



**Councilmember  
Will Jawando**



**County Council  
President  
Tom Hucker**



**Councilmember  
Hans Riemer**

Montgomery County is looking to make major changes to the way we live, with Thrive Montgomery 2050: No new highways, and replacing single family homes with duplexes, triplexes and quadplexes without any input from us. Did you know? Of course not, its much easier for the County to make changes when WE don't know! That's why I started EPIC of MoCo - Empowering People In Communities of MoCo, because we all deserve a seat at the table.

The development process for Thrive Montgomery 2050, the County's proposed new 30-year general plan, has been plagued with irregularities. Rather than following standard procedure for preparing and reviewing this momentous new "vision" for our County, the Planning Board and Council have followed an ad hoc set of procedures for "finalizing" this document.

## **How the process should go**

*Thrive Montgomery 2050* is a general plan for the County for the next 30 years. The normal master plan development process includes:

- A complete “staff draft” of the proposed document (“*Thrive*”, *in this case*) would go to the Planning Board A hearing would be held AND....
- Then, after the hearing, the Planning Board would have work sessions to refine the proposed document.

However, after the Planning Staff presented their draft of *Thrive* to the Planning Board, Chair Casey Anderson announced that he thought the draft was poorly organized and badly written. Then stated he would rewrite it with the help of his staff. As a result, the rewrite was not completed by the November 19th Planning Board hearing, so that hearing was held on the original draft, even though the document was still being changed. That was the first problem.

The second problem was that Chair Anderson’s version, called the *Planning Board Draft*, was released chapter by chapter, rather than as an entire document. Each week, the Planning Board would review one chapter and get a preview of the next (potentially out of order, at that). It was impossible to follow the process, as they dealt with the changed content and then made additional changes. This continued from December 2020 to April 2021.

*Thrive* is meant to provide the framework and tools for subsequent actions such as zoning text amendments (ZTAs) and bills - to carry out *Thrive* goals and policies.

In December 2020, Councilmember Will Jawando introduced his own ZTA, calling for duplexes, townhouses, and apartments in R-60 zones within 1 mile of Metro stations.

## How the process should go

When a ZTA is introduced to the County Council:

- The Council holds a hearing
- The ZTA would go to the Planning Board staff for technical review; where the Planning Board reviews staff’s suggestions and can change them, before sending recommendations back to the Council.
- Then, the ZTA goes to the PHED (Planning, Housing, and Economic Development) committee for work sessions;
- Once the PHED approves a version, it goes to the full Council for their work sessions and a vote.

## When a ZTA is generated by planners:

- Planning Staff and the Planning Board interact to create a version of a ZTA that the Board approves.
- The ZTA goes to the Council, which holds a hearing,
- Then sends it to the PHED for work sessions and approval
- Once the PHED approves it, the ZTA goes to the full Council for a vote.

In March 2021 Councilmembers Hucker and Riemer sent a letter to the Planning Board requesting a new ZTA that included multiplex housing on transit corridors. There was no standard process followed for that request, either.

In April, the Planning Board's draft of *Thrive* went to the County Council, which held two hearings in June. The PHED then began its work sessions. Councilmember Riemer was pushing hard to get it through the PHED by the end of July; however, Councilmember Friedson raised concerns about the process and Councilmember Jawando felt there was insufficient outreach, particularly within Black communities

Meanwhile, the PB is going full speed ahead on the Attainable Housing Strategy (AHS) initiative. Why should you care? Once again, *Thrive* isn't even finished, before the PB is moving on to another set of ZTAs, loosely identified through the *Thrive* plan.

- Too many of the standard processes have been ignored
- A transparent process including broad community input from potentially affected communities.
- One size fits all land use
- Current residential zoning will be changed to allow duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, without any public input

## Join Us in Telling The County Council

### We Won't Thrive with Thrive

Email: [County.Council@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:County.Council@montgomerycountymd.gov)

Sign the petition ONLINE through [change.org](http://chnng.it/v8HF74DqPb): <http://chnng.it/v8HF74DqPb>

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