



Montgomery County Council

From the Office of Councilmember Mike Knapp

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Council members Proposes Plan for Affordable Housing – The Next Generation

“Montgomery County is in an affordable housing crisis. The median price for a new single-family detached home is over half a million dollars. When existing homes are included with all townhouses, the median price is still well over \$300,000. These prices are beyond the reach of the average Montgomery worker who earns \$46,000 a year. No wonder so many people must commute to their jobs in the County from Frederick, West Virginia and Pennsylvania -- making our traffic nightmare worse and creating havoc in the lives of the commuters.

“The sad truth is that too many of our teachers, firefighters, police and service industry workers can’t afford to live in Montgomery County. That’s why we must improve our moderately priced housing program – and do it now.

“Together with my colleagues Mike Knapp, Steve Silverman, Mike Subin, the League of Women Voters, and Gino Renne from the County Government Employees’ Union, I’m proposing a package of adjustments to strengthen our 30-year-old Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit (MPDU) program. The proposal will invest more money in rehabilitating existing affordable homes, while also creating incentives for the private sector to produce many new units. It includes measures to:

- Eliminate most of the notorious “buyouts,” whereby developers contribute cash instead of providing the needed units;
- Preserve the stock of MPDUs for future use by requiring units to remain under price controls for 30 years;
- Introduce greater flexibility in existing development standards that currently limit workforce housing production;

- Increase eligibility limits to include more workforce families;
- Make MPDUs possible at alternative locations as an optional replacement for some commercial development “amenity space;”
- Offer a special bonus for MPDUs built close to transit;
- Elevate housing advocacy as a priority in administrative decision making;
- Recommend funding for a County Closing Cost Assistance Initiative in the wake of the end of the federal Fannie Mae program.

“This pragmatic approach will elevate the importance of workforce housing in development decisions. Our hard-working families deserve no less.”

Council President Steve Silverman said, “None of us wants to live in a county that has no room at the inn for the teachers who help our children learn, the police and firefighters who protect us and our families, or the nurses who bring new lives into the world each and every day.”

“Thirty years ago, Montgomery County set the standard for innovative housing policies. It is time for us to once again take a leadership role, and these initiatives are a great step forward,” stated Councilmember Mike Knapp.

Nancy Soreng, President of the Montgomery County Chapter of the League of Women Voters added, “The League recognizes that the MPDU law, which we have supported from its inception, is in need of modification to meet changing needs and conditions in Montgomery County. We commend Nancy Floreen for taking the initiative to introduce legislation that addresses some of the current impediments to creating and maintaining affordable housing in our community. We look forward to participating in the dialogue that will follow as this initiative moves through the legislative process.”

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