



**Andrew Friedson**  
**District 1 Councilmember**



## **Councilmember Andrew Friedson's Statement on More Housing N.O.W.**

On February 4<sup>th</sup>, Councilmember Fani-Gonzalez and I introduced a package of housing measures called More Housing N.O.W. (New Options for Workers). Some are asking, is this package the same as the Planning Board's Attainable Housing Strategies Recommendations (AHS)? Or something different? Please allow me to explain.

After unprecedented levels of public outreach on the Planning Board's Attainable Housing Strategies recommendations and several months of receiving feedback from community members and housing policy experts, I took a step back to consider how we could build consensus to advance our housing goals in the most meaningful way. While the past several months were dominated by debate and discussion of the attainable housing strategies, combatting the current housing crisis is not – and was never – exclusively about these recommendations. Truly tackling our housing challenges requires a comprehensive approach to address the housing needs of our workforce, increase our housing supply, and facilitate pathways to home ownership.

The lack of housing supply and affordability is not only threatening our ability to fulfill our values as a welcoming, inclusive community, it's having serious economic consequences and contributing to the stagnation of our economy. As identified in both the [Maryland Comptroller's State of the Economy Report](#) and the [Montgomery County Office of Legislative Oversight's 2024 report on outmigration](#), people are leaving the state due to skyrocketing housing costs which hampers our ability to attract the necessary workforce to support our county's businesses, nonprofits, and public sector agencies.

Growing our local economy and improving housing affordability and accessibility have been my top priorities on the County Council. We have [made great strides in the affordable housing realm](#) increasing housing supply for lower income households, but we have not adequately focused on workforce housing – for teachers who need to be in class before 7 am, and

for police, firefighters, and nurses, who work late shifts but can often only afford housing long distances from their jobs, sometimes in other counties, and even other states.

**At the end of the day, we need more housing options for more people, especially along major corridors with access to jobs and amenities.**

Working with the chair of the Council's Economic Development Committee, Councilmember Fani-Gonzalez, we introduced the More Housing N.O.W. (New Options for Workers) package with five bold steps to increase housing supply, reduce costs, and increase pathways to home ownership.

This housing package includes companion proposals to build more workforce housing, convert vacant office buildings to housing, and double the county's investment in assistance for first-time home buyers. The legislative measures to support this package were introduced on Tuesday, February 4 and are available on my [Council website](#).

Focusing on strategies that provide the greatest opportunities to increase our housing supply while increasing access for our workforce, **our approach increases housing options on county corridors and does not propose any zoning changes within residential neighborhoods.**

I believe this is a thoughtful, significant step forward that reflects consensus and will make meaningful progress on housing availability and affordability.