

Opposition to Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) 25-02 – Request for Exemption for 5301, 5209 & 5207 Bradley Blvd., Bethesda, MD 20814

Dear Councilmember Friedson and Montgomery County Council Members,

I am writing to formally express strong opposition to the proposed Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) 25-02, particularly as it pertains to our small residential section of Bradley Blvd, which includes only three homes (5301, 5209 and 5207 Bradley Blvd., Bethesda, MD 20814). I have been a long-term resident in this neighborhood since 2003, and along with my neighbors at 5301 and 5207 Bradley Blvd, we urge the Council to remove our properties from the rezoning plan.

While we recognize the need for increased housing in Montgomery County, this amendment fails to appropriately consider the unique characteristics of our small residential enclave and raises serious safety, infrastructure, and zoning consistency concerns. Additionally, there has been minimal direct communication with affected homeowners regarding these changes, leaving us without a meaningful opportunity to engage in the decision-making process before this proposal advanced.

Furthermore, this is not a true affordable housing plan—only 15% of new units are required to be “workforce housing,” while 85% can be market-rate or luxury. This does not meaningfully address housing affordability in Montgomery County. Additionally, the County is offering massive tax incentives to developers (100% tax abatements for 25 years), without a clear plan for funding the additional public infrastructure required to support increased density. If developers receive these financial benefits, who will cover the costs for schools, emergency services, and road maintenance? The financial burden will fall on existing homeowners, further raising concerns about equity and fairness.

Key Reasons for Exempting Our Properties:

❖ Spot Zoning & Neighborhood Inconsistency

- The proposed rezoning only affects a handful of homes on Bradley Blvd, making it a clear example of spot zoning, which disrupts established neighborhood patterns and creates inconsistent land use.
- Adjacent properties remain zoned for single-family homes, meaning this isolated zoning change does not contribute meaningfully to county-wide housing goals.

❖ Safety & Traffic Concerns

- Bradley Blvd is already a high-traffic road with limited pedestrian infrastructure, and increased housing density would exacerbate traffic congestion and safety hazards.
- There is a lack of appropriate road access, turn lanes, and sidewalks to accommodate an increase in multi-unit housing.
- More residents would lead to increased street parking, obstructing visibility and posing risks for pedestrians, cyclists, and school buses.

❖ Insufficient Infrastructure & Services

- Our section of Bradley Blvd lacks the necessary public infrastructure to support higher-density housing.
- There are no nearby public transit stops or expanded road networks to absorb increased density.
- Water, sewer, and utility services were not designed to accommodate multi-family dwellings, and increased demand could strain existing resources.

❖ Minimal Direct Communication with Homeowners

- There has been little to no direct outreach to the homeowners on our section of Bradley Blvd regarding this major zoning change.
- We were not consulted early in the process and were only made aware of the rezoning through secondary sources, rather than being given an opportunity to participate in meaningful discussions before it was proposed.
- The county has an obligation to directly engage impacted homeowners, rather than broadly applying changes without localized input.

❖ This Is Not an Affordable Housing Plan

- The Workforce Housing provision only requires 15% of new units to be designated as workforce housing, while the remaining 85% can be market-rate or luxury.
- This means the plan does little to actually address affordability concerns in the county.
- The county should focus on true affordability solutions rather than just increasing density without meaningful affordability mandates.

❖ Negative Impact on Property Values & Quality of Life

- The introduction of higher-density development could decrease the desirability of our homes for single-family buyers.

- This zoning change could decrease property values due to an incompatible housing mix in a primarily single-family neighborhood.
- Long-term residents, including myself, chose this neighborhood for its stability and character, which this zoning change threatens.

❖ Minimal Contribution to Housing Goals

- The rezoning of just two or three homes in this section does not meaningfully contribute to Montgomery County's overall housing goals.
- There are other areas in the county better suited for increased housing density—areas with stronger transit access, commercial amenities, and existing multi-unit housing.

Our Request: Remove Our Properties from ZTA 25-02

Given these concerns, we formally request that the Council remove 5301, 5209 and 5207 Bradley Blvd., Bethesda, MD 20814 from the Workforce Housing rezoning plan. We believe that a more strategic approach—one that respects existing communities while still addressing housing needs—is necessary.

We appreciate your time and consideration and look forward to participating in the March 11 public hearing. Please confirm receipt of this request and advise on the next steps for submitting formal testimony.

Sincerely,

Randy and Sally Gaines

5209 Bradley Blvd., Bethesda, MD 20814

Montgomery County Resident Since 2003

Kyung S. Choe

5207 Bradley Blvd., Bethesda, MD 20814

Montgomery County Resident since 1979

Steven and KL Gaginis

5301 Bradley Blvd., Bethesda, MD 20814

Montgomery County Resident Since 1990