

March 11, 2025

Subject: Oppose ZTA 25-02

Dear Montgomery County Councilmembers:

Hello, my name is Stacey Band, and I'm representing my condo association, Bradley House, located in Chevy Chase, MD. We are deeply concerned about these ZTA proposals, particularly the zoning changes. Bethesda and Chevy Chase are already awash in new development, with plans to lift the density cap in Bethesda. We do not have a housing development shortage; we have a pipeline issue.

With current building developments, residents must deal with high traffic, closed sidewalks, blocked roadways, and endless construction. Our schools are overcrowded, and your own County research has found that public transportation cannot handle an increase in our local density. We also need a new traffic study to assess the full impacts and feasibility of doubling the population of downtown Bethesda.

Our County's planning tools for school enrollment estimates continue to wildly miss the mark.

- Bethesda Elementary is back to using portable trailers because the enrollment counts are so off
- Silver Creek Middle School is already over capacity, and
- B-CC High School is a few students away from capacity.

It is not possible to shift school and cluster boundaries every few years to try to compensate for poor counting. Planners have said they assume almost no impact on schools from students coming from apartment and condo buildings. In our building and across Bethesda and Chevy Chase, this is not remotely true. We are seeing the impact of these disparities now in student test scores and learning outcomes – schools do not have the staff required to provide adequate special education services, and elementary school classrooms routinely have near 30 students.

There are also no provisions in these ZTAs for basic amenities and our residents already lack the most minimal green space. Exactly zero new parks have been built since the major redevelopment of Bethesda began more than ten years ago. The ZTA proposals will only add to this problem. No thought was put into the consequences for our young people by putting development first and our schools and the environment last.

We all agree that Montgomery County residents need more affordable and workforce housing options, but there are already properties around the county that are underutilized, and strategic development could revitalize these spaces and include amenities that residents want and need.

Haphazard and scattered planning, with multiple initiatives often working at cross purposes, isn't creating more options; it's creating a mess – and the burden will fall on residents. We want solutions just as much as you, but we want solutions that work.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Stacey

Stacey Band, MPA
Community Liaison and Secretary, Bradley House Condominium