



To,
The Montgomery County Planning Board
2425 Reedie Drive, 14th Floor
Wheaton, MD 20902

November 18, 2020

Reg: Thrive Montgomery 2050

Dear Chairman Anderson and members of the Montgomery County Planning Board,

Sierra Club Montgomery County group is pleased that the Planning Board is preparing this major planning document and supports the draft plan for Thrive 2050.

We believe this plan will set a strong foundation for the county over the next 30 years, as we move forward to address our many challenges and fully embrace some great opportunities. Together we can create a more vibrant, equitable, and livable community!

We believe the major themes of THRIVE are accurate descriptors of where the county needs to move over the coming decades. THRIVE advocates for a robust future that includes compact development, creation of diverse neighborhoods to promote racial justice and equity, growth concentrated around transit, a wider range of housing options throughout the county, transportation that focuses on moving people, not cars, and eradication of greenhouse gas emissions. Equally important is the vision of complete communities connected also by green corridors. These corridors serve as critical natural infrastructure because they increase resilience to the impacts of climate change and protect water quality.

Sierra Club believes that America's most critical environmental issue is climate change and our most critical social issue is racial justice and equity. We also understand that we cannot address one without addressing the other. So Sierra Club fully understands that the various themes of THRIVE are intimately interconnected. For instance, enabling more kids to walk or bike to equitable and diverse neighborhood schools is only going to work when we have created, across the county, neighborhoods with a wide variety of housing types and costs.

This plan can, and should, be consulted often over the coming decades. We do not want a good document that just "sits on the shelf." Thus, we advocate for a shorter, punchier THRIVE that will truly inspire elected officials and a wide range of key actors in the public, private and non-profit sectors. The reader of this plan should walk away excited about what a great place Montgomery County is going to become to live and work over the next 30 years – and be energized to roll up her sleeves to get to work on achieving the plan's vision.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to present Sierra Club's strong support for THRIVE.

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