

**Town of Chevy Chase Testimony**  
**County Council Public Hearing on Thrive Montgomery**  
**June 17, 2021**

Good evening, my name is Barney Rush, Mayor of the Town of Chevy Chase. Our Town is a member of the *Thrive Montgomery 2050 Neighborhood Coalition*. The coalition, consisting of more than twenty-five communities across the County, will provide you with a formal letter proposing seven critical modifications to the Thrive general plan. Tonight, I will focus my remarks on a few of the key changes we recommend.

First, the county should continue to use the master & sector planning processes as the vehicle for change. Thrive anticipates higher density development in single family residential communities. What must be avoided is a new county wide zoning ordinance that leaves residents with only the binary choice of opposing any change or accepting a large-scale change in housing forms. Residents have a continuum of views, and many accept some additional density in their neighborhoods. But it is a matter of degree – and the degree matters. Finding the right balance for a given area cannot be done with a “one size fits all” approach.

Instead, a carefully considered local solution, focused on the street patterns and existing density of that area, and incorporating engagement with residents, will have the best chance of attracting the broad support that fundamental change requires. Also, such a local approach will be best suited to tailor incentives to retain and refurbish existing attainable and affordable housing.

Second, robust funding methods are required to finance the proper level of infrastructure needed to attain Thrive’s vision of complete communities. Where will the funds be found for the added pedestrian, bicycle, bus rapid transit, stormwater, and school infrastructure projects? And how will such costs be shared? This issue could also be addressed in conjunction with a master or sector plan process.

Third, the underpinning for achievement of all these goals will be sustained job creation and economic growth. This, too, must be a focal point of our new general plan.

Please fix the draft plan and ensure that it sets out a strategy for economic growth, includes sound financial planning for required infrastructure, and uses the master and sector planning processes as the means of instituting zoning changes.

Thank you.