

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed **More Housing N.O.W. bill and ZTA 25-02**. While the goal of increasing housing availability is commendable, the de-zoning proposal in this legislation **will not achieve this goal effectively** and poses significant risks to Montgomery County's communities, infrastructure, and overall quality of life.

Poorly Planned Densification Will Not Address Housing Needs

Carving up established neighborhoods is not the best way to solve Montgomery County's housing crisis. Instead of **haphazard upzoning**, the County should focus on **identifying and developing "greenfield" opportunities**—areas where planned growth can occur with appropriate infrastructure. Locations like White Flint and the **Geico campus** present prime opportunities for responsible development that can include affordable workforce housing. If developers refuse to step up, the County must examine what **regulations or disincentives** are preventing them from doing so—rather than **forcing unplanned, piecemeal development where it does not belong**.

No Data Justifies This Bill's Workforce Housing Claims

ZTA 25-02 lacks **any concrete data** demonstrating how many workforce housing units are needed or how success will be measured. This bill is essentially an **open-ended giveaway to developers**, allowing them to **build as many market-rate units as they want, regardless of the impact on infrastructure**. Please do not **hide a pro-developer policy behind the guise of workforce housing**—doing so is both misleading and disrespectful to the residents of Montgomery County.

Serious Public Safety Concerns Due to Increased Density

Even local **firefighters and police** have expressed serious concerns about the increased density proposed under this bill. Many streets in Bethesda and Chevy Chase are already **too narrow for fire trucks to pass safely**, and additional street parking from increased housing density will only exacerbate the problem. Furthermore, **many fire hydrants in the county operate at low pressure**, raising serious questions about whether **our water supply can support the population increases you are proposing**. If increased density means emergency vehicles **cannot reach homes in time**, you will be **jeopardizing lives**—mine included. If my house burns down because the fire truck couldn't get to me, I will no longer see Montgomery County as a livable community.

Duplexes and Other Zoning Changes Benefit Developers, Not Residents

There are **no workforce housing minimums for duplexes**, yet they are included in this bill. If duplexes can be sold at market rates, **how does this help workforce housing?** This is nothing more than a **windfall for developers** at the expense of existing neighborhoods. Similarly, allowing **triplexes and quadplexes to operate businesses like daycares** will create **traffic and**

parking chaos in residential areas. How does this align with the supposed goal of workforce housing? This bill is internally inconsistent, hastily written, and fundamentally flawed.

Failure to Address Infrastructure Strain

The County has not provided **any clear plan** for how existing infrastructure will handle the **increased burden** from this zoning change. Roads, water systems, emergency services, and public transit are already **stretched thin**. Without detailed impact studies and financial assessments, this bill **recklessly disregards the long-term costs of upzoning**. What is the point of adding more housing if the infrastructure **cannot support** those new residents?

Overcrowding in Schools Has Been Ignored

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) already struggles with **overcrowded classrooms, teacher shortages, and limited resources**. This bill does not include **any analysis** of how it will impact schools, nor does it propose **any solutions** for handling increased student populations. A responsible policy would **forecast school enrollment impacts** and determine the necessary investments before moving forward. This bill does neither.

Lack of Transparency and Community Input

The **County Council has failed to engage the community** in a meaningful way regarding this legislation. Instead, more time has been spent with **paid lobbyists** than with the people who actually live in Montgomery County. Public input sessions have been **nothing more than a procedural formality**. This is unacceptable. If you truly represent the residents of this County, you should be listening to us—not special interests.

I Will Not Support Any Council Member Who Votes for This Bill

This bill is a **deeply flawed and poorly conceived** attempt at housing reform, and I will **actively vote against** any Council member who supports it. Montgomery County deserves **thoughtful, data-driven policymaking**, not rushed zoning changes that cater to developers at the community's expense.

Stop Wasting Taxpayer Dollars on Notional Ideas

Montgomery County has a history of chasing **theoretical policy solutions** that do not work in practice—whether it be bike lanes, linear parks, or upzoning schemes that fail to deliver meaningful benefits. This bill is **yet another example** of **feel-good legislation** that ignores practical realities. **Housing affordability is a serious issue**, but the solution is **not unplanned densification**. Instead of passing ill-conceived bills, the Council should be working with communities on **viable, well-planned solutions** that actually meet residents' needs.

Montgomery County's Economic Future Is Uncertain—This Is the Wrong Time for This Bill

With the **potential loss of federal jobs and funding**, Montgomery County may be **heading into a recession**. Now is **not the time** to make radical zoning changes that **could have long-term economic consequences**. The Council should **wait until the economic outlook is clearer** before passing a bill of this magnitude.

Single-Family Neighborhoods Must Be Protected

I bought my home in a **single-family zoned neighborhood** and **pay taxes accordingly**. If my property values decline due to this bill, will my taxes be lowered? Or, will my taxes increase to cover the infrastructure expansion needed to support new developments? This bill **fails to account for how these zoning changes will impact long-term homeowners financially**.

Focus on Attracting Jobs, Not Just Housing

Montgomery County's real issue is **not just housing—it's jobs**. **People are leaving because of a lack of quality employment opportunities**, not just housing costs. Instead of forcing density into existing neighborhoods, the County should focus on **attracting high-quality businesses** that provide **well-paying jobs**. If we build a stronger local economy, housing affordability will improve **without resorting to reckless zoning changes**.

Conclusion

The **More Housing N.O.W. bill and ZTA 25-02** are **fundamentally flawed** and fail to address Montgomery County's real housing challenges. **Without proper planning, infrastructure investment, or clear impact analysis, this bill will create more problems than it solves**. I urge the County Council to **reject this ill-conceived legislation** and work with residents to create a **data-driven, sustainable plan** for housing growth.

Sincerely,

Clare Rohleder

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