

Dear President Stewart and Members of the Montgomery County Council:

My name is Amy Reichert and I am a resident of Bethesda. Thank you for reading my testimony in regards to ZTA 25-02.

The goals of the More Housing N.O.W. bill and ZTA 25-02 are commendable, but the de-zoning proposal will not reach this goal. Instead, it will carve up established neighborhoods which is not the best way to address our county's housing needs. Instead, you should identify "greenfield" opportunities such as White Flint and the Geico campus which are perfect areas for planned communities and supported by adequate infrastructure. If you can't find developers to take on this opportunity, why not? What rules and regulations are standing in their way? Why force random developments into established neighborhoods instead? To me, what's going on smacks more of an opportunity for developers to make a lot of money rather than to serve the needs of workers. This is unfair and disrespectful of both the workers and residents of these neighborhoods who voted you into office.

It is totally unacceptable and irresponsible to push this proposal through without first doing impact studies on how it will affect our infrastructure, our already over dense schools, etc? The added stress on our roads, water supply, storm drainage, emergency services and schools has not been researched adequately. You need to work with the MCPS to determine the impact on school crowding. A thoughtful plan would predict where best to house new incoming students under this plan, and what the cost would be on school resources. Many schools are already overcrowded as it is. How is it good for incoming workforce residents to be placed in already overcrowded schools?

You have not given the community enough information on this bill or time to process it and respond with questions, concerns and ideas for alternatives that would better serve workers and neighborhoods. I believe in a variety of housing options for a variety of income levels, but what is the point of offering these options if the underlying infrastructure cannot support them? In your effort to make room for more people who want to live in Montgomery County, you could be making Montgomery County a less attractive place to live.

Duplexes have no workforce housing minimum requirements. Why are they included if they can be sold at market rates? Why allow triplexes and quadplexes to include businesses like day care centers? This will increase traffic and parking problems in effected neighborhoods, and what does that have to do with workforce housing?

Furthermore, the timing of this bill is bizarre. There are literally hundreds of units going up in Westbard, Friendship Heights and at the old Superfresh location in Spring Valley. At the same time, the federal government work staff is being gutted and thousands are losing their jobs. The president is talking about selling off huge government buildings to be redeveloped. Why now would you want to rezone established neighborhoods that will be severely and negatively impacted by this zoning change to create new housing that may well not be needed by anyone given all the new units soon to be available in our immediate vicinity, and when there are likely to be many fewer jobs in DC, at least for the foreseeable future?

Please know, I along with many of my neighbors will not vote for anyone supporting this bill as it is currently written.

Sincerely,

Amy Reichert