

Tony Byrne  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

March 11, 2025

Dear Montgomery County Councilmembers,

My name is Tony Byrne. I live in North Woodside and own a small business headquartered on Ga Ave in SS. This package will affect me directly, by enabling **additional housing** in my neighborhood, along my commute, and near my workplace.

This is why I sit here today in favor of [Zoning Text Amendment \(ZTA\) 25-02, Workforce Housing - Development Standards](#) , with amendments.

This is personal for my family. Our adult child presently lives in New York. He might wish to return to Maryland to advance his career and start a family, but the dearth of housing options – particularly in the kinds of walkable, bikable, transit-rich communities that his generation increasingly seeks – will likely prevent him from doing so. He will likely never be able to live in the neighborhood where he grew up, which, like most county residential neighborhoods, no longer provides starter home opportunities.

This is why I urge you to **amend** this package to **allow a wider variety** of homes near rail stations as well as on major county corridors, excluding the Ag Reserve.

Now I would like to switch hats and speak to you as a owner of a consulting business, where I recruit young professionals to work in our great state. Prospective recruits tell me about **intense competition** for scarce housing options, especially near transit, leaving them on the sidelines. As a businessperson, I can understand forces of supply and demand.

Growing evidence around the country shows that economic vitality depends on increasing the housing stock in an era of declining household sizes. So this now becomes a **fiscal** issue. More homes means a broader county tax base at a time when I trust you agree: we must pull **every available lever** on the revenue side of the budget.

I recognize you face powerful forces opposing **any** attempt to meaningfully increase and diversify the county's housing stock. I've heard these voices echo for twenty-five years, **consistently** saying that "now is not the right time," while the shortage of homes has evolved from inconvenience, to significant problem, to major crisis.

Today the county faces two demographic futures: the default path we're on right **now** is aging, static, amenity-poor, economically divided, and car-centered, with an emphasis on homeownership only via generational wealth. The other path offers multigenerational

**opportunity**, economic dynamism and fiscal health, more **multicultural** communities, and the resilience that always comes with greater diversity.

Right now, we're **not headed** on that second path. It will take **leadership** to get there. So I'm asking you, today, **to lead**. Please advance this package with the amendment I've proposed.

Thank you for your consideration.