

Greetings, Montgomery County Council Members. My name is Ali Brill and I live in downtown Silver Spring. I am here today to request more robust support for Montgomery County's Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit (MPDU) rental program.

To my knowledge, there have not been significant updates to the MPDU program since 2018, when Bill 34-17 was passed as MPDU Amendments. A lot has changed since 2018! The rising cost of living (without appropriate wage growth) is making it near impossible for many of us to survive with any semblance of comfort.

Due to the impressive visibility of our local government here in Montgomery County, I came across the MPDU rental program last year. With great luck, I *did* secure an MPDU, but my journey navigating through the process was less than ideal. The lack of a universal waiting list made it hard to plan. The lack of transparency and consistency between different building's unit pricing also made it very difficult to filter which properties were worth pursuing. The most troubling element I faced was the in-person, first-come, first-served model for applying. Because these units could become available at any time of the day, I had to be on the ready whenever I received an update email. This required me to leave work several times throughout the process of obtaining housing. For a program that is meant to support low-income residents, leaving work on a regular basis to secure an income-capped unit is a large barrier to access.

Because of the last-minute, in-person, first-come, first-served model of the MPDU program, folks are put in the uncomfortable situation of choosing between job security and housing security. Even if an employer *is* willing to accommodate abrupt departures, folks searching for MPDUs are the same folks that cannot afford taking this time off work!

I believe that in order for the MPDU program to best serve the low and moderate-income residents it seeks to support, there must be improvements that ensure residents feel secure throughout the process. With more funding and executive regulation brought to the program, folks might be able to get on a county or city waiting list, be notified sooner of upcoming available and affordable units, and have a more secure and equitable experience applying for these units.

Thank you for all that you are already doing to make life more affordable for the citizens of Montgomery County. I want to continue living in our vibrant community here! But making that a reality is *increasingly* difficult to accomplish on a single income. Please continue fighting for affordable housing measures in the county, and consider these suggestions regarding the MPDU rental program.

Thank you for your time and consideration!

Ali Brill

Silver Spring, MD