

Dear Council members:

I am stunned why during this time of economic crisis with federal government layoffs, recession and job worries, population uncertainties and inflation/grocery prices/tariffs, you would even propose this repackaged proposal.

Large scale developments in residential neighborhoods cause upheaval in the nature, social, and lives of residents and threatens the communities they built with friends and neighbors, volunteers, religious organizations and small businesses. These large scale initiatives that benefit developers do not serve most residents or renters. They are obnoxiously expensive and market rates are determined by the cost of construction and the location, not by rules of supply. Just recently several apartment buildings in Silver Spring and Wheaton-Glenmont had 20, 35, 50 units vacant and available.

I am against the Zoning Amendment ZTA 25-02 (and ZTA 25-03) to take away residential property owners rights to have apartment buildings, townhouses, triplexes and duplexes alongside residential buildings without any consideration of how they impact the neighbor, the amount of land that they consume with little thought to shadowing someone's home, runoff, and increased population density. While I think that some could be viable options I believe doing this would be essentially altering a person's ability to object to having an obnoxious modern towering building next to them that alters their enjoyment of their property and their life's investment, decreases natural sunlight (solar) for the house and yard, potentially increasing their electricity or decreasing their solar potential, and cause an increased amount of people and traffic in an already dense neighborhood. In addition, it lowers the likelihood that the property could be sold to a potential homeowner and increases the likelihood that their property would be sold to a developer. I believe that if the property is on a corner and has a much larger footprint that doesn't injure the neighboring properties and is compatible in design and scope with the existing neighborhood homes it maybe a better alternative. There are instances where development is a good idea and worth considering. There are public hearings, residential home owners and renters considerations and environmental impact assessments on the nearby properties and watershed. It should not encompass the entire property with hardscapes and buildings: we live in an important watershed and we need plants and trees (not just a token patch of grass with a huge driveway and a tree or plants). Our watersheds are rivers and streams that most begin West of the county and states above us, which in the last five years have

had moderate to severe droughts. We have very little natural springs, most are on private property or have long since run dry. Maryland has no natural lakes.

In addition, the workforce housing will be so limited in scope, and the impact of tax assessments on surrounding properties will cause residents to be priced out of their homes. The cost of rentals would be beyond reach of police, firefighters, and teachers who are beginning their jobs with starting salaries between \$62,000 to \$69,000. The rest of the rentals would be out of reach for many residents in these neighborhoods.

In order to make more profits, development would target older and more affordable homes that serve middle income and lower income residents. When parents and politicians, who are more financially endowed than most middle income and lower income families, complain that their adult children cannot live in their old neighborhood —welcome to the club. There are MANY RESIDENTS whose children are not in their 20s and 30s who can't afford their own homes. There are many residents in their 40s, 50s, 60s and up that have never been able to afford a home. The only hope they've had is to someday save enough to buy a less-trendy older single family house with a small lot. However, eliminating small residential lots and homes that are more affordable, to give to young wealthier residents who can afford the new duplexes and apartments, is taking from the poor and giving to the richer. These new duplexes and triplexes would not likely sell lower than \$525,000. The very basic costs of material and labor will top \$260-350,000k which does not include the extras and profit developers demand. New Townhouses are priced above \$650,000.

Again new real estate DOES NOT follow SUPPLY rules of economics: the new apartments will stay vacant until they meet the rental threshold requirements to pay for construction and building materials and labor, and profit. There's no single place I can think of where new big apartments, townhouses or duplexes added to a neighborhood brought less expensive housing, except in cases where non-profits or governments built them. In addition, most new apartments upgrade their smaller apartments (luxury) with higher end cosmetic finishes such as flooring and appliances that are bought in bulk and added to the rental price to further increase the overall rental price. Then there is location: a suburb of a city. Priced to inflate rental costs. They are using technology to further inflate rents and housing prices.

I am also opposed to the ZTA 25-03 which I believe is the planning department and council's circumventing the desires of Wheaton's residents and business community master plan that did not want the county development to threaten the small businesses and restaurants in Wheaton, many of whom are rented. If the landlords want to sell to a

developer to build large apartment buildings they simply need to evict at least 50% of their tenants or force them out by increasing rents and fees. Frankly, the large scale development envisioned by the planners, politicians and developers would basically kill small businesses and some of the best casual global restaurants in the area, particularly in Wheaton. Other chain restaurants and stores would not likely get their profit margins and would close. The small businesses will never be able to afford the new rents.

Schools, public safety, roads, utilities, watersheds would be even further impacted. When you call 911 & fire & rescue & the police they are stretched thin and yet they somehow manage. Add much more population and it will be a disaster. Police, 911, Fire & Rescue have not only specialized skills and education, but they require certain personalities and stress management that most people don't have, and frankly, fewer people want to do these critical jobs.

Right now, so many residents who already struggled through the past five years with higher costs/inflation, are now worried that they won't be able to afford to live here or that their job is in jeopardy, as well as any future plans for their families, retirement or peace of mind. On top of these concerns, giving tax breaks to developers who are building 85% market rate housing is just another way that those families are going to end up paying more in taxes and with little gain and much to lose. This plan looks at residents and neighborhoods like pieces on a map. They are not. They are living, breathing and thriving communities no matter what cosmetic imperfections you see when you drive by or what tall modern concrete structures you wish was there.

You need to take a breath on these plans until the residents have gotten past the current economic crisis that this country, region, and county is having and then instead of making plans and dictating what residents should want, start with the cities and larger communities that want to meet and help design these plans. Not just developers and special interests, but residents. People who live here should have a say on what is built around them and not have it sneaked by them.

Thank you for considering this long list of concerns. Years ago residents LOVED living here. Now people are no longer saying that. They are worried about their families and communities. They are stressed out not only by national and economic issues. The county planning proposals and regulations are causing stress.

Sincerely, Maria Luchetti Non, Glenmont, MD