How Thrive was created

ENVIROMENTAL RESILIENCE + ECONOMIC HEALTH + COMMUNITY EQUITY

THRIVE MONTGOMERY 2050
How Thrive was created
Years of research and studies that contributed to Thrive
How Thrive was created

Evaluated growth approaches

• Reviewed regional scenario exercises conducted by University of Maryland National Center for Smart Growth
• Met with all surrounding jurisdictions to understand and coordinate with them on their growth strategies
• Met with Maryland State Office of Planning
• Spoke with American Planning Association to identify and learn from similar general plan efforts
• Used MWCOG forecast extrapolated to 2050
• Conducted scenario modeling exercise for transportation recommendations
How Thrive was created
Internal and external coordination

- Over 60 MNCPPC planners involved through working groups and a staff steering committee
- Technical Advisory Group of 27 representatives from County, state and regional agencies
- Interagency Department Head meetings
- Planning Board:
  - 9 briefings;
  - one public hearing/85 speakers;
  - ten worksessions
- PHED and Council presentations:
  - 5 briefings;
  - two public hearings/91 speakers;
  - two worksessions so far
How Thrive was created
Equitable engagement strategy
How Thrive was created

• Over 180 meetings with community
• 1,635 people completed online Thrive Montgomery 2050 Quiz
• 1,300 Meeting-in-a-Box postcards sent to HOAs + Community Associations
• 91,000 postcards to equity emphasis areas
• ThriveMontgomery.com – 42,605 views
• 5,287 views on video promos
• E-letter signup – 1,372, with open rate of 40% (double industry average)
• Estimated participation – approximately **12,000**
How Thrive was created
Outreach to underserved communities

- African Affairs Advisory Group
- Audubon Naturalist Society
- Arts on the Block
- Burtonsville Placemaking participants
- CASA
- First Lego League
- Gandhi Brigade
- Long Branch Week participants
- Latin American Youth Center
- Street Outreach Network
- Middle Eastern American Advisory Group
- Students (USG, MC, Middle School and High School)
- Wheaton Arts Parade participants
- Racial Equity and Social Justice Advisory Committee
How Thrive was created
Audience-centric communications
How Thrive was created
How do you imagine the future?
Transition from Working Draft to Planning Board Draft

• Key public testimony suggesting reorganizing and improving the plan

• The Board wanted to strengthen the Plan’s message and focus on some big-picture core ideas that will guide other, more detailed decisions in the future.

• **No** substantive change in the key concepts and recommendations of the Working Draft Plan
Community comments about the organization of the draft plan

• The draft Plan is not well organized. For example, there are Complete Communities and housing items in nearly all of the chapters which makes it very difficult for the reader to get a comprehensive view of what is being proposed for these topics. (Coalition of incorporated municipalities and community organizations)

• The draft Plan needs to be reworked with more clarity and less redundancy, so that citizens as well as future elected and appointed officials can understand its recommendations for changes that will affect our communities for years to come. (Coalition of incorporated municipalities and community organizations)

• The Plan as currently drafted is “confusing, not synthesized, or organized,” and that it is “too specific yet not developed enough to define why one would want to read it.” (Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights)
Community comments about the organization of the draft plan

- This is a document that reads as if it were written by committee, and it was. This includes redundancies in arguments that could be improved by reorganization and inconsistencies in writing’s voice. Tightening up language will also open up space to include more data visualizations that support the arguments made. Additionally, many goals and policies are almost repeated word-for-word in different chapters. Because so many of the policies and actions are interconnected, we suggest moving these to their own appendix that is not constrained by the plan’s chapters. (Jane Lyons, CSG)

- The actual composition of a plan, as important as this, is in enormous need of editing. It is redundant on almost everyone one of the 167 pages. There are no specifics and the repetitive nature of the document doesn’t lend clarity...It needs clarity, specifics and a tremendous amount of editing. (Patricia Johnson)

- Thrive is organized in a way that is both redundant and siloed at the same time... Please bring some clarity and uniformity to the document while cutting out the many overlaps and redundancies. (Herb Simmens)

- The Thrive Plan as written is too long and has many redundant statements. (Quentin Remein)
Transition from Working Draft to Planning Board Draft

• **Integrate** the core objectives (*economy, equity, environment*) into every part of the plan

• The **first three chapters** lay out the foundation for the county’s growth at three different scales:
  - **Compact Growth** defines growth from a regional & countywide perspective.
  - **Complete Communities** lays out the vision for communities and neighborhoods.
  - **Design, Arts and Culture** chapters provides guidance at the ground level--down to the design of blocks and buildings.

• The **other three chapters** define how the infrastructure (transportation, housing, parks) should support this pattern of growth defined in the first three chapters.
Vision for Growth

• Maintain a constrained growth area
• Reintroduce East County growth corridors as key to racial equity and economic competitiveness
• Emphasis on East/West growth corridors with transit
• Protect the Ag Reserve and make it more accessible and relevant to the whole county
• Look for new ways of thinking about growth: Parking Lots to Places, Complete Communities, 15-minute living
Vision for Growth
Evolution of the Wedges & Corridors Concept
Vision for Growth
Evolution of the Wedges & Corridors Concept

• **The Rural Areas and Ag Reserve** (in darker blue) will continue to be dedicated primarily to agriculture, rural open space and environmental preservation. These areas can absorb some growth which will occur naturally as the agriculture evolves and existing residential communities’ needs will change over time.

• **The Corridor-Focused Growth Area** (in lightest blue), which has existing and planned transit, employment centers and adequate infrastructure in place, is recommended to accommodate the highest share of future growth as outlined in the plan.

• **The Limited Growth Area** between these two tiers contains the mainly suburban residential communities where limited, organic growth is recommended to meet localized needs for services and provide a diverse, and appropriate range of housing choices; increase racial and socioeconomic integration; and achieve more Complete Communities.

• The four types of dots represent a variety of complete communities at various sizes and scales appropriate for their context and the level of activity they can support without overwhelming the natural and man-made resources.
Vision for Growth

Thrive growth boundaries overlayed on current “level of activity heat map” and Special Protection Areas (SPAs)

The proposed growth map is designed to match the current areas of higher activity and avoid SPAs (shown in crosshatch).
Vision for Growth

‘93 Wedges & Corridors overlayed on current zoning

The “gaps” between the ‘93 Wedges and Corridors Plan and current zoning (Olney town center is outside the residential wedge) are adjusted in the proposed growth map—see next slide
Vision for Growth

Thrive growth boundaries overlayed on current zoning

The proposed growth map more closely reflects current zoning than the ‘93 map
Vision for Growth
Thrive Growth boundaries overlayed on ‘93 Wedges & Corridors map

The proposed growth map elevates the concept of corridors. It adds Georgia Avenue and Route 29 corridors to the existing development footprint. It emphasizes centers of activity along corridors.
Vision for Growth
Web of interconnected communities
Vision for Growth: A few of the Big Shifts

Redraw the growth map
- Match the growth footprint to reality
- Restore East County growth corridors for equity and competitiveness
- Focus growth in centers of activity along corridors within footprint
- Strengthen the relevance of the ag reserve

Plan for people, not cars
- Emphasize transit, walking and biking
- Integrate land use and transportation to build great places and reduce VMT
- Introduce social connection and health as explicit objectives
- Recognize the significance of IT infrastructure

Rethink the how (not just the how much and where) of growth
- Redevelopment as currency to pay for upgrades to amenities and infrastructure
- Reduced imperviousness/better stormwater performance
- Deliver complete communities and 15-minute living for as many people as possible

Elevate the importance of design
- Use form-based codes to advance equity and competitiveness
- Incorporate arts and culture into public and private infrastructure
- Recognize quality of place as integral to economic competitiveness

Thrive Montgomery 2050 – PHED Committee on 7-21-21
Next steps: suggested PHED worksessions

✅ **Worksession 1**: Background information on “What is a General Plan?” — COMPLETED ON JULY 14

☑️ **Worksession 2**: Overview on **how Thrive Montgomery 2050 was developed**: outreach, underlying studies and reports, plan organization, growth map and definitions — JULY 21

☑️ **Worksession 3**: **Introduction**—what, why and how of the big picture with a deeper look at the three major outcomes — SCHEDULED FOR JULY 26

☑️ **Worksession 4**: **Compact Growth**; and **Complete Communities** chapters — Sept. TBD

☑️ **Worksession 5**: **Design, Art, and Culture**; and **Transportation** chapters — Sept. TBD

☑️ **Worksession 6**: **Housing**; and **Parks and Recreation** chapters — Sept. TBD

☑️ **Worksession 7**: **Conclusion** and any details that may need to be brought back from the earlier worksessions. — Sept. TBD
Next steps: other jurisdictions did not delay their plans because of COVID

Rockville Planning Commission approved *Rockville 2040* in **March 2021**; Council vote expected in August 2021

City of Frederick Comp Plan adopted in **April 2021**

DC Council adopts Washington DC Comprehensive Plan update in **May 2021**