

Montgomery County Council Public Hearings
ZTA 25-02, Workforce Housing - Development Standards
March 11, 2025
Testimony of Melissa McKenna

Good afternoon. My name is Melissa McKenna.

What homeowner would do this to their own property? Would you?

How would you feel if you saw your house highlighted on the accompanying map?¹ Would you feel targeted for possible taking under imminent domain?

How can you ensure that developers won't buy up these properties? Because this looks like a guide for them to know which houses to go after when the senior owner dies and the family needs to sell the house to pay the taxes on that supposed generational wealth.

Have you looked at the map? The parcels identified are, to put it politely, interesting. Included are parks, houses of worship, government services, and lots and lots of schools:

- Glenmont Forest Park and Kensington Vol Fire Station #18
- Black Hill Regional Park, Saddlebrook Local Park
- Gaithersburg Library
- Rockville Vol Fire Station #31
- The former landfill on E. Gude Drive in Rockville
- The Barrie Day School
- Saint Bernadette Catholic Church and school across from Blair HS
- in Olney: St. Peter's Catholic Church and school
- St. John's Episcopal Church and school
- B'nai Shalom of Olney and school
- Shady Grove and Eastern MSs
- Seneca Valley, Quince Orchard, Northwood, and Kennedy HSs

My personal favorites are: Georgetown Prep, Strathmore, and Blair HS.

The parcels along Randolph Rd, for example, are small, starter-sized, "attainable" single family housing, privately owned and occupied, and often have a small home business on site. These lots typically have a steep front grade and would require at least two adjacent lots and significant earth moving to make a triplex or 4-unit townhouse.

And how are they not part of a residential neighborhood just because they aren't in the middle and the rest of their neighbors are behind them?

There's a good way to do workforce housing, and this proposal is not the way.

I've provided a few examples in my written testimony of Teachers Village in Newark, NJ and Hartford, CT.²

¹ <https://mcplanning.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/lookup/index.html?appid=35c44dee1734457185b0604f3ce67e5e>

² The \$150M Teachers Village being built with teacher housing and charter schools attached to the complex.
(<https://finance.yahoo.com/news/theres-brilliant-150-million-teachers-village-newark-205633041.html>)

In Maryland, rowhome-style teacher housing was completed in Baltimore just last fall.³

I'd provide more examples but then what would I have to run on.

What happened to the APFO part of the Growth and Infrastructure Policy? You know, having adequate public facilities: water, sewer, storm water management, fire and police coverage, school capacity... My bad, that was the Subdivision Staging Policy; the GIP pretty much wrote all that out.

Land use planning provides an overall vision; zoning implements specific regulations to achieve those goals.⁴ In neither case should it encourage haphazard insertions of random housing types everywhere. Which is what I foresee.

What I read in this legislation is a back-door introduction of the main tenet behind the Attainable Housing Initiative: upzoning of single family residential—wrapped in a disguise of highly detailed physical plans and nomenclature.

Please remove the broad brushstroke of road eligibility and edit down to actual parcel availability and then see if this plan works.

Thank you.
Melissa McKenna

³ Developer unveils new housing for teachers in Baltimore, September 27, 2024 (<https://www.wypr.org/wypr-news/2024-09-27/developer-unveils-new-housing-for-teachers-in-baltimore>)

⁴ <https://www.nadigroup.com/insights/do-you-know-the-difference-between-land-use-planning-and-zoning>