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

THRIVE MONTGOMERY 2050: PLANNING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER

What is Thrive Montgomery?

Montgomery County is a great place to live, work, connect and play. But it didn't become that way by accident. Decades ago, through the *On Wedges and Corridors* 1964 General Plan, planners and community members shaped the great communities, places and spaces of Montgomery County.

This update—Thrive Montgomery 2050—is about adapting to new realities, addressing historic inequities and shifting the way we think about how the county should grow. Thrive Montgomery 2050 envisions a county that is more urban, more diverse and more connected. The result of Thrive Montgomery 2050 will be a plan that guides decision-making and helps secure resources to ensure Montgomery County is a place where everyone can be successful, have more opportunities and enjoy a high quality of life in a beautiful and resilient environment. Thrive Montgomery 2050 aims to ensure a vibrant economy, equity for all residents and a healthy environment through 2050 and beyond.

The Target—Three Major Outcomes

Economic Health

We want to ensure a vibrant, strong and competitive economy by attracting and maintaining major employers, continuing to enhance our federal campuses, supporting small businesses and innovation, and attracting and retaining a high-quality, diverse workforce.

Equity

We want to create a place where all residents have equal access to attainable housing, healthy foods, employment, transportation, education and more.

Environmental Resilience

We must use the best strategies to fight climate change and mitigate the impact of both planned changes and unexpected events and continue to preserve our natural resources.

Montgomery County's web of corridors

THE PLAN VISION

Thrive Montgomery 2050 envisions a county that is more urban, more diverse, and more connected, providing a high quality of life for existing residents while also welcoming new residents and new ideas. Specifically, Montgomery County in 2050 consists of a web of Complete Communities connected by vibrant corridors. Individual and unique centers of neighborhood activity and urban nodes optimize land use with a variety of housing types and price points. Housing is located close to transit, workplaces, needed goods and services, public amenities and active park spaces. Two types of corridors connect these Complete Communities to the rest of the county: 1. multimodal transportation and services; and 2. green parks, stream valleys, and trails.

Core Ideas

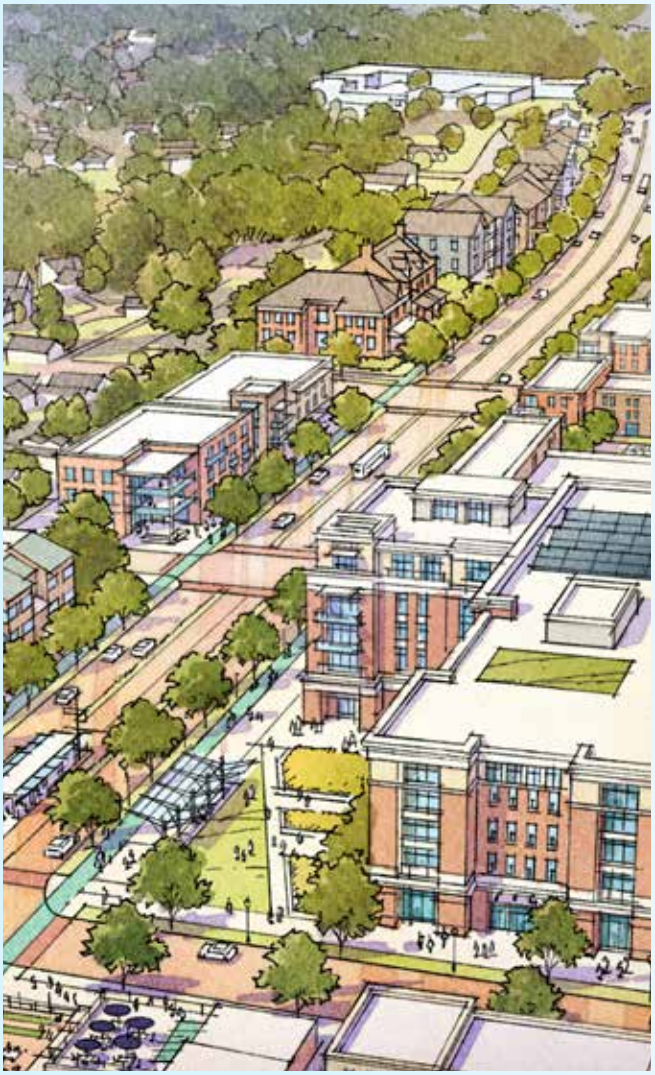
Core ideas emerged through community conversations, expert interviews, analysis and research. The Thrive Montgomery 2050 Plan addresses the challenges Montgomery County faces and includes plans for growth through a series of goals, policies and actions related to these core ideas.

MAJOR THEMES

Thrive Montgomery 2050 recommendations includes nine core themes. These themes all connect to the three outcomes of economic health, equity and environmental resilience.

1. CREATE COMPLETE COMMUNITIES

Complete Communities are places where everyone can live, work, shop, learn and play. Complete Communities are easier to walk around, offer amenities and gathering spaces, such as parks and libraries, and allow people to meet their daily needs closer to home. Complete Communities will look different in different parts of the county and reflect the urban, suburban and rural contexts. At its core, a complete community will be racially, ethnically and economically diverse as well as include a mixture of housing types, uses, amenities and services accessible by foot, bike or transit. A compact form of development and urbanism is essential for creating Complete Communities. Thrive Montgomery 2050 calls it 15-minute living. The goal is to create Complete Communities that are diverse in every way and can provide most essential services within a 15-minute walk, bike ride or transit. More compact development will encourage transit, walking and biking as the predominant modes of travel and will enhance efforts for active lifestyles and social connectedness. The concept of Complete Communities includes Missing Middle housing, which helps produce more affordable and attainable housing and leads to more racially and socioeconomically diverse neighborhoods. Thrive Montgomery 2050 proposes designing parks and public spaces that build social connections, encourage healthy lifestyles, and create vibrant communities in addition to providing stewardship of the natural environment.

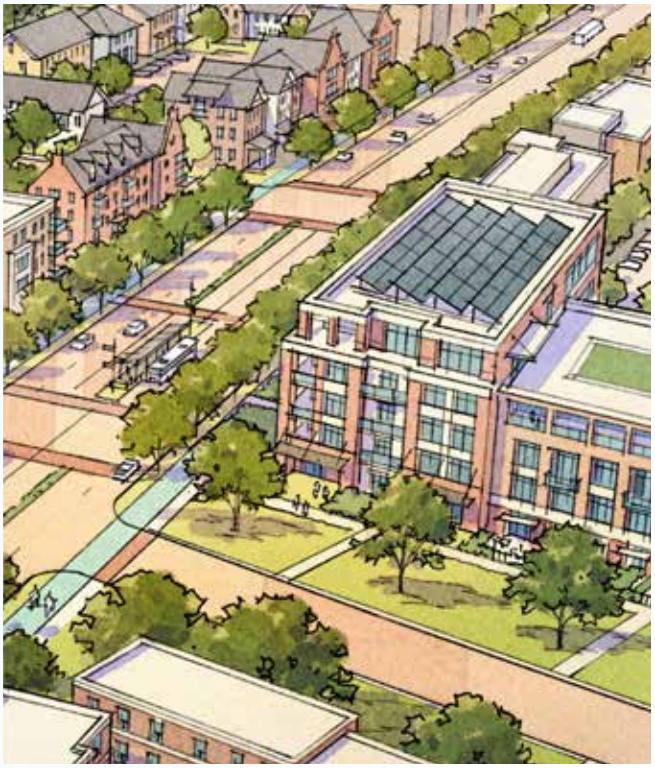


2. ACHIEVE RACIAL JUSTICE AND EQUALITY

Recommendations in Thrive Montgomery 2050 seek to add cultural richness to the county and further the county's economic competitiveness by attracting businesses and residents that prefer diverse, inclusive communities. While the county contends with constrained fiscal resources, we must ensure that existing and new communities of color receive an equitable share of services and investments like high-quality education, job training and other opportunities. Addressing inequity and racial segregation will require a common understanding that we are all connected, and that we share a common interest in how we grow into the future.

3. PROVIDE ATTAINABLE HOUSING FOR ALL

Montgomery County is not producing enough housing, especially affordable and attainable housing. Unless we grow our housing supply to make room for the projected 200,000 new residents moving to the county by 2045, our existing communities will become more expensive, less diverse and integrated, and it will be difficult to attract and retain a skilled workforce. The most important factor in cost of living in Montgomery County versus competing jurisdictions is housing, which makes it harder to attract and retain workers, which makes it harder to attract/retain employers. Also, the legacy of racism and intentional segregation by race and class have continuing impacts on geographic distribution of opportunities and resources such as jobs and schools—making the supply and diversity of housing crucial to integration and equity of opportunity. We need to build more and preserve our affordable housing because added supply is the only way to reduce the affordability/attainability gap over the long term.



4. RETHINK SINGLE-FAMILY NEIGHBORHOODS NEAR TRANSIT

Montgomery County's communities have diverse needs in terms of housing—affordability, the size and type of housing and proximity to transit. The county also has a housing supply gap that will continue. Thrive Montgomery 2050 aims to ensure that exclusively single-family zoning is not a barrier to development in neighborhoods near employment centers and transit. The plan includes policies and actions that support the production of different types of housing near transit, including in existing single-family zones. This is an important step in how the county begins to address past inequities in housing choice, while also creating more options for housing that is affordable and attainable to current and future residents of all income levels. Specifically, Thrive Montgomery 2050 recommends modest increases of density in areas currently zoned exclusively for single-family housing near high-capacity transit that would provide more housing types such as duplexes, triplexes and quadplexes for varying household needs and affordability levels.

5. PLAN FOR PEOPLE INSTEAD OF CARS

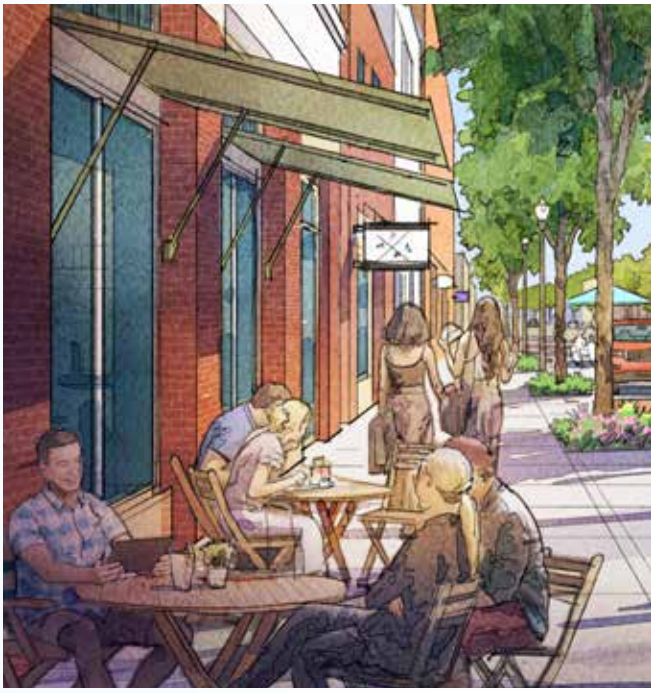
Planning for people means designing roadways, sidewalks and other transportation infrastructure to make them safer for everyone, whether they are walking, biking, taking transit or driving. The county currently has many auto-oriented roads that were designed primarily to move cars quickly. This focus has led to roadways that are unsafe and discourage people from walking, biking or taking transit unless they have no other choice. Thrive Montgomery 2050 re-envisions these major roadways as corridors that support rapid, reliable transit; offer comfortable, safe walking spaces and feature attractive architecture and streetscapes. Providing residents and workers with multiple high-quality travel choices that better connect them to services and jobs will reduce dependence on cars and help create a safe, equitable and environmentally sustainable transportation system. This also means planning for sidewalks and bikeways to support people-centered mobility and taking advantage of Bus Rapid Transit and the Purple Line to connect to centers of opportunity and activity.

6. ERADICATE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

One of Thrive Montgomery's goals is to "eradicate greenhouse gas emissions and dangerous pollutants from the transportation system." The Plan recommends disincentivizing automobile travel through congestion pricing and reducing parking requirements for new development; incentivizing non-auto driving travel by providing high-quality networks for walking, bicycling and transit; and facilitating the mass adoption of electric vehicles. In 2015, transportation accounted for 41% of Montgomery County's greenhouse gas emissions following residential and commercial buildings at a combined 51 percent. Reducing our vehicle miles traveled in personal vehicles by increasing public transit use is the best way to eliminate our transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions. A broader range of housing types would contribute to reduced energy consumption and GHG emissions—particularly multifamily buildings with smaller units, shared walls and proximity to a variety of destinations that can be reached by bike or on foot.

7. PRIORITIZE GREAT DESIGN AND THE IMPORTANCE OF PLACE

Planning is about creating thriving communities and enhancing great places, both in the public realm and in new private development. Excellent design serves functional purposes in facilitating/encouraging interaction and social connection. Support for the arts and culture strengthens pride and sense of place, demonstrates that diversity is valued, and makes Montgomery County a more interesting and attractive place for everyone to call home. This also means ensuring high-quality design for all public and private architecture, infrastructure and open space projects using design guidelines, design advisory panels, design competitions and other tools.



8. MAKE CORRIDORS THE PLACE FOR NEW GROWTH

Growth must be focused along the corridors via infill and redevelopment. This focused development creates the ability to establish centers of activity that support a mix of uses to create walkable, vibrant places, which is essential to economic competitiveness. Concentrating all new growth along existing and planned rail and Bus Rapid Transit corridors will facilitate the transformation of these unsafe traffic arteries into safe and attractive connectors of neighborhoods with a mix of commercial uses and a variety of residential types. To support growth along these corridors will require change in existing single-family neighborhoods through the introduction of Missing Middle housing, such as duplexes, triplexes, townhouses, live-work units and small multifamily structures. This approach also protects the Agricultural Reserve, reduces the cost of roads and raises the cost effectiveness of transit by avoiding sprawl and making growth more environmentally sustainable.

9. DEVELOP REGIONAL SOLUTIONS

Close to 40% of county residents have jobs nearby in some of the major employment centers in Washington, D.C.; Northern Virginia; and in other parts of Maryland at Fort Detrick, Fort Meade, Columbia, Frederick, College Park and Baltimore. Issues such as lack of affordable housing, economic competitiveness, transportation and climate change require regional solutions and strategies. We must consider regional solutions to all challenges and think of Montgomery County as part of a larger ecosystem. We share these issues with our neighbors throughout the Washington, D.C., and Baltimore metro areas, so we should address them together.

How will Thrive Montgomery 2050 be implemented?

Thrive Montgomery 2050 does not automatically change any zoning or other regulations. Implementation of its policies and actions will rely on several tools over the coming decades. Thrive Montgomery 2050 will influence the Montgomery Planning work program for new master, sector and functional plans and detailed studies over the coming years; shape the design and regulatory review of private development; and guide the Planning Board's decision-making. However, Thrive Montgomery's reach and impact extends beyond land-use planning. Thrive Montgomery's guidance also is intended to influence infrastructure, facility, real estate and other planning by multiple county and regional agencies.

Short Term Actions	Medium-Term Actions	Long-Term Actions
Up to 5 years	**6 to 15 years**	**16+ years**
Highest priorities to jump start implementation	Follow short-term actions; may take more time to implement	May require additional, short & medium-term incremental work

Get involved with planning for the future of Montgomery County!

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LEARN MORE: ThriveMontgomery.com or MontgomeryProspera.com