

QUESTIONS FOR THE PHED COMMITTEE

July 11, 2021

Questions for the Planning, Housing, and Economic Development Committee

The Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights, Inc. (CCCFH) is a coalition of 21 local community organizations interested in government and land use issues. We have many concerns about Thrive Montgomery 2050 and the related zoning amendments. The questions below are particularly directed to the Planning, Housing, and Economic Development Committee, but are relevant to deliberations of the entire Council regarding these plans. We would like specific answers, not simply generalities, to the following questions:

1. Why are the county planners allowing developers to build new housing by right? Why shouldn't the new housing plans be reviewed and subjected to the usual planning department processes?
2. Instead of focusing on expensive teardowns, why isn't there a focus on preserving existing "Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing"?
3. How will 15-minute living be interpreted in planning? A 15-minute walk is the only example in the current Draft. (Pages 45, 126.) Yet previous discussions suggested residents would be encouraged to bicycle 15 minutes (3 miles) to grocery shop, which would be difficult or impossible for most residents. (See Fig. 43: "Most auto trips can be made within a short bicycle trip ..." where a bicycle trip of 5.9 miles is considered to be "short".)
4. By 2040, 1 out of 5 residents will be 65 or older, and the diminishing cohort of baby boomers will be frail elderly, ages 76 to 94 years old. The draft Thrive plan mentions seniors only once and it broadly seeks to cull cars and reduce parking spaces. How will seniors' needs for mobility, including parking places at home and a variety of destinations such as retail, doctors, and friends be assured? How will Thrive maximize the ability of seniors to age in place?
5. A central element of Thrive is Complete Communities for an expanding population. But in the discussion of these communities in Thrive, there is no mention of MCPS schools. Where will schools be placed? How much new land will be required? Will schools have substantial playgrounds and

QUESTIONS FOR THE PHED COMMITTEE

fields? What is in store for MCPS students—overcrowding, no or inadequate playgrounds/playing fields at schools? Where is the equity?

6. With an expanding population in Complete Communities and corridors, what is the guiding metric for new parks? What parks would be needed by 2050? What funding sources will be recommended for parks?

7. As we transition to an electric vehicle future, what infrastructure will be needed? How will vehicles that are not parked on the property where people reside, i.e., on the streets, be charged? Will the reduced number of parking spaces at residential buildings advocated by draft Thrive 2050 push people toward having gasoline powered vehicles to avoid the vehicle charging nightmare faced by drivers of vehicles parked on the street?

8. Much of the discussion of economic development and attracting high-quality business has been removed from the Thrive document. What plans are there for attracting new business, aside from the theory (which we question) that building more housing will attract business development?

9. 1. Where is the financial plan for this over-arching blueprint for Montgomery County? Where is the business model for how any of these goals can realistically be funded especially during a time when the County faces a significant decline in economic growth?

10. Existing density already has serious problems with storm water during climate change and severe weather. What programs will be in place to create storm water management for all the projected added density and resulting impervious surfaces?

11. Will aging infrastructure in mature communities be able to handle the extra pressure of density on water, sewage, electric grid, garbage collection and other necessary services?

12. Can communities have representation via advisory committees when new buildings are proposed in their neighborhoods?

13. What is the projected population density (number of residents) in the “complete communities” or “15-minute” communities?

QUESTIONS FOR THE PHED COMMITTEE

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

David S. Forman

Chair, CCCFH

CCCFH website: www.cccfhmd.org

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