

City of Takoma Park, Maryland

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Suzanne R. Ludlow, City Manager

June 9, 2021

Mr. Tom Hucker, President
and Members of the Montgomery County Council
Council Office Building
100 Maryland Avenue, 6th Floor
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear President Hucker and Members of the County Council:

On behalf of the City of Takoma Park, I write to support the updated, proposed Thrive Montgomery 2050 Plan. Takoma Park shares the goals and vision of Thrive Montgomery 2050, which shifts the County's priorities away from car-oriented greenfield development and toward compact, walkable, transit-oriented, and mixed-use development and redevelopment. Thrive Montgomery also aligns with the City's priorities, particularly regarding climate, housing, and racial equity initiatives.

In Resolution 2019-15, Declaring a Climate Change Emergency, the City of Takoma Park calls on the county, state and federal governments "to take more aggressive action on climate change mitigation, adaptation and resiliency to move rapidly toward net zero GHG emissions, and the City will continue to advocate at all levels of government for adoption of policies to achieve these goals." The inclusion of goals for climate mitigation and adaptation throughout the proposed plan meet this challenge, and the City looks forward to the complementary implementation of Thrive Montgomery and the County's Climate Action Plan.

Thrive Montgomery's special focus on increasing affordability and attainability through the "expansion and diversification of our housing stock" in all parts of the County aligns with the City's hope that all aspects of the plan are implemented equitably throughout the County, as this will lead all municipalities to success. Takoma Park provides a disproportionate share of the County's affordable housing. The City recognizes the importance of creating more affordable and 'missing middle' housing as an important and necessary step to achieve housing goals and Complete Communities with greater density near transit. We appreciate that the Plan names the actions required to update County departmental policies and protocols to begin implementation. We hope that the County's Growth and Infrastructure Policy will continue to evolve in alignment with the goals of Thrive Montgomery.

The City appreciates the emphasis on transit and transportation alternatives, including bike and pedestrian infrastructure, and the transformation of major roadways into safe and attractive multi-modal boulevards, a goal the City identified in the Corridor Concept Plan for New Hampshire Avenue in 2008. We continue to advocate for Bus Rapid Transit on New Hampshire Avenue as an essential element of that transformation, as well as additional investment in all transit. We want to move away from continuing to plan for and fund more auto-oriented efforts. We also appreciate the incorporation of the goals of Vision Zero in the Plan.

The Plan highlights the need to coordinate with the State Highway Administration to achieve the shift from car-centric development patterns to improved multi-modal and transit options, and will benefit from the addition of more specific strategies to achieve this objective. The Plan also highlights the importance of coordination with surrounding jurisdictions to ensure project continuity, essential for municipalities like Takoma Park, which borders several jurisdictions. The City would like to see additional focus on how coordination between state and local partners will be operationalized. The success of the Plan will depend on reaching beyond the County boundaries.

In such an ambitious vision, we recognize the need for additional study and the development of metrics for many aspects of the plan, with particular emphasis on the measure and tracking of racial and climate equity goals. The divisive, living legacy of racist land use policies and future threats from a changing climate demand action from all of us. We appreciate the enumeration of possible metrics for evaluation listed through the Plan, and we continue to encourage the County to commit to regular evaluations of progress.

The Thrive Montgomery 2050 Plan is compatible with the work of the City of Takoma Park. We add our voices of support for the Plan and the commitment to create the future we need, and we look forward to cooperation on policies to implement the Plan in the future.

Sincerely,

Suzanne R. Ludlow

Suzanne R. Ludlow
City Manager

cc: Takoma Park City Council