

Subdivision Regulation Amendment (SRA 25-02)

SUBJECT: Written Testimony in support of SRA 25-02

Frank Demarais, ---- Maple Avenue, Takoma Park MD 20912

Dear Council President Stewart, Vice President Jawando, Council Members Alborno, Balcombe, Fani-Gonzalez, Friedson, Glass, Katz, Luedtke, Mink, and Sayles:

I urge the County Council to Support SRA 25-02 in spite of organized efforts to create barriers to the reasonable implementation of the intended benefits of ZTA 25-02. The opportunity to accommodate new units adjacent to County's high-capacity corridors represents an appropriate approach to increasing supply, leveraging current infrastructure and allowing additional households to access the amenities of areas outside of the high-density urban centers where most new construction is appropriately targeted and economic. My perspective on SRA 25-02 reflects professional work in housing development, affordability and residency in a community where single family lots exist alongside multi-unit properties. The envisioned housing will not provide the most critically needed affordability but will leverage the economic reality of corridor access and scale to increase supply with some reductions to full market rate costs. I believe the objections I have seen to SRA 25-02 reflect misunderstandings of the role of multi-unit housing on the livability and flexibility of neighborhoods.

1. The Planning Board appropriately proposes with SRA 25-02 to provide the intended eligibility of lots while reducing unintended impacts on adjacent neighborhoods. ZTA 25-02 intended to reasonably accommodate increases in density where transit and access to corridor roadways would minimize impact on neighborhood interiors. The clarifications of SRA 25-02 will help to meet the objectives of increased opportunities for higher density housing adjacent to single family neighborhoods and the amenities associated with those communities.
2. Planning Department approach to accommodate lot consolidations to two adjacent lots with reasonable square footage and lot coverage requirements addresses some of the economic hurdles of housing production. Construction economics represent the biggest barrier to housing supply and the proposal makes efforts to improve the opportunities for the targeted types and locations of housing approved in ZTA 25-02.
3. Some have proposed oversight of citizens advisory committees as a proxy or replacement for the sector plan process which the ZTA bypassed, but I believe would serve only to obstruct every proposal with no clear structure or guidance on how such input should be used.