

September 17, 2025
Written Testimony on ZTA 25-11

Good afternoon President Stewart and Council Members,

Hello, I am Susan Labin, a long-time Montgomery County resident. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I urge you to oppose the unnecessary and pernicious ZTA 25-11. If it continues to move forward, at a minimum, I urge you to support the amendments proposed by MC4T, which would narrow the scope of this ZTA to unforeseen situations and protect residential areas.¹

I may be familiar to some of you. For first-term Councilmembers, I supported some of your campaigns and know many of you are sympathetic to residents' concern about unfettered and unmonitored cell tower installations. For Council members with longer tenures, I was active in opposing ZTAs 22-01 and 19-07 that allow cell towers just 30 feet from homes with limited if any notice or recourse. The failure of the prior Council to heed scientific evidence and even the DC US Court of Appeals' judgement against the FCC in regards to cell towers was a great disappointment— a disappointment for the substance of the issue and damage to our health and the environment, but also a disappointment in our prior Council that ignored thousands of letters, phone calls, and emails. The sponsor of 22-01 commented that he had never seen such an outpouring of resident opposition in all the years he was on the Council. I hope this Council will listen to constituents.

ZTA 25-11 would allow for cell towers up to 200 feet in height anywhere in the county – including in residential zones, near schools, and apartments –with no due process and no minimum setback. Rather than complying with the existing zoning code, the industry is asking for a giant loophole: the ability to put cell towers anywhere in the county, and in many cases without even obtaining a building permit –bypassing decades of precedent in local zoning.

Instead of this ill-conceived change, the Council should repeal the extremely unpopular and damaging ZTAs 22-01 and 19-07. As aptly stated in the documentary film-Descendant²- zoning is destiny. I urge you to grant us residents a say in our destinies.

Sincerely,

Susan Labin, Ph.D.

¹ <https://mc4tmd.blogspot.com/2025/09/testimony-zta25-11.htm>

² Descendant-the documentary of the Clotilda, last slave ship to America, and the current challenges of the descendant community.