



Testimony in Support of ZTA 20-07

Thank you to the Council for the opportunity to submit testimony on the issue of ZTA 20-07. My name is Ron Basumallik of Bethesda, MD and I am writing today in strong support of ZTA 20-07.

Climate Change

Climate change is the most pressing issue facing the world today. Breaking the pattern of car-centric design and building denser, more walkable communities is the single most important step local governments can take towards reducing their communities carbon footprint. ZTA 20-07 will go a long way in allowing residents to commute via public transit greatly reducing vehicle miles traveled. Transit hubs also tend to have a multitude of uses for daily life such as dining, groceries, entertainment and more. The more residents that can live within walking distance of these amenities the more our counties carbon footprint will go down. In addition to the added benefit of reduced carbon footprints, vehicles get taken off freeways, reducing traffic.

Economic Advantage

Businesses today thrive in places where lots of workers can efficiently travel and in this respect Montgomery County is losing out to our regional competitors in the District and Virginia. While Virginia is building up National Landing and attracted Amazon due to it's connectivity, Montgomery County currently cannot even build townhomes near our most valuable assets, Red Line Metro stations. As someone who was born and raised in Maryland, I want to live in a county that can attract businesses to it's job centers so I don't have to travel across the beltway to get to work. If Montgomery County wants to grow to match our regional competitors, we must build denser.

+ Amendments

I urge the council to support the following amendments to the ZTA

-  Expand the ZTA to R-90 & R-40 zones
-  Expand the ZTA to include Purple Line, MARC and BRT stops
-  Increase height limits for missing middle in these zones
-  Eliminate parking requirements for missing middle in these zones
-  Reduce setbacks for missing middle lots in these zones

As a 25 year old, I want to make Montgomery County my home for decades to come, but the county needs to grow to match opportunities available elsewhere in the region. Housing must keep pace in order to attract young eager individuals such as myself. We cannot waste more time as the rest of the region moves forward, let Montgomery County be a pioneer and show the country what an agile, forward thinking local government can do.

Ron Basumallik
Bethesda, MD