Montgomery County Public Library Comments on Planning Board Draft of Thrive Montgomery 2050, the General Plan

July 29, 2021

Background

Montgomery County Public Libraries' (MCPL) mission is to offer free and equal access to services and resources that connect the people of Montgomery County to ideas and information which sustain and enrich their lives.

MCPL brings resources to our residents from infants to retirees. Our libraries provide access to a lifelong learning gateway and a library card is the key to myriad literacy resources including workforce and career opportunities, online classes and training, digital entertainment, special events and more

MCPL plays an important part in expanding early childhood education. Poverty and economic inequality are the major barriers to student success, and free literacy opportunities are crucial to ensuring that our children are prepared to learn. Our libraries offers numerous early literacy resources to encourage young children to discover learning and become lifelong readers.

MCPL's workforce and business programs connect residents to online classes, help residents develop job skills and basic job searching techniques, assist those looking to develop or expand their careers, and support local small business owners. Through Maryland's Career Online High School, 27 adults have earned a high school diploma. The program affords hard-working people with the opportunity to earn their diploma and become certified in one of eight high-demand, high-growth career fields.

Every day our libraries offer early literacy, education, workforce development and health and wellbeing support to all members of the community. Our traditional role of providing books and other materials, and of course information assistance, whether print, in person or digital, is always at the core of MCPL.

Land Use—MCPL's New Colocated and Free-standing Libraries in Urban Settings

The county has well-established policies that favor the siting of our libraries in urban centers that are accessible to many county residents.

Wheaton Library -29,416 gross/20,744 net

The Wheaton Library and Community Recreation Center opened on September 9, 2019. The 92,000-square foot building is the County's <u>first</u> combined multiplex to include a library, community recreation center, Friends of the Library used bookstore, local park and a future cafe. The facility includes a 79,000-square foot underground parking garage.

Silver Spring Library -69,470 gross/51,980 net

The Silver Spring Library is a mixed-use urban library in downtown Silver Spring, Maryland. The newly built Silver Spring library re-opened in 2015 on Wayne Avenue. The actual building is multiple stories with the library located on the 3rd, 4th, and 5th floors. The 1st floor (front) houses the Bump and Grind café with escalators leading to one of the 3rd floor library entrances. The 2nd floor houses the Levine Music Center. And the 1st floor area will house in the fall of 2021 the Arts on the Block store and gallery. The basement level is the headquarters for Gandhi Brigade, a nonprofit organization that prepares youth to become leaders through the use of digital media. The Purple Line (a new light rail system that will open soon) runs through the facility on the main street level. The Silver Spring Metro station is also close by.

Rockville Library 82,030 gross/ 60,763 net

The Rockville Library is located in the Rockville Town Square. The center includes the library, restaurants, retail stores and the VisArts gallery and studios. The Rockville Library became the first building to open in the Town Square section of Rockville's redevelopment project. The three-story facility houses not only the actual library, but MCPL administrative offices, the Friends of the

Library, Montgomery County, Maryland, and the Literacy Council of Montgomery County. Also located on the third floor are the County's Office of Human Rights. and the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) of the County's Department of Technology Services. The Rockville metro station is close by.

Free-standing libraries in urban settings

Several libraries including the Germantown, Connie Morella (Bethesda), and Long Branch library are located in vibrant urban settings that include various types of housing, parks, restaurants, and retail businesses. Except for Germantown, all of these libraries are easily accessible by either Metro or the future Purple line.

The **Long Branch Library** was renovated and reopened in Jan 2021. The Long Branch library is located near the Long Branch Recreation Center, and a park. The Purple Line is currently being constructed to run near the library which will add another mode of transit to this busy are of mixed housing, restaurants, and businesses.

The **Germantown Library** is located in the heart of the Town Center. The library is located next to the Germantown Town Center Urban Park, the Black Rock Center for the Arts, and numerous local businesses and restaurants.