

KPCA

KENWOOD PARK COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION, INCORPORATED

ONLY DEVELOPERS AND BUILDERS WOULD THRIVE UNDER MORE HOUSING N.O.W. PLAN

NEW PLAN DOES NOT ADDRESS THE SHORTCOMINGS OF THE REJECTED ATTAINABLE HOUSE STRATEGIES INITIATIVE

NEW SCHEDULE PROVIDES PUBLIC ALMOST NO TIME TO REVIEW THE PROPOSAL PRIOR TO THE PUBLIC HEARING

An Arbitrary and Capricious Misuse of Government Power in an Undemocratic Way

The Kenwood Park Community Association (KPCA) strongly opposes the new “More Housing N.O.W” (NOW) proposal that has been introduced by certain members of the Montgomery County Council. KPCA supports efforts to expand access to affordable housing. However, just like the clearly rejected “Attainable Housing Strategies Initiative” (AHSI), the new plan being considered does nothing of the sort. Instead, as discussed below, the plan reflects a process that disregards relevant facts and ***shockingly ignores the needs of our children for adequate schooling and for safety crossing overcrowded streets. And for unknown reasons, the new proposal is being rushed through the process at breakneck speed, with a public hearing scheduled barely a month after a release of an opaque and highly technical proposal.*** It is as though the Council does not want public input.

- **Why is this project being rushed through the process so quickly?** Based on the scant technical information available, it appears that Kenwood Park would be a prime place for new apartment buildings, but the documents are stunningly opaque with large maps and small markings for where the multi-family housing would be placed. Why would anyone schedule a March 11 public hearing, barely a month after an unclear plan is disclosed? It seems as though there is an attempt to circumvent public input.
- **Why did the proposal not address the valid criticisms of the AHSI plan (which we repeat below), which led to its rejection?** It appears that the reason is that NOW is just a repackaged version of the rejected AHSI plan, so there are no answers to our concerns.
- **The new proposal is explicitly designed to assist workers who make 20% more than the median income, with no opportunities for low and middle-income workers.** The plan would permit apartment buildings, duplexes, triplexes, and quadraplexes to be built throughout parts of the County. It is true that the areas where such buildings are permitted are narrower than under the AHSI proposal, but the fact remains that this effort is targeted at expensive homes for upper middle-income families, those making 120% of median income.
 - **No study to explain why only upper middle-income families are helped.** This is a glaring defect in the process.
 - **No explanation of the role of builders in creating this plan, exactly like the AHSI proposal.** We are not against builders being paid for their work. But we would appreciate transparency. What role did builders and developers have in the preparation

of this plan? The residents of Montgomery County have a right to know. This question was posed but not answered regarding the AHSI, and it remains unanswered with respect to the NOW proposal.

- **No interest in the democratic process, exactly like the AHSI proposal.** Why isn't this radical plan being put to a vote of the residents of Montgomery County? The idea of fundamentally changing an entire County without any indication of public support is strikingly undemocratic.
- **There is a lack of reliable data on new housing starts in Montgomery County, exactly like the AHSI proposal.** The County has used inaccurate data as the basis for recommending new housing that is needed. *In fact, the County has been ridiculed publicly for its inaccurate records on this issue.* See <https://montgomeryperspective.com/2024/08/07/will-we-ever-know-whether-we-are-building-enough-housing/> The question of how much additional housing is needed must be clarified before legislating how much additional housing is necessary for the County.
- **An Arlington County, VA circuit judge struck down a county policy that eliminated single family-only zoning in that county due to inadequate study of potential impacts of allowing town homes and small condo buildings in areas not initially planned for them.**
- **No study has been done on the effect of the housing plan on school capacity, exactly like the AHSI proposal.** Our children could be jammed into classes that are perhaps twice as large, and there is no plan to address that.
- **No study has been done on the effect of doubling or quadrupling the population of neighborhoods with narrow roads and on-street parking, exactly like the AHSI proposal.** With a massive increase in traffic, will our children be safe crossing streets? Will we need to widen streets? If so, who pays for that? Will we need public parking areas to be built? Who would pay for that?
- **No study has been done to determine which neighborhoods have the best access to the most effective public transportation, exactly like the AHSI proposal.** Many individuals seeking housing need effective access to public transportation and to nearby commercial establishments, where they can work and shop. The plan ignores these points by including virtually all neighborhoods, including many without easy access to the Metro or commercial establishments, like Kenwood Park.
- **No study has been done of the environmental effects of the plan, exactly like the AHSI proposal.** As County Executive Marc Elrich has said: the plan “does not address the environmental consequences of increased land coverage from the larger building footprints of higher density development, resulting in increased imperviousness, stormwater runoff, and loss of tree cover.”
- **In summary, the proposed plan will create a building boom of expensive multi-family units in single-family zoned neighborhoods that will not create affordable housing. The building boom will result in over-crowded schools, unsafe streets for our children due to a dramatic increase in on-street parking, increased traffic on area roads and degradation of the environment. The proposed plan benefits developers and is detrimental to current tax-paying residents of single-family zoned neighborhoods.**