



We've changed our name from Nine Districts for MoCo to EPIC of MoCo to continue the movement we created by standing up to the Montgomery County Council. Now, you're needed more than ever. Thrive Montgomery 2050, is a General Plan, which will increase density by changing residential zoning to allow for market rate duplexes, triplexes and quadplexes to be built in single-family neighborhoods, This zoning will allow developers to build "by right", which means you no longer will have a say in what is being built next door to you! Most county residents are totally unaware of it and the impact it will have on their lives and property values. To view previous emails and County documents pertaining to Thrive Montgomery 2050, please visit <http://www.epicofmoco.com>

September 20th's meeting of the County Council's Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) committee focused on the new general plan's first two chapters, "Compact Growth: Corridor-Focused Development" and "Complete Communities: Mix of Uses and Forms." Committee Chair Hans Riemer, Planning Board Chair Casey Anderson, and Director Gwen Wright sought to dispel confusion about the complex document. They did not always succeed.

Meeting participants contended that, "Thrive is a 'vision' document and a framework for future growth," which is why key specifics about its implementation do not always appear in the text. Councilmember Andrew Friedson repeatedly sought clarification of definitions and terms. Reflecting concerns from Darnestown residents, he asked how "villages and neighborhood centers" would be expected to grow. "It's

confusing,” he noted, adding that he had trouble explaining plans to his constituents. The plan designates as “limited growth (or suburban) areas” some communities that see themselves as rural. Friedson asked for clearer definitions in the next phase of the document. “We need something tangible and understandable for residents,” he said

Friedson also complained that Thrive growth maps did not match another six to nine planning maps or include sufficient detail on specific communities. Riemer responded that “not everything is on here” and “we don’t do planning from this map... You need to look at what is beneath it to understand our intent.” The map is just a “representation” of actual plans, Riemer said. And, because maps were developed at different times for different purposes, according to staff, they do not always match.

Friedson requested more work to improve the consistency of planning maps. Accordingly it would be useful to explicitly request a comprehensive (and exhaustive) list of each jurisdiction in the county and a map that identified each jurisdiction as a large, medium, small, or other type of “growth center” under the draft plan. Friedson also inquired why the plan designates River Road, rather than Old Georgetown Road, as a major corridor in the plan because it lacks a plan for immediate transit centers and does not connect “activity centers.” Wright responded that a long-term possibility for River Road is to be part of a connection to the Beltway and the American Legion Bridge (a prospect of possible concern to residents)

Anderson and Riemer sought to clarify the meaning of “complete communities” and “15-minute living” in the document. They “explained” that the plan doesn’t envision complete communities everywhere and few areas offer 15-minute walkability. These concepts, though central to the document, are not to be taken literally, they said. Clearly, the plan must further clarify the actual intent of this goal and how it will be implemented and measured throughout the county and in specific areas or jurisdictions.

Riemer repeatedly stressed that growth corridors involve not just downcounty areas like Bethesda, Wheaton, and Silver Spring but upcounty jurisdictions like Gaithersburg, Germantown, and Clarksburg. Changes will also include Olney, which will have a Bus Rapid Transit line, within the planned growth under Thrive.

Riemer concluded the meeting by rejecting the need for a fiscal impact statement for Thrive. Because it is a “vision and a philosophy,” rather than an actual plan, he argued, there is no need for financial analysis right now. Riemer's resistance to this step in the process raises concerns, however, given the plan’s vast scope and the County Office of Management and Budget's recent reported estimate of more than \$8 billion to implement the current recommendations in Thrive.

While Thrive Montgomery 2050 serves as an overall framework for future planning, its lack of specificity will continue to trouble residents and county agencies. Moving forward, protecting the future of our communities and meeting residents’ needs will require far more than what the Thrive plan seems to provide.

We can make a difference, but not without you! This is how you can help.

-Sign the petition

-Town Hall sign-up link [Webinar Registration - Zoom](#)

-Donate <https://gofund.me/0b68e2c8>

Sign the Petition

EPIC OF MoCo- Empowering People In Communities of MoCo

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