

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed **More Housing N.O.W. bill and ZTA 25-02**. While the goal of increasing housing availability is commendable, the de-zoning proposal in this legislation **will not achieve this goal effectively** and poses significant risks to Montgomery County's communities, infrastructure, and overall quality of life.

### **Poorly Planned Densification Will Not Address Housing Needs**

Carving up established neighborhoods is not the best way to solve Montgomery County's housing crisis. Instead of **haphazard upzoning**, the County should focus on **identifying and developing "greenfield" opportunities**—areas where planned growth can occur with appropriate infrastructure. Locations like White Flint and the **Geico campus** present prime opportunities for responsible development that can include affordable workforce housing. If developers refuse to step up, the County must examine what **regulations or disincentives** are preventing them from doing so—rather than **forcing unplanned, piecemeal development where it does not belong**.

### **No Data Justifies This Bill's Workforce Housing Claims**

ZTA 25-02 lacks **any concrete data** demonstrating how many workforce housing units are needed or how success will be measured. This bill is essentially an **open-ended giveaway to developers**, allowing them to **build as many market-rate units as they want, regardless of the impact on infrastructure**. Please do not **hide a pro-developer policy behind the guise of workforce housing**—doing so is both misleading and disrespectful to the residents of Montgomery County.

### **Serious Public Safety Concerns Due to Increased Density**

Even local **firefighters and police** have expressed serious concerns about the increased density proposed under this bill. Many streets in Bethesda and Chevy Chase are already **too narrow for fire trucks to pass safely**, and additional street parking from increased housing density will only exacerbate the problem. Furthermore, **many fire hydrants in the county operate at low pressure**, raising serious questions about whether **our water supply can support the population increases you are proposing**. If increased density means emergency vehicles **cannot reach homes in time**, you will be **jeopardizing lives**—mine included. If my house burns down because the fire truck couldn't get to me, I will no longer see Montgomery County as a livable community.

### **Duplexes and Other Zoning Changes Benefit Developers, Not Residents**

There are **no workforce housing minimums for duplexes**, yet they are included in this bill. If duplexes can be sold at market rates, **how does this help workforce housing?** This is nothing more than a **windfall for developers** at the expense of existing neighborhoods. Similarly, allowing **triplexes and quadplexes to operate businesses like daycares** will create **traffic and**

**parking chaos** in residential areas. How does this align with the supposed goal of workforce housing? This bill is internally inconsistent, hastily written, and fundamentally flawed.

### **Failure to Address Infrastructure Strain**

The County has not provided **any clear plan** for how existing infrastructure will handle the **increased burden** from this zoning change. Roads, water systems, emergency services, and public transit are already **stretched thin**. Without detailed impact studies and financial assessments, this bill **recklessly disregards the long-term costs of upzoning**. What is the point of adding more housing if the infrastructure **cannot support** those new residents?

### **Overcrowding in Schools Has Been Ignored**

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) already struggles with **overcrowded classrooms, teacher shortages, and limited resources**. This bill does not include **any analysis** of how it will impact schools, nor does it propose **any solutions** for handling increased student populations. A responsible policy would **forecast school enrollment impacts** and determine the necessary investments before moving forward. This bill does neither.

### **Lack of Transparency and Community Input**

The **County Council has failed to engage the community** in a meaningful way regarding this legislation. Instead, more time has been spent with **paid lobbyists** than with the people who actually live in Montgomery County. Public input sessions have been **nothing more than a procedural formality**. This is unacceptable. If you truly represent the residents of this County, you should be listening to us—not special interests.

### **I Will Not Support Any Council Member Who Votes for This Bill**

This bill is a **deeply flawed and poorly conceived** attempt at housing reform, and I will **actively vote against** any Council member who supports it. Montgomery County deserves **thoughtful, data-driven policymaking**, not rushed zoning changes that cater to developers at the community's expense.

### **Stop Wasting Taxpayer Dollars on Notional Ideas**

Montgomery County has a history of chasing **theoretical policy solutions** that do not work in practice—whether it be bike lanes, linear parks, or upzoning schemes that fail to deliver meaningful benefits. This bill is **yet another example** of **feel-good legislation** that ignores practical realities. **Housing affordability is a serious issue**, but the solution is **not unplanned densification**. Instead of passing ill-conceived bills, the Council should be working with communities on **viable, well-planned solutions** that actually meet residents' needs.

## **Montgomery County's Economic Future Is Uncertain—This Is the Wrong Time for This Bill**

With the **potential loss of federal jobs and funding**, Montgomery County may be **heading into a recession**. Now is **not the time** to make radical zoning changes that **could have long-term economic consequences**. The Council should **wait until the economic outlook is clearer** before passing a bill of this magnitude.

## **Single-Family Neighborhoods Must Be Protected**

I bought my home in a **single-family zoned neighborhood** and **pay taxes accordingly**. If my property values decline due to this bill, will my taxes be lowered? Or, will my taxes increase to cover the infrastructure expansion needed to support new developments? This bill **fails to account for how these zoning changes will impact long-term homeowners financially**.

## **Focus on Attracting Jobs, Not Just Housing**

Montgomery County's real issue is **not just housing—it's jobs**. **People are leaving because of a lack of quality employment opportunities**, not just housing costs. Instead of forcing density into existing neighborhoods, the County should focus on **attracting high-quality businesses** that provide **well-paying jobs**. If we build a stronger local economy, housing affordability will improve **without resorting to reckless zoning changes**.

## **Conclusion**

The **More Housing N.O.W. bill and ZTA 25-02** are **fundamentally flawed** and fail to address Montgomery County's real housing challenges. **Without proper planning, infrastructure investment, or clear impact analysis, this bill will create more problems than it solves**. I urge the County Council to **reject this ill-conceived legislation** and work with residents to create a **data-driven, sustainable plan** for housing growth.

Sincerely,

**Clare Rohleder**

**Bethesda MD 20816**