



Montgomery County's Advocates for Better Transportation

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## ZTA 20-07, R-60 Zone – Use and Standards (Support)

*Testimony: February 11, 2021*

*Submitted by James Hedrick, Vice-President and Land Use Committee Chair  
on behalf of the [Action Committee for Transit](#)*

The Action Committee for Transit (ACT) strongly supports ZTA-07, improving and expanding the options for Montgomery County's R-60 zones within one-mile of a Metro Station.

Montgomery County faces a staggering shortage of housing over the next decade, both subsidized and market-rate. The Urban Institute estimates that our region needs at least 374,000 new housing units by 2030. Without intervention to address this shortage, housing costs will continue to rise, economic growth will continue to stagnate, and traffic will continue to plague our region.<sup>1</sup>

ACT believes that we cannot adequately address transportation issues in our community without addressing the housing shortage and discriminatory land-use. According to the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG), more than 325,000 workers commute to jobs each day from communities located outside our region.<sup>2</sup> The lack of housing – particularly affordable housing – in our area drives workers and their families to leave where they work just to find housing they can afford. This situation increases everyone's commute times, undercuts Montgomery County's appeal to new businesses, negatively affects our environment, and detracts from everyone's quality of life.

ZTA-20-07 address a frequently overlooked tool for increasing the supply of housing, what is often referred to as "missing middle" housing. By allowing the construction of *neighborhood-scale* multi-family housing (*e.g.*, duplexes, triplexes, and small apartment buildings) in R-60 zones in the County within one-mile of a Metro Station, ZTA 20-07 moves Montgomery County in the right direction and represents a good first step towards improving our land-use policies and encouraging the construction of housing near high-capacity transit.

However, ACT encourages the County Council to reconsider single-family zoning even more broadly and *boldly*. We encourage the County to expand the ZTA to include not only R-60 *but also* R-90 zones. Both R-60 and R-90 zones near transit can accommodate duplexes, triplexes, and neighborhood scale multi-

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<sup>1</sup> [Meeting the Washington Region's Future Housing Needs](#), Urban Institute, September 2019.

<sup>2</sup> [THE FUTURE OF HOUSING IN GREATER WASHINGTON: A Regional Initiative to Create Housing Opportunities, Improve Transportation, and Support Economic Growth](#), Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, 2019.

family housing, and expanding the ZTA to include R-60 and R90 zones would provide even more housing for even more people.

Additionally, the ZTA as written only addresses missing-middle housing within one-mile of *Metro* stations. We encourage the County Council to expand the ZTA to include all major transit types, including Purple Line stations, BRT corridors, MARC Stations, and major bus lines. Our County boasts a variety of different types of transit options, all of which help people commute and travel. Broadening the ZTA to cover even more transit types would make Montgomery County even more of a leader in addressing the legacy of discriminatory zoning.

Everyone in our community deserves the opportunity to live where they work. They deserve the opportunity to live in areas served by transit and not forced into long commutes that strain our transportation system. Adoption of ZTA 20-07 will encourage the production of more transit-oriented housing in high-opportunity areas and show that Montgomery County can be a leader, an example of how to improve the safety, economic opportunity, and quality of life for all Montgomery County residents.