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

Montgomery Planning
Meeting-in-a-Box Kit
THRIVEMONTGOMERY.COM

Dear Community Leader,

Thank you for joining the conversation about the future of Montgomery County. The Montgomery County Planning Department (Montgomery Planning) looks forward to hearing from you on how you imagine your community over the next few decades. We are in the process of updating our General Plan, the policy document that guides growth in the county, and we want to make sure that all voices are heard as we think about Montgomery County in 2050.

Sweeping changes are occurring now that the county did not face 50 years ago: climate change, increasing population diversity, autonomous vehicles, new technologies and so much more.

All of these changes will affect how we travel, live, work and play. That's why we need an updated plan for Montgomery County. The Thrive Montgomery 2050 Plan we create together will guide policy and investment decisions in the decades to come. Three broad outcomes of economic health, community equity and environmental resilience provide an organizing framework for our conversations and analysis. Using this framework throughout the planning process, we'll consider the forces that drive change, topics of interest and possible actions.

The plan will draw on your vision and ideas for your community, as well as planning best practices, expert analysis and innovative responses. Together, we'll determine how to manage growth in the future and address the challenges and opportunities from technological, social, environmental and economic change.

We need your help and the help of your community to make sure that we have captured your ideas for the future. Use the materials in this Meeting-in-a-Box for an upcoming neighborhood association meeting, discussion, gathering or event. We want to make sure your voice is heard in planning our future.

Get involved:

- Request a meeting with Montgomery Planning staff or invite them to your meeting.

- Sign up for the Thrive Montgomery 2050 email list to be notified about events and conversations happening near you.

- Go to www.thrivemontgomery.com to learn more about Thrive Montgomery 2050.

- Take our Thrive Quiz and share your priorities.

- Contact us to learn more about how we are planning for the future of the county:
    Email: thrive2050@montgomeryplanning.org
    Twitter: @montgomeryplans
    Facebook: facebook.com/montgomeryplanning
    Instagram: @montgomeryplanning

Over the next few months, look for Thrive Montgomery 2050 at events and near places where you live or work. We'll also be on social media, online and in your inbox (if you let us!), all with opportunities for you to share your thoughts quickly and easily on what it will take to keep Montgomery County thriving to 2050 and beyond.

We need your help to envision a future worth planning for. Thank you for your willingness to participate in this important project!
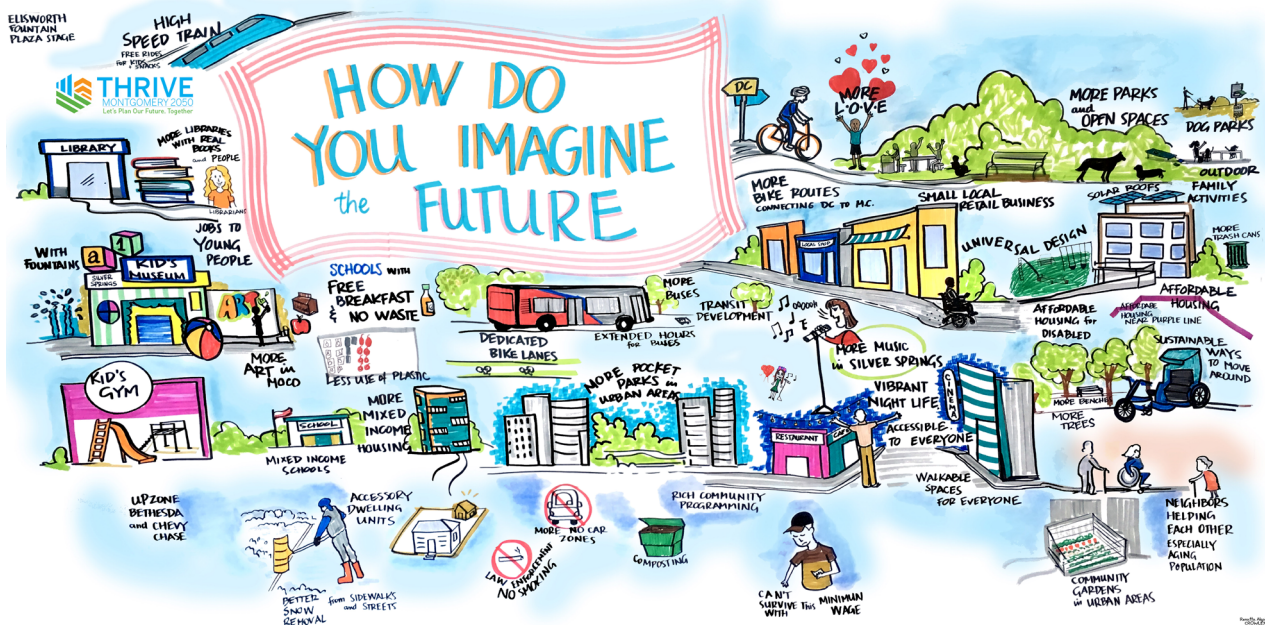
Sincerely,

Gwen Wright

Gwen Wright
Montgomery Planning Director

MEETING-IN-A-BOX OVERVIEW

What will Montgomery County be like in 2050? The Meeting-in-a-Box kit is a tool designed for use by civic and neighborhood associations, community groups or friends to gather and share their ideas for the future of Montgomery County, ideas that will help to inform and shape the Thrive Montgomery 2050 plan. The Meeting-in-a-Box kit contains everything you need to host a discussion about the future of Montgomery County.

CONTENTS

HOST GUIDE

ROLES

Defining roles can help create an interactive environment for everyone to participate throughout the meeting. Attendees need to assume three main roles in order to help keep your meeting running smoothly:

- **Host (1)** – Responsible for printing out materials, facilitating the meeting, completing the *Host Feedback Form*, collecting all materials and returning materials to Montgomery Planning staff.

- **Note-taker (at least 1)** – Responsible for writing down notes from the discussion on the *Group Priority Worksheet*. If you break into smaller groups, you will need a note-taker for each group.

- **Participants (everyone)** – Responsible for engaging in the exercises, completing the *Participant Worksheet*.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR MEETING HOSTS

PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

1. Introduce the community to Thrive Montgomery 2050, Montgomery County's General Plan update.
2. Solicit community input on priorities and topics that will be addressed in the Thrive Montgomery 2050 plan.

TIME NEEDED

1 hour for the meeting, plus time to plan and prepare.

MATERIALS NEEDED

1. One copy of the Meeting-in-a-Box packet.
2. Additional copies of the Participant Worksheet for each participant.
3. Pens for participants.

CONDUCTING YOUR MEETING

1. Invite your friends, neighbors, colleagues or others to your meeting (Host)

- Identify and invite participants to your meeting. Around 8-12 is a good number to facilitate a meaningful small group discussion, but you may want to invite a few more, assuming not all will be able to attend. It's okay if you have fewer and you can invite more if you are comfortable facilitating a larger group.

- Send your meeting invitation via email, mail or call participants on the phone to welcome them to your meeting (see Sample Invitation on page 7). Be sure to allow enough time for people to schedule and try to find a time of day that works for everyone.

- Be sure to remind your participants one to two days before the scheduled meeting to confirm participation of your group.

2. Prepare materials (Host)

- Print enough copies of the Group Priority Worksheet for all of the participants. Collect pens and pencils for participants.

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3. Facilitate a meeting (Host, Notetaker, Participants)

INTRODUCTION (10 min.)

- Take a few minutes at the beginning of the meeting for introductions. Then, introduce Thrive Montgomery 2050 to the group, using the Introduction to Thrive Montgomery 2050 talking points on page 5.

- As a group, watch the Introduction to Thrive Montgomery 2050 video, available at thrivemontgomery.com

- Pass around the Email List (on page 14) for individuals who are interested in receiving emails about Thrive Montgomery 2050
and keeping up-to-date about the plan.

GROUP DISCUSSION (1 hr.)

- Form groups to have a discussion. These meetings are designed to encourage active group conversations. If you are hosting a large meeting with more than 12 people, we suggest that you break into small groups and make sure each group has a notetaker and a facilitator.

- In each group, begin going through the Group Priority Worksheet. Determine top 3 priorities and policy ideas for each topic.

CONCLUSION (5 min.)

- Thank participants for their participation in the discussion and remind them to sign-up for emails on the Email List.

- Remind them to visit www.thrivemontgomery.com to complete the Thrive Quiz and learn more about Thrive Montgomery 2050.

- Encourage each participant to host a Meeting-in-a-Box of their own.

4. Collect and return materials (Host)

Collect the Group Priority Worksheet that was used to capture the group's discussion and the Email List. Complete the Meeting Summary and Host Feedback Form. Return the materials to Montgomery Planning by February 1, 2020:

- **Method 1:** Type your results into the online form that can be found at ThriveMontgomery.com.
- **Method 1:** Scan and email materials to thrive2050@montgomeryplanning.org
- **Method 2:** Mail or drop off at: Attention: Thrive Montgomery 2050
                                         Montgomery Planning
                                         c/o Research and Special Projects
                                         8787 Georgia Ave
                                         Silver Spring MD 20910

Thank You for Hosting Meeting-in-a-Box!

Montgomery Planning is grateful for your time, thoughts, ideas and participation to inform Thrive Montgomery 2050. Your participation is part of a collaborative effort in shaping a thriving Montgomery County.

For more information or to engage in the Thrive Montgomery 2050 planning process, visit www.ThriveMontgomery.com.

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INTRODUCTION TO THRIVE MONTGOMERY 2050

HOW IS MONTGOMERY COUNTY CHANGING?

Over the past 50 years, Montgomery County has experienced a host of changes:

1. **Technology is changing.** The widespread use of digital technologies has changed how we work, shop, learn, communicate and interact.

2. **Montgomery County is more diverse.** People of color now make up about 56 percent of the population, compared with 28 percent in 1990, according to the 2019 Montgomery County Trends Report. Today, 33 percent of residents are foreign-born, compared to 19 percent in 1990. And residents have grown older: About 16 percent are 65 or older and by 2040, this age group is expected to increase to 20 percent of the population.

3. **Montgomery County is a major employment center.** We've grown from a bedroom community of residents mainly commuting to work outside of the county to a major employment center where 60 percent of people who live in the county also work here. Most of our workers are in education, health care, hospitality or food service, professional services, and life sciences. Just 15 percent of the county's workers are employed by the federal government.

4. **Home values are high.** Single-family homes cost 40 percent more than they did 20 years ago and rents are nearly 50 percent higher than they were in 2000, making housing affordability a big issue. Over the same time, incomes have been fairly stagnant and are not keeping pace with the increase in housing prices.

5. **Where, when and how people work are changing.** Office space vacancies are higher than they've been in more than a decade. More people are telecommuting and coworking. Companies with offices are choosing downtowns near public transit rather than suburban office parks and reducing space per employee.

6. **The climate is changing.** Threats from extreme weather events, such as dangerous heat and flooding storms are increasing. Impacts include harm to human health, economic losses and environmental degradation.

WHAT IS THRIVE MONTGOMERY 2050?

Thrive Montgomery 2050 is Montgomery County's General Plan update - the umbrella under which we can plan and move forward together. It will be our shared vision for Montgomery County - a guide to help us secure investment, take action and develop policies to preserve what we love while improving what can be better.

Montgomery County is a great place to live, work and play. But it didn't happen by accident. We planned for that! The great communities, places and spaces that keep us calling Montgomery County home -- like vibrant parks; quality schools; desirable urban, suburban and rural communities, and the Agricultural Reserve -- were all shaped by planners and community members decades ago.

It's time to update our roadmap for the future. In order to face the challenges ahead, we must set goals and ways to reach those goals with the support of the community. That's what Thrive Montgomery 2050 is all about.

The result of Thrive Montgomery 2050 will be a living and breathing plan that guides decision-making and helps secure resources to ensure Montgomery County is a place where everyone can be successful, have opportunities and enjoy a high quality of life in a beautiful and resilient environment.
The Thrive Montgomery 2050 framework consists of three main themes for the General Plan Update:

- **Economic health** means that Montgomery County has a forward-looking economy that is strong and competitive, with a variety of stable and well-paying jobs.

- **Community equity** means that Montgomery County is a place where all residents, regardless of race, age, religion, ethnicity, national origin, income, physical ability or gender, have equal access to affordable housing, healthy food options, parks and open spaces, facilities and services, employment opportunities, a quality education and a variety of mobility options.

- **Environmental resilience** means that Montgomery County is prepared to address the threats of climate change and use the best available strategies to protect both built and natural resources to allow them to be enjoyed by future generations.

Thrive Montgomery 2050 seeks to create a pathway for balancing these three outcomes—a healthy and robust economy should equally benefit all segments of the community while preserving and enhancing the health and resilience of the environment.

Through Thrive Montgomery 2050, we will:
- Identify and examine the changes occurring from technological, social, environmental and economic change;
- Consider what we want for tomorrow;
- Then develop a shared vision that allows us to keep what we love about Montgomery County while taking the actions needed to thrive over the next 30+ years.

A new General Plan for Montgomery County can shape (in no particular order):
- How we move around and what we're connected to.
- Types of businesses, jobs, retail and services we want to keep or attract in the county.
- Where and how we live.
- How all residents regardless of background are welcomed and can thrive.
- How we age in the county.
- Attractions and recreational opportunities.
- How students can access quality education.
- How we respond to technological shifts and their impacts on travel patterns, jobs, education, land use and more.
- How we provide and maintain infrastructure.
- How we prepare for, adapt to and reduce impacts from climate change.
- How we honor and preserve the county's history and learn from the lessons of the past.
- How we protect and enhance our natural built environment

Through Thrive Montgomery 2050, we'll decide together on our priorities as a community to achieve these goals and what we'll do to make them happen. **Ensuring that our county thrives for the next 30 years won't be easy. But we can do it. Together.**

HOW WILL YOUR INPUT MATTER?

For Thrive Montgomery 2050 to be a meaningful, impactful plan, it must reflect a shared vision of our wonderful, diverse community of residents, community-based organizations, businesses, institutions and government organizations.

As we embark on Thrive Montgomery 2050, it's important to note that no recommendations are formed and no proposals are developed yet. For conversations and analysis, three broad outcomes of economic health, community equity and environmental resilience will serve as an organizing framework. But what is covered under these outcomes should be guided by our visioning together. We're starting only with the lessons of the past and our current state.

Together, we'll decide the priorities for Thrive Montgomery 2050.

We need your help to envision a future worth planning for.

SAMPLE INVITATION

Use this template as a guide for your meeting invitations. You can include this language in an email, send invitations in the mail or use it as a guide to invite people over the phone.

You're Invited!

What: Montgomery Planning's Thrive 2050 Plan Meeting-in-a-Box

Where:

When:

RSVP by:

RSVP to:

The Montgomery County Planning Department has invited us to host a meeting using their Thrive Montgomery 2050 Meeting-in-a-Box kit so they can hear from us as they work on the update to Montgomery County's General Plan.

The General Plan is Montgomery County's long-range policy framework for guiding land use and growth. Montgomery County's existing General Plan was last comprehensively updated in the 1960s.

Since it has been 50 years since this document has been fully updated, planners really want to hear from us – the community – on what matters most to us for the next 30 years so that we can keep our county thriving.

We look forward to hearing from you!

For more information about the process, please www.thrivemontgomery.com

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GROUP PRIORITY WORKSHEET

Directions: As a group, discuss each topic and determine the group's top three priorities and policy ideas. After discussing all of the topics and creating priorities for each, decide which priorities are the most important as a group.

EQUITY

1. Montgomery Planning is identifying equity priorities for the county for the next 30 years such as ensuring that no community is unfairly impacted by the harmful effects of environmental and health hazards, **strengthening transportation options between lower-income residents and jobs opportunities, and ensuring new community amenities, such as libraries, are distributed equitably across the county. What are your top three equity priorities for Montgomery County in the next 30 years?**

2. **What three policies should Montgomery County pursue to support your top priorities?**

ENVIRONMENT

3. The county is adapting to climate change and new pressures on our natural environment. Montgomery Planning is setting priorities such as reducing air pollution and other threats to human health, preserving, restoring and enhancing wildlife habitat, and making our urban and suburban areas greener. **What are your top three environmental priorities for Montgomery County in the next 30 years?**

4. **What three policies should Montgomery County pursue to support your top environment priorities?**

ECONOMY

5. Montgomery Planning is setting economic priorities for the county for the next 30 years such as improving economic opportunities for current residents, reducing barriers to starting and expanding businesses, and attracting, retaining and expanding major employers. **What are your top three economy priorities for Montgomery County in the next 30 years?**

6. **What three policies should Montgomery County pursue to support your top economic priorities?**

TRANSPORTATION

7. Montgomery Planning wants to ensure people can safely and efficiently travel to where they work, live and play. Priorities include ensuring reliability on the County's roadway and transit network, reducing travel time, eliminating transportation fatalities and severe injuries. **What are your top three transportation priorities for Montgomery County in the next 30 years?**

8. **What three policies should Montgomery County pursue to support your top transportation priorities?**

HOUSING

9. As more residents move into the county, Montgomery Planning is weighing housing priorities, such as creating opportunities for homeownership at all income levels, providing more variety in housing options, and preserving existing neighborhoods. **What are your top three housing priorities for Montgomery County in the next 30 years?**

10. **What three policies should Montgomery County pursue to support your top housing priorities?**

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

11. Residents and visitors prize the County's system of parks and open space. Montgomery Planning is examining priorities such as acquiring additional parkland in areas of the county that are currently underserved, creating more activation programs for existing parks, and preserving natural areas and features for their scenic, recreation and habitat value. **What are your top three park or open space priorities for Montgomery County in the next 30 years?**

12. **What three policies should Montgomery County pursue to support your top parks or open space priorities?**

DESIGN, ARTS AND CULTURE

13. Design, arts and culture priorities define how our communities look and what resources residents can access. Montgomery Planning is examining priorities such as providing access to a broader and more diverse range of cultural experiences for residents, investing in existing cultural buildings and spaces, and integrating public art into new development, public spaces and infrastructure projects. **What are your top three design, arts or culture priorities for Montgomery County in the next 30 years?**

14. **What three policies should Montgomery County pursue to support your top priorities?**

TOP PRIORITIES

15. **Out of all the priorities your group identified, what are the three most important?**

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

16. **Is there anything else we should consider?**

MEETING-IN-A-BOX SUMMARY

Host Name

Date of Meeting

Host Email

Organization

Number of Meeting Participants

Location of Meeting

HOST FEEDBACK FORM

Help us improve Meeting-in-a-Box by completing the questions below.

1. **Meeting-in-a-Box is an effective tool to gain community feedback for Thrive 2050.**

    a. Strongly Disagree
    b. Disagree
    c. Neutral
    d. Agree
    e. Strongly Agree

2. **The materials in Meeting-in-a-Box are easy to understand and use.**

    a. Strongly Disagree
    b. Disagree
    c. Neutral
    d. Agree
    e. Strongly Agree

3. **I felt well prepared to facilitate the group discussion as described in the instructions.**

    a. Strongly Disagree
    b. Disagree
    c. Neutral
    d. Agree
    e. Strongly Agree

For questions 4 and 5, please rate the following aspects of your meeting:

4. **Participant engagement**

    a. Very Poor
    b. Poor
    c. Fair
    d. Good
    e. Excellent

5. **Quality of group discussions**

    a. Very Poor
    b. Poor
    c. Fair
    d. Good
    e. Excellent

Host Feedback Form continues on back...

6. **How long did it take for your group to complete the exercises and discussion?**

   a. < 30 minutes

   b. 30 - 1 hour

   d. More than 1 hour

7. **Would you host Meeting-in-a-Box again?**

   a. Yes

   b. No

   If no, please explain why.

8. **Would you recommend Meeting-in-a-Box to others?**

   a. Yes

   b. No

9. **How should we improve Meeting-in-a-Box?**

10. **Additional comments or feedback:**

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**If you would like email updates about Thrive Montgomery 2050,
please add your name and email below.**

DATE: _____ **EVENT:** _____

Name	Email	Zip Code