



March 11, 2025

Montgomery County Council  
Council Office Building  
100 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear Council President Stewart and members of the County Council:

My name is Dan Reed and I serve as the Maryland Policy Director for [Greater Greater Washington](#), a nonprofit that works to advance racial, economic, and environmental justice in land use, transportation, and housing throughout Greater Washington. GGWash supports the More Housing NOW package, which is an important and needed first step to addressing our housing crisis.

At a time when the future of our democracy is at stake, when people in many parts of the country are having their rights stripped away, and when the Democratic Party is out of power at the federal level, it's here at the local level that we are able to make a difference. And one of the main powers that local governments have in Maryland is land use: deciding where things go, who gets to live where, and who has access to all of the things needed to have a full, happy life.

We recently conducted a statewide housing poll, which found that three-quarters of Marylanders say rising housing costs are a burden for them or someone they know, and 71% believe governments should reduce barriers to homebuilding to lower home prices<sup>1</sup>. It's not surprising that Governor Moore has introduced the Housing for Jobs Act, which cites a "housing production gap" of 41,000 units between the number of available homes and the number of available jobs in Montgomery County.

Montgomery County's official policy on land use, Thrive 2050, adopted in 2022, is explicit about the need to make our zoning more flexible and allow more types of homes in more places: smaller homes, lower-cost homes, and multi-family homes<sup>2</sup>. Our increasingly diverse population needs an equally diverse housing stock. Less than half of Montgomery County residents live in single-family homes, even though they comprise most of the county's land; and while 63% of the county's white residents live in single-family homes, just 29% of Black residents do<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://ggwash.org/view/98610/2025-maryland-housing-for-jobs-poll-wes-moore>

<sup>2</sup> <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/THRIVE-Approved-Adopted-Final.pdf#page=150>

<sup>3</sup> <https://lookerstudio.google.com/s/tK5Khn8xlbQ>

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Home prices in the county have risen 20% between 2020 and 2024, and as long as we devote most of its land to the most expensive housing type—the average sale price for a single-family house is now \$1 million<sup>4</sup>—this trend will only continue. According to the county’s recent survey, just 18% of county residents are satisfied with the availability of quality, affordable housing.

Today, in every neighborhood in this county, you can build a single-family house on a vacant lot with minimal review. Why are we privileging the most expensive housing type over everything else? It should be no more difficult to build a duplex, townhomes, or apartments in the county’s neighborhoods—or put another way, people who cannot afford nor do not want a single-family house deserve more choices in where in the county they can live. That is equitable, it is logical, and it is the right thing to do.

Given the urgency of our housing crisis and public support for doing something about it, the County Council has an opportunity to step up. In the near term, that means passing the More Housing NOW package, including ZTA 25-02, which would allow duplexes, townhomes, and apartments by optional method of development along major corridors.

We have a few requested amendments: to allow these housing types by-right, to put them on par with single-family homes; to include corner lots on corridors, which will provide more flexibility in design and siting; and expand the areas covered to include Metro, MARC, and Purple Line stations, currently a significant missed opportunity in the proposal. We’re also asking for the council to commit to pursuing broader, countywide zoning reforms, as directed by the previous council when it adopted Thrive in 2022.

As a community we must stop pushing our housing issues, our workforce, and our friends and loved ones, to other counties or states. We must acknowledge that zoning for more housing is a key part of the solution to our housing crisis, alongside the MPDU program, the affordable housing trust fund, and rent stabilization. And we must recognize that most people are not going to come to listening sessions or town halls or public hearings to give decision-makers permission to do the right thing. We urge the council to strengthen and pass ZTA 25-02.

Sincerely,

Dan Reed  
Regional Policy Director

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<sup>4</sup> [https://www2.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcgportalapps/Press\\_Detail.aspx?Item\\_ID=46485](https://www2.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcgportalapps/Press_Detail.aspx?Item_ID=46485)