

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF “MORE HOUSING N.O.W.” MEASURES

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I strongly support the More Housing N.O.W. package of measures, and urge its rapid passage. But it must be a first step; the Council needs to go further.

The County needs to undertake not only the zoning reform proposed by the sponsors of More Housing N.O.W., but more extensive reform that opens up more of the county to duplexes, as was once standard practice in the County.

Housing in Montgomery County is increasingly unattainable for working families, especially families where there is one income. We are one such family. My wife is a stay-at-home mom by choice. But that choice has meant that we have long been able to only rent, not buy, in the county. And rental costs keep escalating, ahead of income. We now pay over 50% of income in rent.

I see little prospect our older daughter, a minimum wage worker, will be able to remain in the County. Housing costs are a huge obstacle. There are tens of thousands like her.

It is unfortunate that many who otherwise think of themselves as liberal and progressive oppose zoning changes that would provide greater access to different housing options for a wider range of income earners. Some raise school and / or traffic concerns to oppose change. MCPS can handle more students, with boundary changes. Transit can handle more patrons; more riders = more revenue = system financial sustainability.

Without serious zoning and housing reform, Montgomery County is unlikely to grow. Governor Moore has rightly emphasized the need for Maryland to grow. Growth is desirable. Growth brings new taxpayers, broadening the tax base and enabling the county to continue to fund services that residents rely on. No growth inevitably means either higher taxes on existing residents or service cuts.

I urge the Council to support More Housing N.O.W. and consider additional measures that promote more housing, especially attainable and affordable housing.

Thank you for considering my views.