

## Conclusion

Our community has experienced major social, economic and environmental changes over the life of the Wedges and Corridors plan, and even more dramatic shifts are on the horizon.

Thrive Montgomery 2050 aims to establish a framework for responding to economic, demographic, social, and environmental change in ways that are rooted in enduring lessons about what has made places successful in the past, while remaining adaptable to unforeseen circumstances. That is why the plan emphasizes the basic concepts of compact form; diversity of building types and design; and complementary transportation infrastructure instead of attempting to predict the pace and direction of technological innovation or the consequences of catastrophic events, whether natural or man-made, whose long-term effects are impossible to forecast with certainty. That said, the framework's focus is not meant to rule out other means of achieving the overarching goals of economic health, racial equity and social justice, and environmental resilience.

This document is a guidebook, not an exhaustive list of prescriptions. It does not address every topic relevant to our future, but it provides strong direction for decisions about land use, transportation, and related issues within the ability of local government to influence.

### Montgomery County has a lot going for it yet there's room for improvement

In addition to the advantages Montgomery County has enjoyed by virtue of our location in the national capital region, the County has benefitted from a tradition of thoughtful planning that has allowed us to develop and grow while preserving land and other resources in ways that have supported a high quality of life. The Wedges and Corridors Plan was exceptionally progressive for its time, and it helped us to build high quality park and school systems, preserved natural resources and farmland, and laid the groundwork for transit-oriented smart growth. Thrive Montgomery 2050 has attempted to provide an unflinching assessment of the Wedges and Corridors Plan and provide policies and practices that will build on its ideas but also address its shortcomings that have adversely impacted parts of the County.

The federal government's presence has given us a foundation of good jobs and a concentration of public investment in life sciences and information technology that provide enviable opportunities. But the stability and reliability of the base of employment tied to government should not make us complacent. Policies and investments need to capitalize on those opportunities and ensure that Montgomery County is a strong competitor with a diverse economy that brings our residents good paying jobs. Because land is scarce, there is less room for error and discipline is needed in how land is used, and design excellence is can be fostered to respond to market forces and attract both businesses and residents to call Montgomery County home.

We must also address the reality that Montgomery County's prosperity has not benefited all our residents equitably. The urgency of demands for racial justice and the need to rebuild bonds of trust and community are clear. As the demographics of our community change rapidly along dimensions of age, race and

ethnicity, income and wealth, culture, and language, the need to confront inequitable practices has grown increasingly urgent.

As for environmental sustainability, Montgomery County's past record of support for water quality protection, forest conservation, and land preservation are helpful but ultimately will not be sufficient to shield us from the effects of climate change. More creative strategies to build resilience and improve sustainability of both the built and natural environments are critical.

While these economic, social, and environmental changes will not be easy to navigate, Montgomery County is well-positioned to make the decisions and investments necessary for success. Our community is in the 99th percentile of all counties in the country in terms of household income and educational attainment, with annual economic output of almost \$100 billion and an amazingly diverse population. We can draw on tremendous human and physical resources; our assets would be the envy of almost any local jurisdiction anywhere. With Thrive Montgomery 2050 as a guide, in conjunction with master planning processes, we can plan carefully and act decisively to make the changes needed to help Montgomery County thrive well into the future.

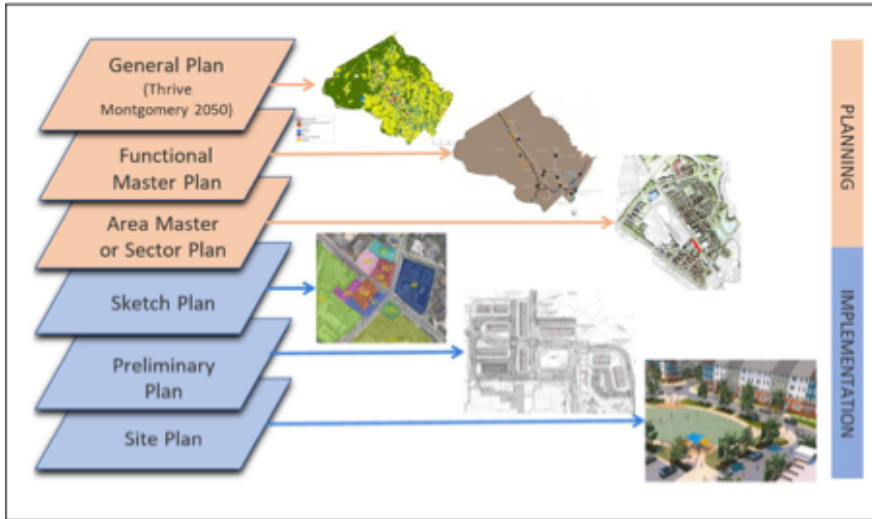
**How Thrive Montgomery 2050 ~~will-should~~ be Implemented**  
**Cooperation among public and private sectors in implementation**

Implementation of Thrive Montgomery 2050 will occur over several decades and will require changes in master plans, zoning and building codes, subdivision regulations, the adequate public facilities ordinance and many other county rules and processes – they are not made in the adoption of this General Plan.

However, as noted in the introduction, Thrive Montgomery 2050 provides the legal predicate for these changes.

The Planning and Parks Departments will lead much of the work, but full implementation of Thrive 2050's recommendations will require collaboration or approval of other government bodies and extensive citizen input. For example, updating the zoning code will require coordination with Department of Permitting Services, while changes to street design standards require coordination with the Department of Transportation and the State Highway Administration. ~~Agencies such as the Arts and Humanities Council will lead the creation of a new cultural plan, and t~~he Department of Recreation, working with the Parks Department, will help expand opportunities for physical activity. The County Council will be asked to review and approve many of these efforts in both land use and budget decisions.

**Commented [A1]:** Deleted the line about the Arts and Humanities Council because a "cultural plan" is not within the defined scope of a general plan.



### The Role of the Public and Private Sectors

Market-driven development will play an important role in implementing Thrive Montgomery 2050.

~~Montgomery County is embarking on an ambitious effort in an age of intense competition and disruption in the private sector and shrinking fiscal capacity of government entities at all levels.~~ To successfully implement ~~these~~ Thrive Montgomery 2050's ideas, the county will need to align public and private investments to maximize their long-term benefits. Future growth will likely be focused in a compact footprint through private sector-led real estate projects. Infill and redevelopment along major corridors ~~will~~ ~~should~~ ~~can~~ create a finer-grained network of streets and add gathering spaces that complement publicly-owned parks. Property owners ~~will~~ ~~may~~ retrofit outdated buildings for new uses and enhance environmental performance by redeveloping surface parking lots and incorporating stormwater management. Private investment in diverse housing types and neighborhood serving retail ~~will~~ ~~can~~ fill in missing amenities and lead to more Complete Communities.

~~Of course,~~ growth requires improvements and additions to public infrastructure and services. Public infrastructure is provided mainly through the county's Capital Improvements Program (CIP), but the private sector makes important contributions pursuant to the county's Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance and impact tax law, which require property developers to build, dedicate, or ~~provide money~~ for parks, roads, schools, and affordable housing. These rules are the mechanism by which new development ~~at its inception~~ generates revenue for the public sector to fund ~~many~~ infrastructure improvements. New sources of funding and more effective use of county assets, such as public land and right-of-way, also may be needed. The combination of such public and private investments is the most reliable long-term strategy ~~for~~ ~~for~~ ~~creating~~ ~~built~~ ~~environments~~ ~~likely~~ ~~to~~ attracting new residents, businesses, and a skilled workforce to ~~high-quality Complete Communities.~~ ~~the County.~~

Commented [A2]: The county's rules that require developers to pay for infrastructure improvements won't apply to much of the infill development Thrive is pushing and the county may need to rethink how it assesses these contributions. This should at least be mentioned.

The anticipated outcome ~~will be~~ is an economically competitive and sustainable county with a strong tax base and broadly shared opportunities.

#### Modifications to other plans, policies, and rules

Thrive Montgomery 2050 is a broad policy document and does not, in and of itself, change land uses, zoning or transportation. Key to implementing Thrive Montgomery 2050, Montgomery County will need to undertake a variety of future actions. These actions are not specified in detail in this document but will be fleshed out in future work programs for the Planning Department and other agencies.

Some future actions may include, but are not limited to:

- Reviews of existing policies, regulations, and programs;
- Studies and new master, functional, or facility plans to delve more deeply into the topics

addressed in the policies, collect and analyze data, and identify detailed strategies for decision making and implementation;

- Development of tools and templates to support master planning, regulatory review and other planning processes; and
- Changes to agency governance and practices that shape how decisions are made.

#### Relationship between Thrive Montgomery 2050 and the Climate Action Plan

Thrive Montgomery 2050 was developed in coordination to coordinate with the county's Climate Action Plan (CAP). Thrive Montgomery 2050 addresses generally where and how land will be conserved or developed for housing, office buildings, parks, agriculture, recreation, transportation, and other types of public and private infrastructure decisions that have a major influence on greenhouse gas emissions, carbon sequestration, and adaptation to climate change. The CAP, on the other hand, focuses on specific near-term actions to eliminate greenhouse gas emissions by 2035 and mitigate or adapt to the effects of increased heat and flooding, high winds, and drought. Thrive Montgomery 2050's climate change-related recommendations will be implemented in concert with the CAP through legislative and zoning changes with significant public participation through master planning, advisory panels, and other appropriate mechanisms.

**Commented [A3]:** Thrive does this very broadly, but the Complete Communities chapter is lacking this sort of detail.

#### Measuring Progress - Indicators

The County undoubtedly will encounter issues not anticipated by this plan. The indicators listed below are intended, along with the more detailed metrics listed in previous chapters, to guide how these types of issues and potential responses should be evaluated and allow for periodic assessments of progress to inform priorities and set shorter-term goals. These indicators address the three overarching objectives of

**Commented [A4]:** All the "metrics" need specific goals by specific dates to actually be metrics.

the plan and are broader than the more specific measures included in each chapter. The following list should not be considered exhaustive and may be modified or expanded to suit future needs:

- Economic performance and competitiveness
  - o Wage and job growth
  - o New business formation
  - o Economic output per capita
- Physical activity and public health measures
  - o Daily and weekly exercise and physical activity
  - o Participation in organized and informal sports and fitness activities
  - o Adverse health outcomes associated with physical inactivity
- Racial equity and social inclusion
  - o Racial and economic diversity of neighborhoods and schools
  - o Measures of social capital, civic engagement, and community trust
  - o Equitable life outcomes across race, income, age, gender, etc.
- Environmental sustainability and resilience
  - o Greenhouse gas emissions
  - o Vehicle miles traveled
  - o Water and air quality

The indicators, along with ~~the metrics provided in the preceding chapters~~ others, will be further refined. The list of actions that will be developed and reviewed after Thrive is adopted should include a section on indicators and metrics, providing detailed information on how the metric or indicator will be measured, the agency responsible for collecting the associated data, and how frequently the metric or indicator will be publicly reviewed and reported.

Commented [A5]: As phrased, this is not directly one of or related to one of the three overarching goals.

