

# We need more housing of all kinds in Montgomery County

We don't have enough housing available in Montgomery County to meet the needs of our residents. Homeownership rates have been in decline, especially for adults under the age of 35. Housing is becoming more expensive and competition is tight. The obstacles faced by young workers in finding housing they can afford make it harder for employers to attract and retain the employees they need, damaging our economic competitiveness. Plus, Montgomery County is anticipated to grow by 200,000 more residents by 2045. Thrive Montgomery 2050, the update to the county's General Plan, addresses the county's need to increase the amount and variety of housing. To develop recommendations to spur more diverse types of housing in more parts of the county, the Montgomery County Council asked Montgomery Planning to launch the Attainable Housing Strategies initiative. Attainable Housing is unsubsidized market housing that is appropriate and suitable for the households that live here.

## Planning for an equitable housing future

At the root, finding new housing solutions is about making our communities more equitable and more inclusive by countering the historical discriminatory aspects of zoning. Zoning determines what can be built where and by limiting housing options, we have limited who has access to different neighborhoods. If we want to diversify our communities – we need to focus on diversifying our housing options.

In 2020, the average detached home in Montgomery County was sold for \$775,000 compared to \$370,000 for attached structures.

Through this effort and in Montgomery Planning's Equity Agenda for Planning, we also recognize the role that Montgomery Planning had played through plans and policies that have created and perpetuated racial inequity in Montgomery County. We have a long history of land use decisions that created exclusionary neighborhoods and formed barriers to resources and opportunities for people of color and other disadvantaged persons.

Attainable Housing Strategies is one step in many needed to address the barriers to equitable resources and opportunities for many households in Montgomery County.

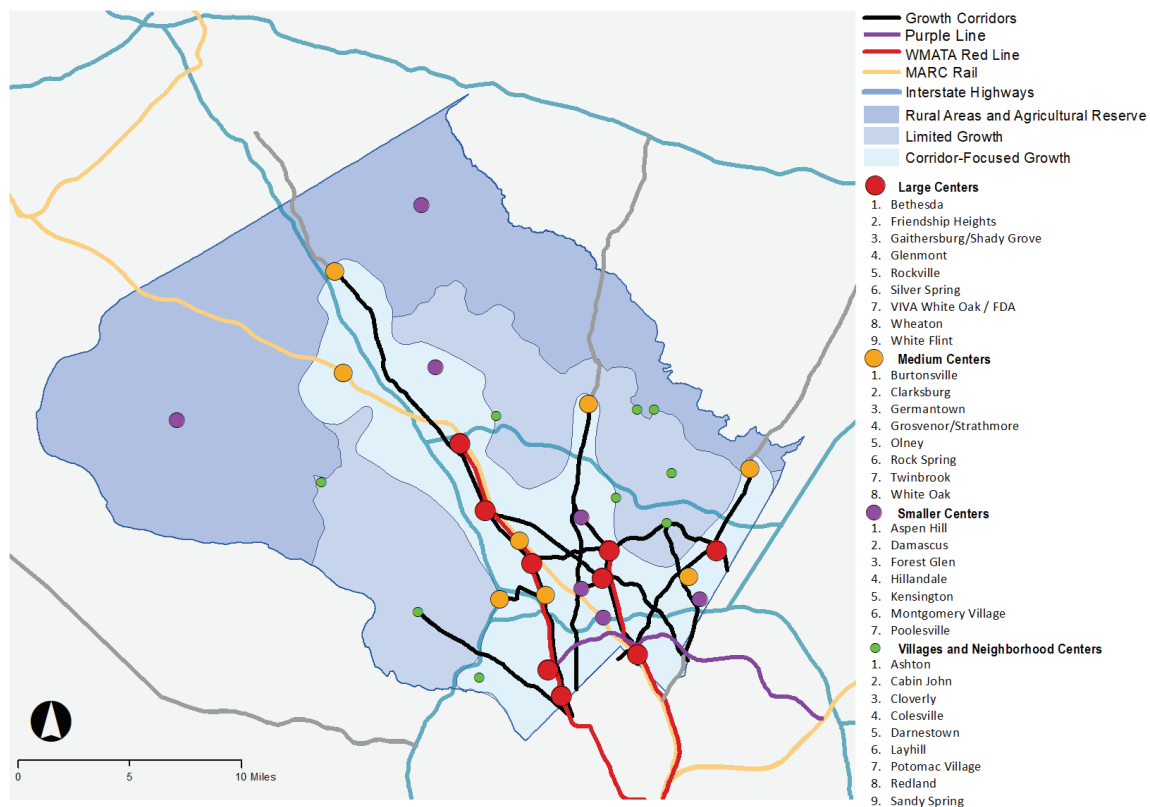
## Putting housing closer to transit and services

Thrive Montgomery 2050 recommends concentrating more housing of different sizes and types near high-quality transit corridors, where we can provide housing that will help keep workers in the county, curb escalating prices in the most desirable locations, and improve the accessibility of jobs, transportation, and services.

### Thrive Montgomery 2050 Corridor-Focused Growth Area Map

The Thrive Montgomery 2050 Corridor-Focused Growth Area Map illustrates growth concepts and potential centers of activity, but the diagram should be considered in the context of the Compact Growth and Complete Communities chapters, of Thrive Montgomery 2050, the update to the county's General Plan. The centers of activity shown are not exhaustive of all existing or potential centers. The Thrive Montgomery 2050 Corridor-Focused Growth Area Map shows, within the Corridor-Focused Growth area, several centers of activity that are along growth corridors and Metrorail, MARC and the Purple Line.

The Corridor-Focused Growth area is envisioned as where future growth will be concentrated through compact, infill development and redevelopment.



The Thrive Montgomery 2050 Growth Diagram illustrates growth concepts and potential centers of activity, but the diagram should be considered in the context of the Compact Growth and Complete Communities chapters. The centers of activity shown are not exhaustive of all existing or potential centers.





# Making moves on housing issues

Currently, there are multiple efforts underway to support more housing choices in the county. Take a deeper dive into the details on Montgomery Planning’s Thrive Montgomery 2050, the Attainable Housing Strategies initiative, and County Councilmember Will Jawando’s zoning text amendment.

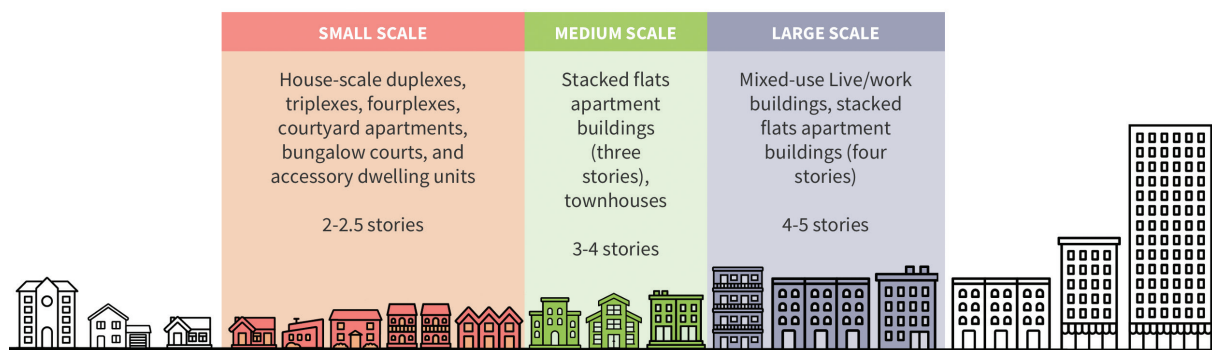
	Thrive Montgomery 2050	Attainable Housing Strategies initiative	Zoning Text Amendment 20-07
What is it?	Thrive Montgomery 2050 is the update to Montgomery County’s General Plan. It is a long-term high-level policy document focusing on three broad outcomes for the county’s future: economic health, equity, and environmental resilience.	The Attainable Housing Strategies initiative aims to create options for existing and new residents to find homes at the right sizes, locations, and price points for their needs and expand homeownership opportunities for the county’s diverse populations while growing the county’s housing supply.	ZTA 20-07 was introduced in December 2020 to allow Missing Middle Housing types, such as triplexes, in parts of the R-60 zone. The Council held a public hearing for ZTA 20-07 in February 2021, but action on the ZTA has been on hold while Montgomery Planning pursues the Attainable Housing Strategies initiative.



	Thrive Montgomery 2050	Attainable Housing Strategies initiative	Zoning Text Amendment 20-07
What's on the table?	The housing policy in Thrive Montgomery 2050 recognizes both the need to produce more housing and to plan for a wide range of housing types and sizes, including growth along the county's corridors. It also focuses on preservation and production of affordable housing. <b>Thrive Montgomery 2050, as a high-level policy plan, does not make any zoning changes.</b>	All recommendations are targeted to the Corridor-Focused Growth Area, as identified in the Thrive Montgomery 2050 Growth Map.  Change the zoning code to <b>allow by-right house-scale duplexes and triplexes</b> in the R-40, R-60, R-90, & R-200 zones with <b>conformance with a pattern book</b> that provides guidance on massing, placement and height to keep units house scale.  Create a <b>new optional method of development</b> to encourage consolidation of lots to develop duplexes, cottage courts, townhouses, small multiplexes and apartments near transit, along our growth corridors, and near the county's centers of activity.	Allow for duplexes, townhouses, and multifamily structures to be built within the current R-60 standards within a mile of a Metrorail station.  Also allows more flexibility for projects constructed on R-60 zoned sites located within ½ mile of a Metrorail station. Such sites would be excluded from infill lot coverage limits (allows less lot coverage for certain types of new development) and the minimum parking requirements would be decreased.  ZTA 20-07, as introduced, <b>would allow apartment buildings within a mile of Metrorail on lots zoned R-60 with 25,000 square feet or less in area.</b>

### Attainable Housing Strategies for a Range of Housing Types and Scales

This graphic demonstrates the relative physical scale of the attainable housing targeted by the Attainable Housing Strategies Initiative.



Attainable housing comes in three scales: small, medium, and large. Small scale refers to house-scale “missing middle” housing types, such as duplexes, triplexes and other structures that are similar in scale to a single-family home. Medium scale includes stacked flats apartment buildings and townhouses that are three to four stories. On the right, large scale includes four to five story stacked flats apartment buildings.





# Perceptions vs. Reality: Housing in Montgomery County

## Perception: Single-family homes will be replaced.

**Reality:** No homeowners will be required to replace their home or build specific housing types. Zoning and other changes to permit attainable housing will instead allow property owners to choose to build different types of homes should they wish to do so.

## Perception: Parking requirements will be eliminated.

**Reality:** The preliminary Attainable Housing Strategies (AHS) recommendations do not eliminate parking minimums but would reduce parking requirements by half and allow further reduction of parking requirements in the growth corridors identified in Thrive Montgomery 2050.

### AFFORDABILITY

A measure of whether or not a household can afford to live in a dwelling, and how much of their income goes to housing costs.

### ATTAINABILITY

The ability of households of various incomes and sizes to obtain housing that is suitable for their needs and affordable to them.



## Perception: I won't be able to afford a home.

**Reality:** The Attainable Housing Strategies initiative focuses on spurring the production of market rate dwellings that are more affordable than the typical new single-family home, generally due to their smaller size. Prices for attainable housing may vary in different parts of the county, given different market realities in the county. However, the types of homes proposed as part of the Attainable Housing Strategies initiative would make owning a home in higher-priced neighborhoods more attainable to more residents.

## Perception: Apartment buildings will be allowed in my single-family neighborhood.

**Reality:** The preliminary Attainable Housing Strategies initiative recommendations would not allow apartment buildings in single-family neighborhoods. The recommendations would allow small apartment buildings only along certain roadways within identified growth corridors and not by-right. Apartment buildings would be allowed only through the optional method of development, which requires a site plan review by the Planning Board and an opportunity for public comments.

Thrive Montgomery 2050 recommends policies and actions to support creative housing options including Missing Middle Housing types such as tiny houses, cottages, duplexes, multiplexes, and small apartment buildings, among others to help meet housing needs and diversify housing options, particularly in areas near transit, employment, and educational opportunities (p. 100). But any changes to allow apartment buildings where they are not currently allowed by zoning would require a Zoning Text Amendment or a rezoning of properties through a sectional map amendment.

### PATTERN BOOK

A document containing various pre-approved design options for building small-scale housing. Includes building massing, placement, height, door placement, parking, building features (porches, etc.), options tailored based on a range of lot sizes and shapes and designed to keep units “house scale.”





## Perception: My neighborhood won't look as nice because of different building types.

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**Reality:** Thrive Montgomery 2050 recommends policies and actions to replace vague concepts such as “compatibility” with clear standards for form, site layout, setbacks, architecture, and the location of parking. (p. 65)

The preliminary Attainable Housing Strategies initiative recommendations would require property owners looking to build a duplex, triplex or quadplex to follow a pattern book to proceed by-right. The pattern book will provide direction on massing, orientation, scale, and parking concepts for different housing types on different size parcels, to ensure these housing types are house scaled. Also, the preliminary recommendations maintain existing height and setback standards to ensure the structures are consistent in scale with single-family homes.

### BY-RIGHT DEVELOPMENT

By-right development refers to development that is allowed by zoning without a discretionary review process. By-right projects must still comply with applicable zoning standards.

### OPTIONAL METHOD OF DEVELOPMENT

Optional Method of Development allows an increase in density, allows additional building types and/or provides more flexibility for certain development standards in exchange for providing identified shares of desired housing types or particular desired amenities.

### MASSING

Massing describes the relationship of a building's various parts to each other. Architectural elements such as windows, doors and roofs as well as interior floor plans can affect building mass. Massing is important because it is one of several details that determine the visual interest of a building, the perception of the building's volume and how it blends with its surroundings.

## Contact

**Lisa Govoni**

Housing Planner  
Lisa.Govoni@  
montgomeryplanning.org

**MontgomeryPlanning.org/housing**

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