

# Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights

## About THRIVE and the petition signed by over 3900 citizens with concerns

Patricia Johnson <pdjohnson01@yahoo.com>

Fri, Sep 23, 2022 at 12:49 PM

To: marc.elrich@montgomerycountymd.gov

Cc: "Wellington, Meredith" <meredith.wellington@montgomerycountymd.gov>,  
claire.iseli@montgomerycountymd.gov

Dear County Executive Elrich,

I am writing you to remind you of the petition that has circulated during this year reflecting concerns voiced by over 3900 citizens about the Planning Board's vision for the county for the next thirty years in Thrive2050.

<https://www.change.org/p/montgomery-county-council-montgomery-county-council-broad-community-input-needed-on-residential-zoning-changes>

This petition continues to be active and citizens are still signing as of this date. It seems as though the County Council has no regard for these concerns voiced by many constituents. I am asking you, County Executive Elrich, to reach out personally to certain County Council members that may listen to the problematic issues with this plan.

CE Elrich, we know that you sent a strong letter to the Council with your very valid concerns which echo our own. I know that you repeated these concerns on your weekly text messages. We appreciate your words and efforts.

However, we don't think that this is enough. After witnessing the hearings this week and noting that the only letters that were mentioned in discussions at the County Council were those of paid lobbyists who approved Thrive, we feel that the Council needs to hear personally from you. Would you please consider calling Councilmembers Katz, Jawando, Friedson, Navarro and Glass? Please impress upon them the very accurate and valuable concerns that echo your constituents that this plan is flawed. The three added chapters were barely covered in the meetings. "*The fix is in*" as reported by David Lublin for the Seventh State, exposes a critical disregard of problems voiced by many citizens of Montgomery County. This is not fair representation by the County Council of the county's citizens. Please personally reach out to the Councilmembers we have mentioned above and address both your and our concerns. We feel that we have no voice except for those that are paid lobbyists. This is not representative government. Please reach out individually to these Councilmembers. You can make a difference and speak for us.

Sincerely, Patricia Johnson (District 1) member of CCCFH

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*The Seventh State*

September 23, 2022

## **The Fix is In, Part II**

Montgomery County Council staff are now claiming that no comments about Thrive's three new chapters

(Environmental Health and Resilience, Economic Competitiveness, and Racial Equity and Social Justice) were received from anyone besides Jane Lyons, a paid employee of the Coalition for Smarter Growth, and Dan Reed, a paid employee of Greater Greater Washington, and the County's Department of Environmental Protection.

During the Council session on September 22, Council staff stated: "So we only received direct comments on the chapters from Coalition for Smarter Growth, from Greater Greater Washington, and from DEP."

This is misleading in two senses. First, other organizations, including environmental and civic groups, have recently commented extensively on these issues even if they did not comment on the specific language in these new chapters. Put more bluntly, the staff omitted key information regarding recent comments.

Second, the very first draft of Thrive, proposed by Planning Staff (called the Working Draft Plan) had chapters similar to these three, which received multiple comments. Many comments made on this and subsequent versions of Thrive still apply to the version which the Council is now considering. Must residents resubmit the same comments repeatedly to have them heard?

Moreover, if the Council received no additional comments on these specific and very important chapters, councilmembers should question whether true consultation has actually occurred with either the hired experts or the residents—also known as their constituents. Clearly, either the chapters were not distributed and publicized widely or insufficient time was given to comment. It's inconceivable in our vocal county that only two paid lobbyists have thoughts on a chapters of a plan supposed to shape Montgomery County for 30 years.

The new racial equity and social justice analysis suggests directly that more engagement is needed. In the Thrive work session this past Tuesday, councilmembers cut the session from two hours to about 70 minutes, and took an inordinate amount of time to congratulate themselves on their awareness of racial equity and social justice.

As a result, they limited the discussion time for the consultant, who had been paid nearly \$100,000 for the analysis, and simply dispensed with several of his recommendations for more comprehensive engagement and improvements to Thrive.

In other words, this consultation is largely performative. It's designed to tick off boxes rather than gain meaningful input. In this most recent work session, the Council spent much time incorporating comments from two regional organizations that want to make the document more radical, and none from critics in the Montgomery community.

Truth be told, councilmembers don't seem very engaged with the complex issues and just want to ram through Thrive Montgomery 2050.

**David Lublin**

CCCFH website: [www.cccfhmd.org](http://www.cccfhmd.org)

**Representing the Communities of Brookdale, Chevy Chase Village, Chevy Chase West, Drummond, 4800 Chevy Chase Drive Condominium, Kenwood, Kenwood Condominium, Kenwood Forest II, Kenwood House Cooperative, Little Falls Place, Somerset, Somerset House Condominiums, Springfield, Sumner Citizens Association, Village of Friendship Heights, Westbard Mews, Westmoreland, Westwood Mews, and Wood Acres**