

Hello. My name is David Johnson, and I live in Chevy Chase

I believe there are too many unknowns about ZTA 25-02 to allow consideration at this time. For one thing, why are there over 30,000 approved housing units already in the pipeline and none are being built? And why would one think adding additional units by this ZTA would expect a different result? Lisa Govoni, Supervisor for Montgomery Planning, has stated, and I quote: “We are working on a thorough analysis of the pipeline to better understand project-specific impediments to getting these units built. After our deep dive, we hope to implement strategies and policies to accelerate the construction of unbuilt pipeline units to meet our housing goals.” So, what’s the number of how many service workers, teachers, police and fire are there that need and want homes in Montgomery? How can you set a goal and not have a number? She goes on to say, “We should continue to zone for housing that meets demand **in places that have the infrastructure to support it.**”

Where is the research for the potential effects of this proposed ZTA on the present infrastructure in areas that are already under stress? You know that many of these neighborhoods were established nearly 100 years ago, with infrastructure, determined by Master Plan, equally as old. WSSC reported that 130 water main pipes burst in January alone. Many neighborhoods have narrow streets, some without sidewalks. If developers do not provide full on-site parking, and are allowed to “Chain”, how will resulting on-street parking affect emergency vehicles getting through, or how would the quality of life in those neighborhoods be affected? What are your plans to lessen the gridlock already present? Your own research has found that public transportation cannot handle an increase over the 30 million square foot cap currently in place. Public schools are already above 100% capacity, and we heard at the BCC Listening Session that children are sitting on the floors of school buses as all seats are filled. And the County Council Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) determined that ZTA 25-02 will widen disparities in housing by race and ethnicity, will negatively impact racial equity and social justice, and is likely to benefit only developers and landlords.

I have been an orthopedic surgeon in this area for over 50 years, and a 2500 year old adage known to every doctor is: “First, Do No Harm.” Before I would recommend surgery to any patient, I’d ask myself 3 questions: 1) Have I considered alternative options that may be equally good or better? 2) What could go wrong?—so I can anticipate and prevent. And 3) the most important of all—“What do I not know?” Because being blind sided may lead to disaster for the patient, and may cause me to lose my career. So before you do any surgery on neighborhoods, what questions have you asked? Your careers may depend on it.

Thank You