



VILLAGE OF NORTH CHEVY CHASE

PO BOX 15887, CHEVY CHASE, MD 20815

September 18, 2020

Dear Council President Katz, Vice President Hucker, Councilmember Alborno, Councilmember Friedson, Councilmember Glass, Councilmember Jawando, Councilmember Navarro, Councilmember Rice, and Councilmember Riemer:

The Council for the Village of North Chevy Chase requests that you delay consideration of Thrive Montgomery 2050 at the Planning Board and County Council levels for at least one year. The Nation, State and County have been faced with unprecedented economic and personal hardships brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. The current draft relies on pre-pandemic data and assumptions, yet recent data suggest we may be facing permanent changes in how we live, spend, work, commute, study, and play:

- Metro weekday ridership overall has declined nearly 95% since March.
- Multiple businesses in the County have closed permanently and others have laid off thousands of employees.
- Weakness in high-cost rentals is not translating into lower rents, as indicated by the conversion of luxury rentals into more profitable short-term rentals.
- Many companies and employees have discovered that telecommuting works and saves time and money – cutting into the commercial real estate market and altering the residential market in favor of homes with work space and outdoor recreation space on site or nearby.
- Government funding for services and pressing capital needs will be severely circumscribed by both diminished revenues and meeting immediate needs precipitated by the pandemic.

It is impossible to know which changes will be lasting, but their potential to affect housing choices, education, commuting patterns, brick and mortar retail, recreation, and transportation demands and solutions, among others, is indisputable. While the plan acknowledges the likelihood of increased telecommuting, it does not adequately address where and how people will continue their lives once the pandemic fades. We will learn much more about that in the next 12-18 months. For the foreseeable future, people are focused on staying healthy, keeping their jobs, feeding and schooling their children, and paying for housing.

The Village of North Chevy Chase appreciates the time and effort that has gone into developing a vision for the County through Thrive Montgomery but believes that delaying its consideration and incorporating an analysis of the pandemic's impact will best serve the County and its residents. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Adrian Andreassi", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Adrian Andreassi, Village Council Chair

(Additional Councilmembers: Brian Hoffner, Maury Mechanick, Chas Stuart, Ronald Jones)