery Planning Responses

Recommended Changes to Thrive Montgomery 2050 noted in Consultant Report September 15, 2022

The Montgomery County Planning Department provides the following responses to recommendations for changes to the Planning, Housing and Economic Development Committee (PHED) draft of the Thrive Montgomery 2050 Plan. These recommendations are contained in the Thrive Montgomery 2050 Racial Equity and Social Justice Review Report by Nspiregreen and Public Engagement Associates, consultants to the County Council, on pages 42 to 45 of the report.

The report's recommendations and Montgomery Planning's responses are grouped into three categories:

- 1) Recommendations that duplicate policies or actions that already exist in [Thrive Montgomery's policy chapters](#) or [Actions List](#);
- 2) Recommendations that are more appropriate to be added to the Actions List for Thrive Montgomery rather than in the policy chapters; and
- 3) Recommendations that Montgomery Planning believes are not appropriate for a general land use plan like Thrive Montgomery 2050 and could be addressed elsewhere in county policy.

Please note: all page references in the responses are to the PHED Committee Draft.

I. Recommendations that duplicate existing policies or actions in Thrive Montgomery 2050

Many of the recommended changes in the report are already present in Thrive Montgomery's policy chapters or in the Actions list. Responses to those recommendations, including noting where they currently exist in Thrive Montgomery, follow.

- ***For all plan chapters, the "How will we evaluate progress?" sections need to include establishing specific targets for equity outcomes - for example: Establish criteria to support black owned businesses recruitment and retention.***

Response:

On page 84, Thrive already has three key racial equity and social inclusion metrics. These metrics are somewhat general by design and the document notes that they will be further refined during the subsequent review of the Actions List. In addition, Planning is including a FY24 budget proposal to further refine the Thrive implementation metrics.

- ***Focus density near transit stations.***

Response:

Montgomery Planning Responses to Nspiregreen's Recommended Changes to Thrive Montgomery 2050

This is already a major focus of Thrive and all the recommendations in the document reinforce this idea. The following are a few of the many citations about transit-oriented development in the current draft:

- The proposed growth map on page 20 and the explanation of different tiers (on page 21) is all about concentrating density near transit stations.
- Page 19: The intensity of development along these corridors should be aligned with the urban, suburban, and rural context and calibrated to account for existing or planned transit and other transportation infrastructure.
- Page 22: Amend land use, design, and zoning regulations, including the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations, to support corridor-focused compact development. Appropriate densities will vary but should be sufficient to support, at a minimum, the efficient provision of transit service along these corridors.
- ***When new development comes, efforts need to be made to ensure that the existing community benefits in a significant and meaningful way. Community Benefit Agreements need to have accountability mechanisms and follow up to measure outcomes.***

Response:

Thrive already talks about developing policies against displacement and other negative effects of new development. Page 32: *"Specific strategies will be needed to recognize and minimize the negative impacts of gentrification on communities and businesses at risk of displacement, including the recommendations described in the chapter on housing together with policies outside the scope of this plan, such as direct assistance to small and minority-owned businesses."* Community benefit agreements language can be added to the quote on page 32 as another example of a tool to mitigate the negative impacts of new development on existing BIPOC communities. It should be noted that all optional method projects – including almost all projects in the CR family of zones – require public benefits that are negotiated with each project. One of Montgomery Planning's projects in FY23 is to update and improve the public benefit point system. Community benefit agreements can be discussed as a part of this project, and this could be mentioned in the Actions List.

- ***In existing low-income areas, prioritize development of parks, open-space and institutional uses to support improved property values.***

Response:

This recommendation is the same as the recommendation on page 76 of the Thrive PHED draft. Additionally, one of the three main goals of Montgomery Parks Energized Public Spaces Master Plan is to *"Prioritize parks and public spaces for implementation using social equity and other factors."* Because rising property values affect people in different ways, and potentially in ways that reduce social equity, they should not be goals of recommendations. Encouraging investment is a positive externality of park or open space creation, but it's not the end of equity-specific recommendations, in which case equity itself should be the goal.

- ***If market rate housing is going to be built in areas with naturally occurring affordable housing, strong tools to prevent displacement are needed.***

Response:

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This concern is highlighted in several locations in the plan. See page 25 of the PHED Committee draft, and page 32 – as noted above. In addition, it is important to note that our Neighborhood Change research has provided data that concludes that disinvestment and concentration of poverty are greater threats in Montgomery County than displacement. The data shows that very little naturally occurring affordable housing has actually been removed for new housing.

- ***Design a clear growth management strategy to protect communities of color from displacement and overcrowding.***

Response:

See page 65 of the plan: *Develop targeted strategies to minimize gentrification and displacement while promoting integration and avoiding the concentration of poverty.*

- ***Neighborhood stabilization and conservation strategies for communities of color.***

Response:

Montgomery Planning's Neighborhood Change study demonstrates that most neighborhoods in Montgomery County – unlike other communities such as the District of Columbia – have been stable and have not experienced significant economic changes. More than displacement, Montgomery County's communities of color have suffered from disinvestment. This requires a set of strategies that will allow for reinvestment while maintaining existing housing and community character. Thrive Montgomery includes policies that speak to the need for greater public investment in communities of color, such as the East County.

On page 9, the plan states: *Advancing racial equity through just planning policies and public investments in underserved communities, promoting the racial and economic integration of neighborhoods, and focusing on the potential for the design of communities to help build social trust and inclusion while encouraging civic participation are among the most significant elements of Thrive Montgomery 2050.*

On page 25, the plan states: *The identification of growth corridors in the East County – particularly along Route 29 and the Georgia Avenue corridor along Metrorail's Red Line – is vital to reversing decades of no growth and ensuring that the benefits of growth are more equitably distributed across lines of geography, class, and race. Political opposition to development in the East County – most clearly expressed by the removal of the I-95/Route 29 corridor in the 1993 Refinement of the Wedges and Corridors Plan from the areas identified as appropriate for growth – pushed public and private investment to the west. Subsequent public and private investment was focused along the I-270 corridor because this area appeared to offer the best prospects for growth and success. Meanwhile, the East County became relatively less attractive for employers and residents, feeding a cycle of stagnation.*

On page 50, the plan states: *Focus investment in communications infrastructure and services to connect people and parts of the county that lack convenient access to jobs and educational opportunities.*

- ***Invest in racial equity.***

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Response:

We agree and believe that many of the plan recommendations do just this. The plan – which focuses on land use – makes a specific set of recommendations on page 25 about rebalancing the geographic distribution of opportunity. Further, almost all of the recommendations in the plan, including those aimed specifically at increasing equity, require funding or investment to be implemented.

- ***Leverage rich diversity in the County, especially in places like Silver Spring, Rockville, Gaithersburg, and Germantown.***

Response:

We agree and believe that this is the message communicated throughout the plan. For example, see pages 11 and 12, page 36, and particularly page 38: *“Recalibrate Investments in Arts and Culture with Equity in Mind.”*

- ***Explore ways to celebrate “Diversity Hubs” in Montgomery County as places to reinforce inclusion.***

Response:

Thrive addresses the idea of diversity and inclusion in the following two statements, and diversity and inclusion are a key part of what is envisioned by Complete Communities:

Page 9: *In parallel with steps to reduce inequity in the geographic distribution of resources and opportunities, Montgomery County must work to build a shared sense of purpose that can help strengthen efforts to promote respect for diversity, demonstrate the value of inclusion, and build a foundation for greater trust.*

Page 39: *Link individual architectural projects seamlessly to their surroundings irrespective of style. Civic buildings and public gathering places must be treated as important sites whose design reinforces community identity and a culture of inclusion and democracy.*

- ***Invest in urban design and architecture that promotes safe communities and civic pride.***

Response:

Thrive addresses this on page 9: *“Advancing racial equity through just planning policies and public investments in underserved communities, promoting the racial and economic integration of neighborhoods, and focusing on the potential for the design of communities to help build social trust and inclusion while encouraging civic participation are among the most significant elements of Thrive Montgomery 2050.”*

- ***Discourage walls and buffers which keep communities disconnected.***

Response:

On page 9, Thrive discusses the Impacts of Past Practices, and on page 74, it states: *“Parks conceived*

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as buffers often act as separators rather than gathering places for people."

- **Create training, internship, and jobs programs for local artists, specifically local BIPOC artists, to get jobs in advancing public arts and culture.**

Response:

Action D-13 in the current Actions list states: *"Support the Arts and Humanities Council in creating inclusive arts and culture plans that establish a refreshed vision, set goals, criteria, and priorities for the county's support of the arts and culture sector and addresses how the county's arts and culture resources are allocated."*

- **Prioritize inclusion of racial minorities and immigrants in public placemaking to help nurture a sense of culture which celebrates all residents.**

Response:

Page 40 of the plan has a strong set of recommendations regarding how the County should *"Support arts and cultural institutions and programming to educate, connect and build communities that celebrate our diversity and strengthen pride of place."*

- **Invest in urban design that allows communities to adapt to climate change and extreme weather patterns. Pair these plans with long-term maintenance plans to detail plans for maintenance, key players involved, and populations impacted by these plans.**

Response:

Page 39 of the Draft Plan: *"Encourage state-of-the-practice sustainability features such as net-zero/carbon-positive buildings, biophilic design and on-site energy generation for new public buildings and large private developments on sites across the county."*

Also, Action D-9 states: *"Develop guidelines and standards for climate-sensitive design principles and materials for new public and private development projects. Ensure these standards include strategies to maximize greenhouse gas reductions in the built environment, including generating clean renewable energy and reducing heat island effect."*

- **Sustainable Urban Design needs to be accompanied by formal guidance that ensures equitable use of design technique, sustainable materials, and investment in sustainable infrastructure in all neighborhoods, regardless of the demographic composition of a neighborhood.**

Response:

Area master plans typically have design guidelines, as part of plan document for small area plans and as a separate document for larger areas, that address these issues and apply equally in all areas of the master plan regardless of the demographic composition of the neighborhood.

On page 39, the draft plan states: *"Establish standards for public facilities that align with infill and redevelopment strategies and acknowledge the county's limited land supply and ambitious climate-*

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action goals."

- ***Create plans to specifically reuse existing viable buildings to support BIPOC entrepreneurs access affordable spaces for small local businesses.***

Response:

On Page 39, Thrive states, *"Promote cost-effective infill and adaptive reuse design strategies to retrofit single-use commercial sites such as retail strips, malls, and office parks into mixed use developments. Incentivize the reuse of historic buildings and existing structures to accommodate the evolution of communities, maintain building diversity, preserve naturally occurring affordable space, and retain embodied energy of structures."*

- ***Improve access to the Ag Reserve and urban centers, from neighborhoods through Multi-Modal Transit.***

Response:

The Planning Board Draft had a specific reference to transit access to the Ag Reserve, but it was changed by the PHED Committee to: *"Improve awareness of and access to the Agricultural Reserve for the public to experience and directly benefit from this valuable resource for locally grown food, outdoor recreation, and tourism."* (P. 23).

- ***Subsidize the cost of shared mobility options for residents with limited access to train stations or bus stops.***

Response:

Action T-23 in the current Actions list states: *"Apply pricing mechanisms in Montgomery County to foster equity and distribute revenue to promote walking, bicycling, and transit."*

- ***Encouraged mixed-use zoning to integrate a balance of parking options to accommodate car-dependent residents.***

Response:

Compact growth and Complete Communities are all about mixed use zoning. The County has been a leader in mixed use zoning since the early 1990s. In all of our mixed use areas, there are still parking requirements in new development for individuals who use cars, but the goal is to balance parking and travel by car with other modes. Page 48 of the plan states: *The point of this plan's emphasis on supporting alternatives to automobile travel is not to eliminate driving, but to make short trips around town by bicycle or bus safe and appealing.*

- ***Address issues faced by commuters travelling to/from outside of the County for work through regional collaboration.***

Response:

See page 47 of the plan that addresses this issue. In addition, there are two actions in Thrive's Actions List that address this recommendation:

Action T-16. Form a subregional transportation or transit authority, such as the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority, that would include Montgomery County and Prince George's County,

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among others.

Action T-17. Develop short-term and long-term bus transit plans to extend local and regional bus service to underserved communities in Montgomery County, improve reliability, frequency, and span of service and restructure local and regional bus service to integrate with existing and planned rail and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT).

- ***Consider exemptions for policies such as congestion pricing and reduced parking for low-income and BIPOC communities***

Response:

Action T-23 in the current Actions list states: *"Apply pricing mechanisms in Montgomery County to foster equity and distribute revenue to promote walking, bicycling, and transit."*

- ***Identify opportunities for Capacity Building to increase the capacity for Target communities to have meaningful participation***

Response:

This bullet is similar to the one in the General section at the front of this document. Through our Equity in Planning Agenda, Montgomery Planning is always looking for ways to improve our outreach and engagement with communities that are typically underrepresented in the planning process. As we work on future master plans, we will continue to find creative ways to involve these communities in the planning process.

Action D-20 in the current Actions list states, "Partner with Montgomery County Public Schools to introduce students to Thrive Montgomery 2050 and local land use planning as a part of the standard educational curriculum."

- ***Encourage distribution of assets and resources that reflects a prioritization of historically disadvantaged residents, giving them a chance to "catch-up" and level the proverbial playing field.***

Response:

This language is similar to language Montgomery Planning proposed in a new chapter on Equity that was submitted for consideration by the Council.

- ***Protect and preserve historic African-American and Indigenous sites***

Response:

On page 39, Thrive states: "Preserve, renew, and reuse existing and historic buildings, districts, and landscapes to affirm the continuity and evolution of communities while celebrating local culture and identity."

Action D-19 states: *"Partner with local, statewide, and federal cultural heritage organizations to seek grants that promote and preserve historical and cultural sites county wide."*

- ***Capital Improvement Program should be aligned with Thrive***

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Response:

On Page 7, under “How Thrive Montgomery 2050 addresses economic health”, Thrive states: *“Thrive Montgomery 2050 plays an important role in strengthening our economic competitiveness by creating the kind of places where people with diverse choices want to live and work. Its recommendations for land use, transportation, parks, and other public and private infrastructure lay the groundwork for economic development initiatives undertaken by other entities. For example, **the county’s Capital Improvement Program (CIP) should be aligned with Thrive Montgomery 2050’s recommendations** to make our neighborhoods more attractive for private development by providing high quality transit, sidewalks and a walkable grid of streets, great urban parks, and high-performing and racially integrated schools”.* (Emphasis added).

- **Inventory and establish plan to address environmental justice issues.**

Response:

Action C-6 states: *“Develop guidance to conduct a racial equity and social justice impact analysis when planning, designing and budgeting for new community facilities such as libraries, recreation centers, schools, parks, and public infrastructure to determine whether the new amenity will be accessible to nearby residents of all backgrounds and will reduce any existing inequities in access.”*

Action P-27 states: *“Ensure environmental and sustainability services improve public health, allow for opportunities for nature interpretation and education, and corrects environmental injustices within equity and/or densely populated areas.”*

- **Establish clear environmental thresholds and targets with a focus on improving access to parks and enhancing environmental quality and resource management in communities of color.**

Response:

On page 76, Thrive says: *“Ensure that parks and recreation opportunities are equitably distributed along racial, socioeconomic, and geographic lines.”*

- **Strengthen strategies to deal with unsheltered populations**

Response:

This recommendation is already in Thrive on page 64: *“As part of the commitment to the Housing First approach, develop strategies to build deeply affordable housing and provide permanent supportive housing.”*

- **Develop social and cooperative housing**

Response:

This recommendation is already in Thrive on page 65:

“Support creative housing options including personal living quarters and/or micro units; “missing middle” housing types such as tiny houses, cottages, duplexes, multiplexes, and small apartment

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buildings; shared housing, cooperative housing, co- housing, and accessory dwelling units (ADUs), to help meet housing needs and diversify housing options.”

And “Consider features of other housing models such as social housing that, in addition to providing long-term affordability for low and moderate-income households, emphasizes architectural quality, environmental performance, and social stability”

- ***Preserve naturally occurring affordable housing***

Response:

Thrive talks about naturally occurring affordable housing in the following places:

Page 39: *Incentivize the reuse of historic buildings and existing structures to accommodate the evolution of communities, maintain building diversity, preserve naturally occurring affordable space, and retain embodied energy of structures.*

Page 65: – *“Refine regulatory tools and financial and other incentives with the goal of avoiding a net loss of market-rate and income-restricted affordable housing stock without erecting disincentives for the construction of additional units.”*

Page 69: *Preservation of both naturally-occurring and regulated existing affordable units will minimize gentrification and displacement as these communities see future investments in transit infrastructure, schools, and amenities.*

On page 71, one of the measures of evaluating progress is: *“Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing preserved, overall and by area of county.”*

- ***Identify Affordable housing targets and create realistic measures to reach them***

Response:

In November, 2019, The County Council adopted a [Resolution](#) to support Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments’ regional housing targets, which included targets for Montgomery County.

(1) Amount: At least 320,000 housing units should be added in the region between 2020 and 2030. This is an additional 75,000 units beyond the units already forecast for this period.

(2) Accessibility: At least 75% of all new housing should be in Activity Centers or near high-capacity transit.

(3) Affordability: At least 75% of new housing should be affordable to low- and middle-income households.

For Montgomery County, the Resolution supported the *“goal of producing 10,000 housing units above the existing forecast, including housing that will be produced in the City of Gaithersburg and City of Rockville.”*

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Action H-19 in the current Actions list states: *"Create a Housing Functional Master Plan to provide measurable housing goals and strategies for different market segments in Montgomery County as well as an analysis of affordability gaps and impediments to the housing supply."*

- ***Identify strategies and partnerships to help address the "digital divide" bringing free networked resources to vulnerable communities.***

Response:

On page 50, Thrive states: *"Focus investment in communications infrastructure and services to connect people and parts of the county that lack convenient access to jobs and educational opportunities."*

- ***Encourage establishment of rent to own programs and create systems to educate homeowners how to protect and enhance their investments***

Response:

Thrive already addresses homeownership programs on page 65: *"Expand existing programs designed to increase access to homeownership, especially among low-income residents, people of color, and young adults; create new programs and entities such as community land trusts to maintain long term affordable homeownership opportunities."* It is important to note that most rent to own programs are predatory, especially for communities of color.

- ***Integrate green systems opportunities (solar, water, etc.)***

Response:

Thrive has a number of recommendations covering all aspects of environmental sustainability, climate change and community resilience.

On page 11, it states: *To effectively reduce greenhouse gas emissions and slow the effects of climate change will require "greening" of our electricity grid through a significant increase in clean energy generation in the County, likely employing both large-scale solar PV projects where feasible and smaller distributed solar PV installations.*

Page 22: *Improve the environmental sustainability of growth by encouraging infill and redevelopment to curb sprawl and bring areas built out in an era with little or no environmental regulations up to robust standards for stormwater management and other state-of-the-practice environmental standards.*

On page 39: *Encourage state-of-the-practice sustainability features such as net-zero/carbon-positive buildings, biophilic design and on-site energy generation for new public buildings and large private developments on sites across the county.*

Action G-9 states: *Evaluate opportunities for siting alternative energy production and storage systems*

Action D-9 states: *Develop guidelines and standards for climate-sensitive design principles and*

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materials for new public and private development projects. Ensure these standards include strategies to maximize greenhouse gas reductions in the built environment, including generating clean renewable energy and reducing heat island effect.

- ***Develop a zoning and design strategy which allows different housing types to be built and [in] high income (primarily single family) areas that will preserve existing property values through careful design and allow for low income residents to live with dignity.***

Response:

Thrive already has language to this effect on Page 65: *“Support creative housing options including personal living quarters and/or micro units; “missing middle” housing types such as tiny houses, cottages, duplexes, multiplexes, and small apartment buildings; shared housing, cooperative housing, co- housing, and accessory dwelling units (ADUs), to help meet housing needs and diversify housing options.”*

“Preserv[ing] existing property values” in the context of providing more affordable housing is problematic as there is no evidence that allowing different types of housing or affordable housing has a negative effect on nearby property values according to a [recent study by the Urban Institute of housing mix and property values in the City of Alexandria](#).

- **Missing Middle: Based on the observed trend over time of the widening wealth gap between economic elites and the working class, it is doubly important importance to ensure that future development makes room for the growing low to moderate income class. New development should preserve at least 15 to 20% of units for the lowest income earners, but also set aside at least 20% for low to moderate income households i.e. Workforce housing that people earning standard wage jobs can afford.**

Response:

Missing Middle recommendation is already in Thrive on page 65: *“Support creative housing options including personal living quarters and/or micro units; “missing middle” housing types such as tiny houses, cottages, duplexes, multiplexes, and small apartment buildings; shared housing, cooperative housing, co- housing, and accessory dwelling units (ADUs), to help meet housing needs and diversify housing options.”*

- Montgomery Planning closely examined affordability requirements for Missing Middle housing types during Attainable Housing Strategies Study. The set aside of 40% is not economically feasible for smaller, infill missing middle projects (further, it is not feasible for larger projects either without subsidy).
- DHCA already administers a formal Workforce Housing affordable housing program (for 80-120% of AMI)– there are problems with the program currently that make it difficult to administer. Therefore, it is not emphasized in Thrive.
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DHCA/housing/singlefamily>
- However, workforce housing is already broadly mentioned in Thrive on page 65: *“Calibrate the applicability of the Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit (MPDU) program and other affordable housing programs to provide price-regulated units appropriate for income levels ranging from deeply affordable to workforce.”*

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- ***Promote and expand inclusionary zoning with tools such as density bonuses and reduced parking requirements for developers that build affordable housing***

Response:

We already extensively use the tools of inclusionary zoning, density bonuses, and reduced parking requirements. We probably have the most generous bonus density policy in the country.

On page 65, Thrive already recommends, “*Calibrate the applicability of the Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit (MPDU) program and other affordable housing programs to provide price-regulated units appropriate for income levels ranging from deeply affordable to workforce.*”

- ***Develop system for measuring outcomes to ensure that initiatives put in place to help communities of color are having intended outcomes.***

Response:

As noted previously, there are already general metrics proposed regarding equity. In addition, Planning is including a FY24 budget proposal to further refine the Thrive implementation metrics and can further consider how to measure outcomes by race. Many of the housing metrics included on page 71 of the plan are disaggregated by race.

- *Number of and proportion of cost-burdened households disaggregated by race*
 - *Combined housing and transportation costs disaggregated by race*
 - *Rent and mortgage payments as a proportion of household income disaggregated by race*
 - *Number and percent of low-income households in a census tract (concentration of poverty)*
 - *Number and percent of low-income households lost in a census tract over a period of time (displacement)*
 - *Racial and income diversity within neighborhoods*
 - *Rates of homeownership by race, income, and area*
 - *Number of affordable units by type, overall and by area of county*
 - *Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing preserved, overall and by area of county*
 - *Number of homeless residents*
- ***Advocate on the state and federal level of funding to support development of low-income housing***

Response:

Similar action already included in Actions list: “*Work with Prince George’s County and the State of Maryland to attain a 9 percent Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) set-aside for Montgomery and Prince George’s Counties.*” – page 13 (Actions list). Could rework action about LIHTC set-aside to be broader.

- ***Identify new mechanisms to provide supportive housing for vulnerable residents, with a special focus on those who may be ageing out of youth programs (18-24)***

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Response:

There is already a Housing First policy and policy for supportive housing types like PLQs (aka SROs) in thrive on page 64: *"As part of the commitment to the Housing First approach, develop strategies to build deeply affordable housing and provide permanent supportive housing"*

On page 65, Thrive recommends *"Support creative housing options including personal living quarters and/or micro units; "missing middle" housing types such as tiny houses, cottages, duplexes, multiplexes, and small apartment buildings; shared housing, cooperative housing, co- housing, and accessory dwelling units (ADUs), to help meet housing needs and diversify housing options."*

- ***Ensure the priority is given to projects that show benefit to vulnerable communities. Address the most serious 'wounds' first.***

Response:

The Equity Focus Areas, which are already in place, and the Community Equity Index (currently being developed) allow us to prioritize projects in this way.

- **Reestablish the River Road Growth Corridor to provide opportunities for low-moderate income housing development.**

Response:

The PHED Committee removed the River Road growth corridor from the Planning Board Draft. Planning staff would have no problem if the Council wants to reestablish it.

II. Recommendations that are more appropriate for inclusion in Thrive Montgomery's Actions List instead of the policy chapters

Some recommended changes are more appropriate additions to the Actions List instead of the high-level policy guidance in Thrive Montgomery 2050.

- ***Partner compact growth with social work that helps residents access housing affordability resources.***

Response:

Compact growth is a fundamental concept of Thrive. We agree that it is essential that other programs under the control of the County Executive – in agencies such as HHS and DHCA – need to be aligned with the overall vision. The County's DHCA and not-for-profit housing entities can focus on helping residents access housing affordability resources where need is greatest. If a specific statement to that effect in this land use plan would be helpful, it could be added in the Actions List.

- ***Work with County to set up incentives for workforce development youth + adult.***

Response:

This specific reference to workforce development is an item that could be included in the Actions List. However, Thrive already acknowledges the importance of a strong and diverse workforce as

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stated on page 8 of the document.

- **Look at ways to address the costs of transit.**

Response:

This can be an Action item for the executive branch to consider. Please note that the county is already addressing and prioritizing transit cost reduction. For example, it considered continuing to make Ride-On free after the pandemic, but it was too financial burdensome. The County has decided to reduce fares from the pre-pandemic \$2 to \$1. Increased ridership in higher density areas will bring higher revenues and help the county continue to subsidize transit fares as much as financially feasible.

- **Consider creating land uses such as lots for essential vehicles.**

Response:

This should be an Action item for a comprehensive study as it is a very complicated and controversial issue. It must be separated from any infill and missing middle kind of initiative as it will not only conflict with using street right-of way of off-site parking for duplexes and triplexes in residential zones, but also create questions about the "change of neighborhood's character" issues.

- ***Conduct a housing study that will seek to address displacement fears by community, determine how to achieve growth targets, and identify barriers to successful implementation.***

Response:

In the preparation of Thrive, a number of housing studies were completed including a "[Housing Needs Assessment](#)", and "[Preservation of Affordable Housing Study](#)" which looked at both subsidized affordable housing and naturally occurring affordable housing. These studies informed the policies in Thrive. Additional work on this issue can be an action item to expand on the extensive work Montgomery Planning has already done, such as [The Neighborhood Change Study](#), which explores displacement and concentration of poverty in Montgomery County.

- ***Leverage partnerships to increase education access.***

Response:

This is a detailed action item that may be appropriate for the Actions List.

- ***Identify way to improve access to recreational programming, jobs, and education for young people 16-24.***

Response:

This is a detailed action item that may be appropriate for the Actions List.

- ***Incentives for BIPOC entrepreneurs + pathways to contracts.***

Response:

This is a detailed action time that may be appropriate for the Actions List. The executive branch may

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want to comment on a number of these action ideas as they have been working in these areas for a number of years.

- ***Consider CPTED or other standards to encourage safe/welcoming public spaces.***

Response:

Mentioning a specific safety review mechanism such as CPTED is too specific for a general plan, but if needed it can be added to the Actions List. Also, CPTED is planning jargon that lay people are not aware of.

- ***Create official channels for BIPOC artists, neighbors, and businesses owners to come together to provide input on arts and culture***

Response:

This could be on an Actions item as a specific idea for the Montgomery County Arts and Humanities Council, which already does much of this.

- ***Create policy framework to ensure that BIPOC businesses are accessing opportunities in new development(s).***

Response:

The County's small business development office already provides this kind of service and if it would be helpful to provide specific direction to the Executive Branch about expanding these efforts, that could be included in the Actions List.

- ***Hospitality and Life Sciences cluster - Work to achieve a way in for low-income and minority residents through partnerships and workforce development opportunities.***

Response:

This could be an Action item for MCEDC, Worksource Montgomery, and the County Executive's office to explore.

- ***Look for opportunities to improve outcomes for vulnerable communities through regional partnerships and collaboration.***

Response:

This could be an Action item for further exploration.

- ***Establish programs and policies which create opportunities for vulnerable groups to participate more fully in business opportunities.***

Response:

This could be an action item for the Executive Branch or MCEDC as they are the lead economic development implementers. The recommendation is too tactical for the General Plan's policy guidance and is outside the authority of Montgomery Planning to implement.

- ***Strengthen strategies aimed at foreclosure prevention***

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Response:

This could be an action item for the Department of Housing and Community Affairs. Foreclosure has not been a significant issue in the County.

- **Make home improvement and maintenance incentives available to low income property owners who spend a certain proportion of their income on housing costs.**

Response:

This is similar to the current single-family rehabilitation loan program administered by DHCA. If included, it should be an Action item and reworded with an emphasis on potential adjustments/expansion of the existing program.

- **Weatherization programs will help with County's sustainability goals and improve health outcomes for residents. Prioritize making grant dollars and incentives available to low income families to improve their indoor environmental quality and overall resource management.**

Response:

This is too detailed for a general plan. But it can be part of a Housing Functional Master Plan include in the current Actions list (H-19): *"Create a Housing Functional Master Plan to provide measurable housing goals and strategies for different market segments in Montgomery County as well as an analysis of affordability gaps and impediments to the housing supply."*

State also has weatherization program listed on DEP's website:

<https://dhcd.maryland.gov/Residents/Pages/wap/default.asp>

- ***Identify and inventory existing areas that have private restrictive covenants and work with state to address***

Response:

Montgomery Planning is already working on the [Mapping Segregation project](#) to identify racial restrictive covenants. There could be a separate Action item to address restrictive covenants by homeowners associations at the state level.

- ***Conduct analysis to determine social and economic costs of past discriminatory practices to develop an implementation plan to address the legacies of racism. This should serve as a baseline for determining what reparations might look like.***

Response:

This could be an Action item. We are currently conducting an analysis of racially restrictive covenants in Montgomery County. This is only one component of the legacy of racism, and it's difficult to quantify the lasting impacts. A full accounting would require a significant commitment of staff and resources from both Planning and County agencies.

III. Recommendations that are not appropriate for inclusion in a general plan or are process recommendations

Other recommended changes are beyond the scope of a general land use plan and/or are already present in existing county programs or policies. Some recommendations relate to process changes.

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Where the recommendation relates to an existing program, it may be more appropriate to revise the suggested addition to reflect an adjustment or expansion of an existing program, instead of establishing a new program with a similar focus.

- ***After revising Thrive: Revisit with low-income and BIPOC communities to make sure communities can support the policies before passing the document.***

Response:

The current schedule calls for Council action by October 25, 2022, due to County Code prohibiting the County Council, during an election year, from acting on a master plan or zoning change after October 31. As the consultants' data shows, there is majority support ranging from 51% to 83% – specifically from BIPOC residents who participated directly in the focus groups – for policies related to Housing, Transportation, Design Arts and Culture, and Parks and Recreation in Thrive. As Thrive is implemented and policies are considered for action, there will be extensive engagement with BIPOC and other residents.

- ***Allow more time and resources to complete drafting RESJ Review language.***

Response:

The Council – after working on Thrive for 1 ½ years - has decided that it wants to act on Thrive by October 25, 2022. Thrive is not an end but rather a beginning for making RESJ issues a part of all planning work going forward. Montgomery Planning is already working on a number of equity related initiatives that will further explore RESJ issues as they pertain to Montgomery County, including its Equity Focus Areas mapping, Mapping Segregation analysis, a statistical study of Neighborhood Change, and a Community Equity Index.

- ***Establish working relationships with Communities that prioritize participatory planning and delegate power to vulnerable communities.***

Response:

Through our Equity in Planning Agenda, Montgomery Planning is always looking for ways to improve our outreach and engagement with communities that are typically underrepresented in the planning process. We have expanded our toolkit of equitable engagement strategies through several recent master plans, such as the Fairland and Briggs Chaney Master Plan currently underway. We also have drafted an Equitable Engagement Guide that will be completed soon. As we work on future master plans, we will continue to find creative ways to involve these communities in the planning process.

- ***Increase developer impact fees if the economic case can be made***

Response:

Montgomery County has some of the highest impact fees in the region. Council periodically reviews the growth policy and makes decisions about impact fees. In the 2020 Growth and Infrastructure Policy, the Council made the decision to “right size” (i.e. decrease) development impact fees. This is a tactical recommendation and not appropriate for a General Plan.

- ***Improve communication to address anxiety over changes.***

Montgomery Planning Responses to Nspiregreen's Recommended Changes to Thrive Montgomery 2050

Response:

This should be part of a broader discussion on how to do better outreach and educate citizens about land use and related topics outside of the implementation of Thrive.

- ***Identify subsidies to support down payment and weatherization***

Response:

This is a programmatic recommendation and not appropriate for a General Plan. HOC, the county, and state have down payment assistance programs.

<https://www.hocmc.org/homeownership.html>

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/green/energy/assistance.html>

State also has weatherization program:

<https://dhcd.maryland.gov/Residents/Pages/wap/default.asp>

If it were included as an Action item, it should focus on expanding these programs.

- ***Work with lenders to make capital available to BIPOC and low-income first-time home buyers***

Response:

This recommendation addresses work done by DHCA and HOC and is too tactical for a General Plan. HOC has a homeownership program offering qualified buyers home loans and down payment/closing cost assistance: <https://www.hocmc.org/homeownership.html>

- ***Increase checks and balances to offset the personal bias that impacts programs meant to help people of color but end up causing problems due to inadequate safeguards.***

Response:

This is an operational recommendation and not appropriate for the General Plan. Certainly, it is a topic that M-NCPPC, Montgomery County, and MCPS should address as part of the continued implementation of the Racial Equity and Social Justice Act.

- ***Encourage Antiracism, accessibility, and implicit bias training for transportation officials, including decision makers, planners, agency leaders, and bus and train conductors.***

Response:

This recommendation is operational and not appropriate for a land use general plan. Please note that Montgomery Planning, as part of its Equity in Planning Agenda, already requires ongoing racial equity and social justice training for all of its employees and has an ADA accessibility initiative underway, including training, to improve accessibility to Planning Department materials and community engagement. County agencies are required under the county's Racial Equity law to implement similar initiatives for their employees.