

Montgomery County Council  
Council Office Building  
100 Maryland Avenue, 6th Floor  
Rockville, MD 20850

Re: ZTA 25-02, "Workforce Housing," More Housing N.O.W.

Dear Councilmembers:

I am writing as President of the South of Sligo Citizen's Association (SOSCA) that encompasses an area in Takoma Park between Sligo Creek Parkway and Conway Avenue, from the eastern border of Takoma Park to Jackson Avenue on SOSCA's western border.

Because ZTA 25-02 would change the zoning of 14 single family house properties in our neighborhood, SOSCA provided information and conducted a survey of our residents on this proposal. Generally, residents seemed surprised that such a radical change could be enacted without a years-long public process as is done through the Master Planning process. Our survey found that a large majority of respondents (68%) OPPOSED this ZTA. Only 32% supported the proposal. Of those whose properties would be re-zoned, 100% opposed the proposal.

Our part of Takoma Park is already affected by residents from large apartment buildings in Prince Georges County that park on our residential side streets, restricting parking for our own residents. Overall, Takoma Park currently has approximately half its households in rental, and more than 90% of rentals are rent stabilized or subsidized. In addition, the County has already re-zoned the former Washington Adventist Hospital property from single-family housing to multi-family, with buildings up to 15 stories high, and also up-zoned surrounding properties to increase the density. This move alone will increase the population of Takoma Park by about 35% or more. There is also a 148-unit apartment building planned for the corner of University Blvd and Carroll Ave. that is likely to be built in the next year or so. And there are several new apartment and condo buildings just over the border of Takoma Park in DC near the Takoma Metro Station.

While many of our residents voiced support for additional housing, it seems to be not supported by most respondents closest to the affected properties in the SOSCA neighborhood. Some respondents on both sides of this issue were adamant, although it seemed that the most heartfelt and non-scripted comments came from those opposed to the proposal. Please see below for details on the responses we received.

<b>SUPPORT</b>	
<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Text of Survey Checkbox</b>
3	We need more housing, no matter the costs or inconvenient to others.
3	The set asides for low-income residents will create more affordable housing.
2	Additional neighbors will make the neighborhood more vibrant.
0	I live some distance away, so the changes won't affect me.
1	More dense housing will increase tax revenue.

<b>OPPOSED</b>	
<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Text of Survey Checkbox</b>
14	I live in SOSCA because I like a single-family home neighborhood with trees, not an urbanized neighborhood.
13	I relied on the current zoning to protect the character of my neighborhood.
12	I don't want my property taxes to increase.
11	I don't want a huge building near to my home, with decreased sunlight and increased stormwater runoff.
13	I'm concerned about increased noise and parking on my street.
11	Takoma Park already has a lot of rental housing (about half of households rent) and rent control.
12	We should favor homeownership, not rentals, for community stability and to build personal wealth.

Here are some of the most significant of the additional comments we received:

**SUPPORT:**

- More housing will make Takoma Park more affordable and will promote the diversity that so many of us cherish.
- It makes sense to open these options along New Hampshire with the purple line coming.
- Adding housing near major transit routes is a no-brainer.
- The zoning changes are proposed along major transportation corridors only, not in neighborhoods. I also support excluding some specific single family properties on the access road not on New Hampshire Ave itself, and part of a discrete neighborhood. Also climate benefits.

**OPPOSE:**

- This is a misguided proposal that will adversely impact the quality of life not only in the neighborhoods where it is enacted but throughout the entire Takoma community.
- Developing along New Hampshire and other busy streets makes poor people live in noise and pollution. Would you want to live along NH Ave?
- ZTA-25-02 is a disguised property and money grab that will benefit outside developers and investors. Our County Council and City Council politicians should protect private homeowners like me and not set us up to eventually "take" our homes with clever, tricky language like up zoning and rezoning. This is not the normal philosophical imperative of the citizens of Takoma Park. This ZTA25-02 strategy is an unfair travesty.
- The SOSCA area is a real neighborhood. Large multi-family properties with additional traffic and parking needs would threaten the quality of the neighborhood.
- Residents in the SOSCA area already deal with a host of urban problems, including crime. Community leaders should focus on helping our neighborhoods to thrive.
- The NOW process was rushed without proper citizen input from targeted properties. The focus should be on major retail areas immediately adjacent to the Purple Line. Montgomery County should coordinate directly with Prince George's County to optimize the solutions for workforce housing.
- MPB designated 4 properties 1/2 block from my house without consulting with the property owners. There are commercial areas to the north and south of these 4 properties that are in

poor condition and/or vacant that would be more suitable for redevelopment with lower-level retail and upper level housing.

- As a residential neighborhood with many families and not enough sidewalks, I worry about protecting people (particularly children) who walk and play in the streets. Increased population density and traffic is a major concern that I think should be avoided.
- Let's see more open space and less congestion. We don't need any more developing.
- I oppose displacing our longtime neighbors who live on New Hampshire Ave. I also find it troubling that those properties being rezoned in my neighborhood are predominantly occupied by BIPOC households.
- (edited slightly for length) Construction trucks & noise plus traffic while building such large structures will disrupt our current neighborhood's peaceful atmosphere. Homes in the proposed area should be left alone and continue to be single family dwellings. Large apartments are already located nearby. Please do not remove long time residents from their single family homes. This Removal is disruptive to our community. Takoma Park Strong. Also want to maintain our lovely green park adjacent to New Hampshire Ave for our health and relaxation without additional crowded dwellings.
- My concerns are parking and an increase in people who do not necessarily feel invested in the neighborhood community. Unlike more urban contexts, there is no alley behind the New Hampshire Ave properties that could provide access to sufficient off-street parking for the added units, so everyone is going to be parking in the neighborhood, which already has tight parking because many of the single-family homes have no driveways.

SOSCA invested considerable time to provide information about the County's proposed ZTA 25-02 to our residents and to collect and analyze their survey responses. We hope this is useful to you as you determine the best way forward. Given the sentiments of your constituents, the already dense development along New Hampshire Avenue in Takoma Park, and the recent changes to zoning in Takoma Park that the County has already made, it seems prudent to leave these R-60 properties out of your proposal.

Further, given the level of concerns and alarm raised among residents about this sort of proposal, it seems that such sweeping zoning changes should not be made through zoning text amendment.

Thank you for your consideration. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.

Catherine Tunis, President  
South of Sligo Citizens' Association

cc: Takoma Park City Council  
SOSCA Officers