

#29

COMPLETE



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Q1

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Q2

Planning Board member

What are you applying for?

Page 2: Housing Production

Q3

Montgomery County needs 60,000 homes by 2040 according to the Planning Department. Where in the county do you think density should be increased to accommodate the construction of new housing? Select all of the options that apply. If you don't think density should be increased in Montgomery County, please select "I do not think density should be increased anywhere in Montgomery County."

- New housing should be concentrated within a close distance of Metro and Purple Line stations.
- ,
- New housing should be built throughout existing residential neighborhoods in duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, and small apartment buildings.
- ,
- New housing should be built on the site of aging commercial properties, like shopping centers and office parks.

Q4

Over 100,000

How many additional units (including the aforementioned 60,000) do you think should be built here by 2040?

Q5

Yes

The recently passed Thrive 2050 plan identifies main corridors in the county as “complete communities” where more housing and mixed-use development should occur, including changing single-family zoning to allow a variety of house types. Do you support this goal?

Q6

As a Planning Board member, your role is to advise the council on strategies for increasing housing production. Please rank the following policies that would increase housing production in the order you’d advise the council to undertake them:

- | | |
|--|----------|
| Legalizing two-unit buildings countywide | 4 |
| Legalizing four-unit buildings countywide | 1 |
| Increasing the percentage of affordable housing required in new development | 5 |
| Incentivizing the conversion of older office buildings, shopping centers, etc. to residential properties | 6 |
| Reducing parking requirements in new construction | 2 |
| Legalizing and incentivizing housing above public facilities, such as libraries, recreation centers, and fire stations | 3 |
-

Q7

Yes

In 2020, the County Council—under advice from the Planning Board—eliminated the housing moratorium, in which building permits could not be issued in areas where schools were over capacity. Do you agree with this policy change?

Q8

Yes

The Planning Department is currently working on Attainable Housing Strategies, a study of ways to expand housing options (such as duplexes, townhomes, and small apartment buildings) in Montgomery County. Planning staff have draft recommendations, which include: allowing up to three homes by-right on lots currently zoned for one house (R-40, R-60, R-90, and R-200) allowing up to four homes on lots closer to transit creating a new optional method of development to encourage construction of duplexes, cottage courts, townhomes, and small apartment buildings near transit, along the Growth Corridors identified in Thrive 2050, and near activity centers. If you were a Planning Board member, would you vote to advise that the County Council pursue these recommendations as written?

Q9

If you answered yes, why would you recommend the Council make these changes? If no, what would you change?

No policy or zoning code proposal is perfect, and although I may prefer slight adjustments here or there regarding the the draft recommendation (or additional elements to include parking reform, as an example), I would support these recommendations for several reasons:

- In order to meet our housing goals (which include production targets and a diversity of options to meet the needs of different types of households), we need to dramatically expand our existing buildable land capacity. A zoning change to allow more units on residential lots is a good method to increase this capacity without sprawling into greenfield areas, which would make many of our challenges worse (climate and environmental impacts, VMT increases, service and infrastructure costs, and ultimately housing affordability and overall cost of living). Moreover, allowing by-right development of middle housing style or scale development reduces the time and resources required to move through the permitting process, which speeds up housing production while lowering overall development costs.

- Density is good, and has a host of associated benefits. In a largely suburban county like ours, close in to the core of the metro area and with good transit access and infrastructure (which, yes, could always be improved with better service and frequency), we should do everything we can to capitalize on our location-based advantages and encourage the sort of residential density that leads to less driving, more energy efficient buildings, thriving local businesses, and ultimately greater housing affordability and lower overall costs of living (along with lower service, infrastructure, and maintenance costs for the county on a per capita basis).

- Exclusionary zoning and heavily subsidized low density development has contributed to our climate and affordability crises, and has in many cases had at effect of producing generational wealth for white households while excluding wealth-generating ownership opportunities for households of color. Although the demographic composition of single-unit zoned suburban areas is changing in some places, the legacy impact of exclusionary zoning cannot be ignored, and the relationship between some of the original exclusive suburbs in our county and current demographic and household income trends is clear. Maintaining exclusionary single-unit zoning is, in my view, indefensible on several fronts.

- A diversity of housing options is how we help ensure that people from a variety of backgrounds, with a variety of needs or preferences, can find a home that works for them. It's how we can help a young adult or group of friends affordably find a place to live; a young couple, family, or single parent find a home that's sized and priced for their situation, in a convenient location; an ageing resident downsize when they're ready and remain close to friends, family, and amenities.

- If I could make one amendment to this package, it would be the addition of parking reform recommendations, to include among other things the elimination of parking minimums. The benefits of parking reform are clear -- they reduce construction costs and therefore housing costs, they de-link cars and development and therefore deprioritize cars as the default/preferred mode, they encourage more sustainable transportation options, and (with regard to eliminating parking minimums in particular) they support the overall goal of a diversity of housing options to meet different needs, since developers can right-size and tailor their projects based on projected market demand or community needs.

Page 3: Affordable Housing

Q10

I consider affordable housing to be (check all that, in your opinion, apply):

**Subsidized,
Costing no more than 30 percent of one's household income**

Q11

I consider market-rate housing to be (check all that, in your opinion, apply):

**Not means-tested or income-restricted,
Unsubsidized**

Q12

The Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit (MPDU) program requires that at least 12.5% of homes in a new residential development with at least 20 homes be set aside as affordable homes. The cost of doing so is paid by a project's developer. Because the number of MPDUs is tied to the number of total units, the larger a development is, the more MPDUs will be built. Conversely, if the initial density proposed by a developer is reduced during the approvals process, rather than maintained or increased, fewer MPDUs will be built. Planning Board commissioners are likely to hear from some constituents concerned by a project's potential impact—real or assumed—on traffic, parking, views, and property values and rents, and whether it fits the character of the neighborhood. If a development with MPDUs came before you, what would you do, given the likelihood of at least some pushback?

I would encourage developers to maximize the height and density of the project.

Q13

Montgomery County spends an estimated \$180,000 of taxpayer dollars to educate a public school student from kindergarten through 12th grade. However, many children who grow up in Montgomery County cannot afford to live there as adults. Should it be a priority for the County to ensure that a child on whose education it has invested can afford to live here as an adult?

Yes

Page 4: Affordable Housing

Q14

If you selected yes, which policies to make housing more affordable do you think the county should pursue? Select all that apply.

- Zoning for denser housing,**
- Reducing or eliminating parking requirements,**
- Down payment or closing cost assistance,**
- Rent stabilization,**
- Increasing the affordable housing trust fund,**
- Social housing,**
- Other (please specify):
- Other options include: code change to reduce required setbacks or lot coverage maximums, increase allowable heights or FAR, etc.

Page 5: Affordable Housing

Q15

How will you ensure that the County produces housing for residents who make between 50% AMI and 80% AMI?

Many of the things discussed in earlier questions are paramount to increase the supply of housing options that are affordable for residents and households earning between 50-80% of AMI. This is a particularly difficult income band to afford a house, given the cost of development and the chronic shortage of government subsidies and vouchers. In our county, the challenge is even steeper in some ways, given the wide range of incomes that can fall between 50-80% at different household sizes. Still, there are several things the county can do:

- Zoning: Allow more residential units per lot by right in all single-unit zones
- Parking: Eliminate parking minimums and requirements, particularly for multi-family structures and near transit
- County funding: Expand funding for programs like the Multifamily Loan Program, the Housing Opportunities Commission, and the Affordable Housing Opportunity Fund
- County development: Social housing, co-housing, co-development of housing with partners, purchasing of land for use as affordable residential housing
- Code changes: Eliminate or reduce elements of code that contribute to expensive or inefficient housing development

Q16

How will you ensure the County produces housing for residents who make between 80% AMI and 120% AMI?

For this income band, many of the recommendations from the previous question apply as well. I would add a couple of homeownership-related items here -- which is not to say that homeownership is not relevant for the 50-80% AMI band, it of course is for many households and remains a way to build generational wealth. A couple of ownership-related strategies include:

- Downpayment assistance programs
- Bonds for students (doubles as a way to help young adults afford to stay in the County if they prefer to do so)
- Expand low-interest financing support

As we know, the federal government has a large and indispensable role to play in housing affordability through HUD and its use of Section 8 vouchers and LIHTC. Given its proximity and connections, Montgomery County is as well positioned as any county to engage more with the HUD and congressional representatives on these issues to attempt to expand federal funding in the future -- and also potentially turn housing support into an entitlement rather than an application-based process with long wait lists.

Page 6: Transportation

Q17

Yes

The County's Climate Action Plan includes a target of reducing trips made by private vehicle to 60 percent of total trips (from 75 percent in 2018). Do you agree that incenting residents and visitors to drive less should be an explicit policy goal of the County?

Q18

Yes

A 12-year study, published in 2019, found that protected bike lanes drastically lowered fatal crash rates *for all road users* in Seattle (-60.6%), San Francisco (-49.3%), Denver (-40.3%) and Chicago (-38.2%), among others. Would you, as a Planning Board member, support removing single-occupancy vehicle parking and travel lanes for protected bike lanes?

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Q19

They should repurpose whatever lane their staff believe is best on any given street.

If yes, how do you think the county and/or state of Maryland should prioritize repurposing street space to create protected bike lanes?

Q20

Yes

Do you think Montgomery Parks should expand its Open Parkways program, in which roads in County parks such as Sligo Creek Parkway, Beach Drive, and Little Falls Parkway are closed to cars?

Page 8: Transportation

Q21

Yes

The Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan, approved in 2013, recommends a network of bus lanes on major roads throughout the county. Today, buses are primarily delayed by sitting in single-occupancy vehicle traffic. Bus riders are more frequently Black and brown, and less affluent, than rail riders and drivers. Would you support removing single-occupancy vehicle parking and travel lanes for dedicated bus lanes, which make bus service faster and more reliable?

Q22

The county's climate action plan goal to be carbon-free by 2035 requires most of the reduction of its transportation emissions to come from residents turning existing single-occupancy vehicle trips into transit, walking, and biking trips. Please describe at least one trip you currently take by car (even if you, yourself, are not driving) that you can commit to taking on foot, by bus, by train, via a mobility device, or by bike instead.

I rarely use a car, but I recognize that this is a privilege that not many people have -- or at least, an option for many people that is convenient, accessible, and safe. There is tremendous latent demand for non-car transportation options in this county and region, and we should be doing everything we can do to meet this demand and dramatically increase transit and active transportation mode share - for climate, safety, cost of living, and quality of life reasons.

One trip I do currently take by car is driving my young daughter to pediatrician appointments. She just turned one, and as she gets older I'm very much looking forward to turning this trip -- and many other trips -- into bicycle trips with her, either using a seat on the back of my current bike or getting a front- or back-loading e-cargo bike with room for kids.

Q23

Reducing traffic fatalities and injuries will not only require incentives for people to drive less and nudges to make them drive better. It will also require policies that actively reshape the County's transportation systems and its landscape to decrease single-occupancy vehicle trips, and to slow down the speed of those trips when people do make them. Please rank the following policies in the order that you would advise the Council to pursue them. If you would not advise that the Council pursue a specific policy, please select N/A.

- | | |
|---|----------|
| Removing minimum parking requirements in new developments near transit | 2 |
| Implementing road diets on arterial streets | 4 |
| Making some streets, especially residential streets, car-free | 3 |
| Building more housing and affordable housing in the County near transit and job centers | 1 |

Q24

None of the above

Governor Wes Moore's administration will revisit plans to add four high-occupancy toll (HOT) lanes to I-270 and I-495, including whether to move forward with the project and whether or not to institute tolls on part or all of the road. Please select which of the following configurations you would support. If you would not support a specific option, please select "none of the above."

Q25

The Planning Department has started to expand its toolbox of outreach methods in order to hear from a broader variety of community members, in addition to traditional outreach formats. The following is a list of potential sources of feedback for a hypothetical project coming before the board. Rank how important each of these sources would be to your decision-making process. If this source would not be important to you, please select N/A.

Comments from residents at a Planning Department presentation to a civic association	5
Door-knocking in an apartment complex	1
Online survey of 500 residents	4
Pop-up event at a community festival	2
Booth at a farmer's market	3
Letters, emails, and calls from neighbors adjacent to the site	6

Q26

In your own words, could you describe what this data means for the Planning Board as it makes decisions in the future?

This is important and powerful information that shows, among other things, that there is broad support for the sort of housing policies and approaches that we know are necessary (more homes, more options, more density, etc.), despite the narratives and criticism that always emerge during these discussions. More specifically, it suggests that younger residents and renters are looking for opportunities to remain in the county, and also demonstrates that residents and households are eager for a diversity of housing options as their life circumstances change, as they age, as they find partners or downsize, and as they potentially start families or support retired parents. This data -- connected to the idea of a diversity of housing options, and MORE housing in general -- is more evidence in support of the idea that our neighbors are not satisfied with our current housing supply and land uses, and we should act to meet their needs, which also has co-benefits for climate mitigation, vibrant and mixed use spaces, local businesses, and more amenities closer to more people.
