Town of Chevy Chase
Subcommittee on Regional Growth and Development
Wednesday, September 30, 2020
7:00 pm, Virtual Meeting

Attendees: Dedun Ingram (chair, LRP); Lees Hartman (chair, LUC); Karen Elkins; Tom Glazer; Ted Kalick; Martha Marmofern; Steve Seidel;; David Valenstein; Ellen Cornelius-Ericson (Council liaison); Irene Lane (Council liaison)

1. The minutes from the September 16 meeting were approved.

2. <u>2020-2024 County Growth Policy (Subdivision Staging Policy)</u>. The subcommittee was briefed on what had happened with the County Growth Policy (CGP) since the September 16 meeting.

3. <u>Thrive Montgomery.</u> The subcommittee began its discussion of the goals, policies, and actions in Thrive Montgomery related to complete communities, compact communities (15-minute living), retrofitting existing neighborhoods by increasing density and adding new housing types and uses. To aid discussion, the subcommittee used a list of the goals, policies, and actions from the working draft of Thrive Montgomery (published on October 24) relevant to physical changes to the built environment that had been categorized into the following groups:

- Locate Infill development near transit corridors
- Increase housing diversity and density in existing neighborhoods
- Create Recreation/gathering spaces within neighborhoods

 General concepts were discussed as well as their potential application within the Town.

<u>Points made during committee discussion:</u>

- Unclear how the 15-minute communities can be created within Montgomery County except in a very few places.

- Even in places where amenities are within a 15-minute walk, it seems unlikely that most people will give up their cars and walk or cycle everywhere, even if there were a robust mass transit system which there is not.

- For 15-minute communities to work, an extensive mass transit system would need to be put in place. How is that feasible given we can't fund Metro and WAMATA and Ride On, and the lack of success, after years of trying, in getting BRT routes in place and MARC service extended?

- One of the goals of Thrive Montgomery is to create more affordable housing and more varied housing types, especially near transit. Goals, policies, and actions promote adding middle housing to existing single-family neighborhoods near transit in order to accomplish this. Adding middle housing to existing single-family neighborhoods, like the Town, will not create truly affordable housing if the housing in the neighborhood is itself not affordable. The new housing will be less expensive than a house in that neighborhood, but the prices of the middle housing will be driven by the market and so will be out of reach of most people. Unless there are subsidy programs.

- How should the County prioritize its goal of creating complete communities? For equity, should neighborhoods that are underserved by transit and amenities be focused on first, rather than put scarce resources into neighborhoods that have already met some of the complete community goals?

- Unclear whether the complete communities' strategy is calling for more amenities in currently underserved areas or clustering housing around existing amenities. Given how difficult it is for retail stores to stay in business these days, will they be able to survive if located within neighborhoods?

- For businesses to be successful, they need customers coming from further away than just a 15-minute walk/cycle.

- Adding missing middle housing in the Town would be acceptable provided the Town continues to have the authority to control height, setback, FAR, etc. rules, so the middle housing conforms to the Town's rules.

- Seems most likely that any missing middle housing would be built on the Town borders, or on the 4-H property.

- Many of the Thrive Montgomery goals seem out of reach because there is no funding - especially for new mass transit.

- Thrive Montgomery does not include a fiscal analysis / financial impact from the proposed strategies since schools and transportation policies seem to be an afterthought.

4. At its October 13 meeting, the subcommittee will discuss transportation elements of Thrive Montgomery.