

**Public Comment Item**  
**Attainable Housing Strategies**  
**Public Listening Session**

**From:** [Mimi Kress](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Attainable Housing Strategies initiative  
**Date:** Monday, February 26, 2024 4:50:47 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL]** Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear MNCPPC Planning Board:

I am writing in regard to the public listening sessions on Attainable Housing Strategies initiatives. As a lifelong resident of Montgomery County and as a homebuilder here for the past 40 years, I believe that affordable housing is imperative. To that end, I am in favor of fully initiating the Attainable Housing program and believe that a very wide variety of housing types should be built within the county. These types can be built in our single-family zones, and they can be built without damaging the quality and character of neighborhoods. It is an issue of equity and economic vitality within the county. The Board should fully and unequivocally support this initiative so that missing middle type housing can be built starting tomorrow!

Certainly, zoning would need to change to allow these types of housing within the existing Residential zones but in addition to that we would need to see changes to parking requirements, height restrictions, stormwater management limitations, tree requirements, high impact fees, review process time and fees, etc. These are definite impediments to implementing these housing types today. The costs to build a single-family home cannot be applied in the same way to attainable housing strategies or a builder will stick with single family building. There is no incentive to build more affordable housing if the same restrictions and costs apply.

Demographics are showing we need smaller homes, possibly on smaller lots for people to start home ownership or for them to retire in within neighborhoods they grew up in. I want my kids to be able to afford a home, even if smaller, within our community. Today, that is impossible, even though most households are 1 or 2 people. Montgomery County is losing young homeowners and down-sizing seniors to neighboring states and counties.

While we have not been involved with affordable housing as a company, we would certainly welcome the opportunity for in-fill building of missing middle housing if it was feasible. I am very actively involved with Habitat for Humanity of Metro Maryland and know very well the limited resources available to our community members in need of decent and affordable housing. We need to be creative in providing affordable and attainable housing, but also cognizant that the developers and builders are not going to do this in lieu of a more profitable single-family build if there are no concessions being given.

I strongly urge you to consider implementation of initiatives that will provide opportunities for people with a limited or restricted income to enjoy home ownership in our County.

Thank you for your consideration of my thoughts on this.

Sincerely,

Mimi Brodsky Kress, COO  
Sandy Spring Builders, LLC

***Mimi Brodsky Kress, COO***  
Sandy Spring Builders, LLC  
4705 West Virginia Avenue  
Bethesda, MD 20814  
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**From:** [rg.steinman](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** March 21 – Public Comment Item – Attainable Housing Strategies Public Listening Session  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 19, 2024 1:06:21 PM  
**Attachments:** [Attainable housing comments, March 2024.docx](#)

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL]** Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Please include my statement for the record:

**March 21, 2024 – Public Comment Item – Attainable Housing Strategies Public Listening Session** (Word doc also attached)

Dear Planning Board President and Members,

“In Montgomery County, expanding attainable housing options means enabling the construction or renovation of diverse housing types beyond the typical detached single-family home to create more units that are smaller and more affordable.” (From Montgomery Planning, ATTAINABLE HOUSING STRATEGIES: LISTENING SESSION)

Offering a wider range of housing options can achieve desirable results if the increased density takes into account critical factors that impact a neighborhood’s quality of life. Key among these are **preservation of the natural environment**, the **adequacy of public facilities and utilities**, the **implementation safeguards to prevent real estate developer exploitation**, and the **preservation of Naturally Existing Affordable Housing**.

## **PRESERVATION OF NEIGHBORHOOD GREEN SPACE AND MATURE TREES**

Preserving trees has positive effects on a neighborhood’s health and character, and it also enhances the attractiveness of the developments and the developers' reputations and profits. With increased density often comes additional impervious surface area because of more buildings, parking areas, etc. Adhering to strict impervious limits is critical if we are to preserve neighborhood green space and trees.

Trees and green space provide climate and health benefits, as well as increase the monetary value of developments. Trees improve and maintain the quality of water, soil, and air and remove pollutants from the air. Trees provide shade and help lower temperatures during hot weather, and provide habitat, refuge and food for wildlife. Trees enrich people's lives and beautify landscapes. The more we can preserve urban greenspace, with its natural areas and older mature trees, the more deeply and powerfully the ecosystems can mitigate the extreme effects of climate change and global warming.

## **ENSURING ADEQUATE PUBLIC FACILITIES AND UTILITIES**

Increasing housing density will increase traffic, wastewater and storm water run-off, electricity demand, school attendance, and more. Infrastructure capacity must proceed in lockstep with the construction of additional housing units. Increased traffic and gridlock have already overtaken many of our roadways; many Montgomery County schools are overcrowded and students end up in trailers; and stormwater run-off is greater than the existing pipes can handle in many neighborhoods leading to street, yard, and basement flooding. Without the accompanying infrastructure, increased density will drain the County budget and negatively affect the way we live.

## **IMPLEMENT SAFEGUARDS TO PREVENT REAL ESTATE DEVELOPER EXPLOITATION**

Increasing housing density, i.e. upzoning, without any safeguards is a free-for-all for developers and has led to skyrocketing home prices and high rentals, with absentee landlords, in many places in the country. Not only does this put home ownership even more out of reach, but it also means that rental dollars flow out of the local region. Implementing Safeguards, including owner occupancy requirements, architectural plan reviews, style books, construction material requirements such as re-use of existing materials, tree canopy and vegetation preservation, etc. makes it harder for developers and investors to use the upzoning as a land/cash grab.

## **PRESERVATION OF NATURALLY OCCURRING AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

Finally, where there is already Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH), the goal should be the preservation of these already affordable units. Housing supply grows very slowly, and new units are often more expensive than smaller, older homes. This is particularly true in markets where values are rising, for example along the Purple Line corridor, where there is a risk of conversion to higher, market-rate rental properties or in densely populated areas where multifamily housing is more prevalent. Preserving NOAHs helps to narrow the affordability gap without having to build newer housing, and it keeps families and communities intact and protects vulnerable residential areas from speculative development and displacement.

Montgomery County has many tools available to preserve NOAHs. Using these tools will increase the overall housing supply while preserving existing affordable units, which will result in increased affordability across neighborhoods where demand pressure is the highest.

Thank you for considering these important quality of life components in our neighborhoods.

Most Sincerely,

Ms. Roberta G (rg) Steinman  
9009 Fairview Rd  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
301.565.2025  
[lifeonurth@gmail.com](mailto:lifeonurth@gmail.com)

## ATTAINABLE HOUSING COMMENTS

### March 21, 2024 – Public Comment Item – Attainable Housing Strategies Public Listening Session

“In Montgomery County, expanding attainable housing options means enabling the construction or renovation of diverse housing types beyond the typical detached single-family home to create more units that are smaller and more affordable.” (Montgomery Planning, ATTAINABLE HOUSING STRATEGIES: LISTENING SESSION)

Offering a wider range of housing options can achieve desirable results if the increased density takes into account critical factors that impact a neighborhood’s quality of life. Key among these are **preservation of the natural environment**, the **adequacy of public facilities and utilities**, the **implementation safeguards to prevent real estate developer exploitation**, and the **preservation of Naturally Existing Affordable Housing**.

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### **ATTAINABLE HOUSING COMMENTS**

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Montgomery County has many tools available to preserve NOAHs. Using these tools will increase the overall housing supply while preserving existing affordable units, which will result in increased affordability across neighborhoods where demand pressure is the highest.

Thank you for considering these important quality of life components in our neighborhoods.

Most Sincerely,

Ms. Roberta G (rg) Steinman  
9009 Fairview Rd  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
301.565.2025  
[lifeonurth@gmail.com](mailto:lifeonurth@gmail.com)

**From:** [Joan Barron](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Attainable Housing  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 19, 2024 10:56:33 AM

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL]** Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Good Morning

I listened to Lisa Govoni's presentation last evening on Attainable Housing and found it helpful however I want to make sure I am clear on a few issues. It appears that this will be an overarching ZTA for residents in R-60 zones. I agree that more attainable housing and affordable housing is needed in the county. However, I have several concerns regarding the one size fits all aspect of the discussion. Neighbors will not have any say in concerns that may pertain to their individual lots, streets, or neighborhoods. I know that a recent ZTA has allowed for fewer parking requirements for housing within 1/2 mile of transit. In our neighborhood of Chevy Chase West, which is just outside that restriction, we have narrow streets many without sidewalks. More density in some blocks will result in more parking hassles for the elderly, folks with physical challenges, pedestrians, and access to charging for electric vehicles. We are also hemmed in in this neighborhood. The advantage is there are no cut throughs but it becomes increasingly difficult to leave the neighborhood during various hours of the day.

Regarding the Middle Scale option I would like some clarity. Wisconsin Avenue south of Bradley (The Green Mile) is not, as I understand, in a corridor where the Middle Scale would come into play. If one day it did, would this option only include properties directly on Wisconsin or would properties in the neighborhood be affected?

I am also concerned that the 'naturally occurring' affordable housing near us may well help the missing middle but will push out the folks who rely on this housing which is near to transit, jobs, and shopping. This became less of a concern after the discussion last evening but I hope such housing becomes a priority going forward.

As this process continues I will be interested in hearing and learning exactly when these zoning changes will occur and in the end who will benefit. Hopefully it will be the community. I remain more than skeptical that attainable will become a reality when I see single family homes in our community continually being sold for 2-3 million dollars.

Finally, I heard several residents last evening speak to the fact that few people know that these changes are coming. I believe there needs to be more outreach. More outreach leads to better understanding.



Thank you

Joan Barron

4704 Morgan Drive

Chevy Chase, 20815

Chevy Chase West Neighborhood Assn.

**From:** [Jacob Barker](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** March 21 – Public Comment Item – Attainable Housing Strategies Public Listening Session  
**Date:** Monday, March 18, 2024 5:37:25 PM  
**Attachments:** [Public Comment 24.03.21.pdf](#)

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[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Please see the attached public comment.

Spread the music,

Jacob Barker  
Montgomery County Public Schools  
National United Methodist Church

605 Hudson Ave, Apt 322  
Takoma Park, MD 20912  
515-710-6810

**March 21 – Public Comment Item – Attainable Housing Strategies  
Public Listening Session**

To Whom it Concerns,

Montgomery County has a severe housing shortage. So severe that it has driven wages up and is the main inflation issue as of now. Making it possible to build a more affordable range of housing options, like duplexes, triplexes and small apartment buildings will help address this shortage, ensure the next generation can afford to live here, and provide homes for all parts of our workforce.

Legalizing a wider range of housing types in areas with great access to transit supports greater inclusion, sustainability, and economic health. It will allow us to:

- Offer housing options more affordable than what is currently possible to build
- Provide the housing needed to support important jobs—from teachers to firefighters to critical service industries—and so young people can afford to stay
- Think more sustainably about how we use land near existing transit, jobs, and amenity-rich centers—so we can reduce carbon emissions and preserve natural spaces

Please strike single family zoning from our codes, and allow people to choose a broader range of housing types in places that make sense for them. In turn, this will help make existing transit more efficient and economical since we will end up with more people living along lines. Legalize more housing.

Jacob Barker  
605 Hudson Ave, Apt 322  
Takoma Park, MD 20912  
515-710-6810

**From:** [Robert Oshel](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Written Testimony for March 21 Attainable Housing Strategies Public Listening Session  
**Date:** Monday, March 18, 2024 1:53:20 PM

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL]** Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Please accept this statement for the record of the March 21 Attainable Housing Strategies Listening Session.

As the Planning Board and the County Council work to implement the Thrive 2050 plan and increase densities in existing neighborhoods, I urge you to keep in mind the need to preserve the quality of life for both existing and new residents.

Adding density to existing neighborhoods while maintaining quality of life requires a delicate touch. Specifically, I believe density should be increased only if public facilities and utilities (schools, roads and transportation, water, sewer, and stormwater, electrical grid capacity, etc.) can handle the additional population at the time the density is added. For example, existing and new residents should not be faced with overcrowded schools for years because a neighborhood's population was allowed to grow before the necessary school capacity could be added. Another example is that the capacity to handle storm water needs to be adequate to allow for growth. The storm sewer system installed in my neighborhood in 1950 to eliminate flooding was adequate for years but additional development now has resulted in consistent major flooding along one street whenever there are heavy rains. Adding more structures or structures which cover more land area in the neighborhood's watershed would only make this situation worse.

In addition, green space and tree cover must be preserved to the maximum extent possible. This is important not only to make neighborhoods attractive places to live, but it is also needed to mitigate climate change. Bigger structures housing more people may be a net loss for the environment and our quality of life unless they are well planned and built to preserve trees and green space.

Adding density must be done very carefully. The capacity to handle it must precede the added density. Green space and trees must be preserved. Nobody, neither existing residents nor new residents, will be well served if the added density reduces the quality of life that has made our neighborhoods desirable places to live.

Robert E. Oshel  
9114 Crosby Road  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
301-523-0307  
[Robert.Oshel@gmail.com](mailto:Robert.Oshel@gmail.com)

**From:** [Jen Hawse](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Attainable Housing Strategies  
**Date:** Monday, March 18, 2024 12:49:48 PM

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL]** Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Planning Board,

As a homeowner in Montgomery County, MD, I am highly vested in creating more attainable housing options for my neighbors. I support any housing strategy recommendations which would remove the barriers to building more diverse housing types. As Montgomery County grows and adds hundreds of thousands of individuals in the coming decades, we will need more diverse housing stock options that are priced at a reasonable rate.

Please support recommendations that allow for attainable housing by-right in corridor-focused growth areas as defined by Thrive 2050. This transit-oriented housing will serve as a climate solution for our region while also ensuring all people have walkable, bikeable, and accessible places to live.

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to watching this people-centered process unfold.

Best,

Jen

--

Jen Hawse  
410-302-3061  
[jlhawse@gmail.com](mailto:jlhawse@gmail.com)

**From:** [Bee Ditzler](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Testimony for March 21, 2024  
**Date:** Sunday, March 17, 2024 11:25:25 AM

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL]** Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Chair Harris and Members of the Planning Board,

I am Barbara Ditzler and live at 1225 Noyes Drive, Silver Spring inside the beltway just north of Silver Spring CBD. As a "senior" I am 100% for attainable housing as it creates a wider range of residents that can afford to live in close proximity to transit, jobs and services. Proximity to elements is why we live where we do.

There are many benefits for encouraging attainable housing. Children benefit from having a diverse population in their classrooms both academically and socially. Statistics show there is greater achievement of students dispersed around an area and not concentrated. Our single family zoning that encompasses most of the county is not affordable for all. I live in a community of almost all single family homes on their own plot of land and wish that more was offered in variety and cost. It's not just me who likes to walk to appointments, shops, transit and more. Our environment has less degradation by living closer to amenities. Living locally is a commodity that should be readily available to more people through attainable housing.

It's time to change what housing is affordable to people and follow through on Thrive concepts and make them a reality in implementing smarter housing zoning. We all benefit from more attainable housing.

Sincerely,  
Barbara Ditzler

**From:** [Ellen Rader](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: March 21 Agenda Item on Attainable Housing/ Letter of Support  
**Date:** Sunday, March 17, 2024 8:16:31 PM

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL]** Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

I realized I did not include my address as is required.

My address is

Ellen Rader

4841 Leland Street

Chevy Chase, MD 20815

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** Ellen Rader <[southbethesda@gmail.com](mailto:southbethesda@gmail.com)>

**Date:** Sun, Mar 17, 2024 at 4:26 PM

**Subject:** March 21 Agenda Item on Attainable Housing/ Letter of Support

**To:** <[mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org](mailto:mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org)>

MNCPPC Planning Board Members,

I am a single family homeowner who has lived in the Sacks Subdivision of Bethesda since 1985. I support the Attainable Housing Strategies initiative. Sacks is located within the Downtown Bethesda Master plan area. It is located within sight of the Purple Line station, is less than ½ mile from the main Bethesda Metro entrance, is adjacent to the new Lot 31 parking garage and is adjacent to apartment buildings and major roads. Because of the Sacks Subdivision location, it is ideal for Missing Middle type housing.

The Downtown Bethesda Master Plan was approved in May 2017. A number of homeowners within Sacks, including myself, were involved in the master plan process which started in 2014. We advocated for a zoning change to allow for higher density which would help meet projected County housing needs. We were told by the County Council that there was no mechanism available to do so for an existing R-60 neighborhood. Rezoning would create non-conforming lots and was highly discouraged by the Council. The Council decided the only way to provide potential for change was to recommend a Residential Floating Zone to allow “residential development at higher densities in appropriate circumstances” (See page 139 of the Bethesda Downtown Plan).

Implementing the requirements for rezoning through the Floating Zone process has proven to be difficult. We have met with developers to determine their interest in redevelopment and even considered going through the zoning process as a self-funded group of owners. We have had an architect provide sketch plans for multifamily housing that resembles large homes. At the time, some of the biggest hurdles of going through the Floating Zone process are time, expense and parking requirements. I have been told it would take at least a year and a half to go through the process, exclusive of potential lawsuits. Zoning experts have told me it would cost over \$100,000 to prepare necessary documents. I am pleased that recently the parking requirements have been eliminated for areas near the Metro. It is still much easier for a

developer to make a profit by buying up small houses in the area, tearing them down and building very large houses in their place. That is occurring in Sacks. Many of the new large homes are occupied by only two people and are valued at close to three million dollars. These new homes will most likely remain for many years to come. The Attainable Housing Strategies Initiative would be an effective way to transition areas like the Sacks Subdivision to higher density housing that is compatible with the neighborhood without forcing any homeowner to sell.

I support the MNCPPC Attainable Housing Strategies initiative for the same reasons that have been expressed in Thrive Montgomery 2050, the organization Greater Greater Washington and the Coalition for Smarter Growth and in a blog post by Gwen Wright titled “Missing Middle Housing, Planning’s New Cup of Tea”. There needs to be an effective mechanism for change other than the use of floating zones for transitioning areas like Sacks that are near Metro stations into higher density housing to meet the future needs of the County.

Ellen Rader



**From:** [Jerry Withers](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Supporting Attainable Housing  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 19, 2024 4:21:08 PM

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL]** Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Montgomery County Planning Board,

Thank you for allowing for public input.

I am a 40 year resident of Nolte Park Silver Spring.

I whole heartedly support the Attainable Housing Strategies recommendations to remove barriers to building more diverse housing types.

As a 30 year home owner and a recent retiree, I am very aware that should my housing needs evolve as a senior citizen the options in Montgomery County for smaller or lower cost housing is very limited.

Lower income access to good housing comes to mind and should be addressed as a priority. Not only is the inventory of housing limited in number but the overwhelming dominance of single family housing creates a pinch point for seniors and young families alike. As a senior living in a perfectly fine but out of date 1950s house that does increase in value is a double edged sword. This housing sector remains well below the ever newer and larger housing that comes on the market. There simply is no current option for less space and lower cost in ownership or rental.. By dividing the cost of land between multiple households, attainable housing offers housing options that are comparatively more affordable.

Development as defined by Thrive 2050 with more housing in transit-oriented corridors will help more people live closer to the places they need to go, and to more often be able to choose to walk, bike, or use transit. This will make Montgomery County an even more wonderful place to live. More people also translates to more tax revenue and better businesses.

Jerry Withers

206 Dale Drive

Silver Spring MD

**Joyce B. Siegel**  
**11801 Rockville Pike #1112. N. Bethesda, MD 20852**  
**301-881-8389. [joybsiege@aol.com](mailto:joybsiege@aol.com)**

to: Chair Artie Harris and MNCPPC Commissioners

3/17/24

I am writing in support of

In the interest of our environment and a healthy, varied, more affordable "Attainable" housing market in our community I applaud the efforts to remove barriers to mixing different types of housing in favorably located areas of the county, especially near public transit services.

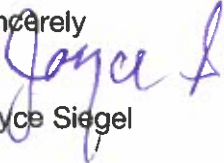
I think the Commission should develop a plan to enable and facilitate utilizing surplus land owned by HOA's and condominiums.

An example: my condominium (The Forum, on Rockville Pike near the Metro stop near Pike & Rose) has extra density zoning which is currently impossible to use because of state condo law. This old building (1970's) needs upgrading....pipes, perhaps heating/cooling system and other environmentally related upgrades. ...along with the precious density it isn't using. It is an affordable housing resource.

Many years ago I was involved in the renewal of the Scotland community, on Seven Locks Road. I know significant Scotland property was acquired from thatd community to develop Cabin John Park. Perhaps some of that land could be used for additional housing?

I think the County should undertake some sort of surplus land study to see what potential housing sites might be available. Perhaps the school board could be coaxed to do the same. Do PEPCO and WGL have surplus properties that would be feasible housing sites?

Sincerely



Joyce Siegel

**From:** [Lloyd Guerci](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Thank you for your message  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 20, 2024 12:19:07 PM

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL]** Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Hi,

I submitted comments on the draft Attainable Housing Report, for tomorrow's Planning Board session.

My address is in my written comments that were attached to my email. It was not in the transmittal email.

It is:

Lloyd Guerci  
4627 Hunt Ave  
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

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**From:** MCP-Chair <mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 20, 2024 12:06 PM  
**To:** Lloyd Guerci <lgjreg@hotmail.com>  
**Subject:** Thank you for your message

Thank you for this message. If you have submitted written testimony for a Planning Board item, please be sure to include your mailing address to satisfy proper noticing requirements. You may provide this to [MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org](mailto:MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org)

For all other e-mails, Chair's Office staff will respond as soon as possible. If you need immediate assistance, please call our office at (301) 495-4605.

BEFORE THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

Meeting of March 21, 2024, Listening Session, After item 9

Written Testimony on Draft Attainable Housing Report

By: Lloyd Guerci, March 20, 2024

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Attainable Housing Report, [Attachment-DRAFT-AHS-Report-with-Markup\\_2-22-24\\_3-21-24.pdf \(montgomeryplanningboard.org\)](#)

I have lived in the DMV for over 50 years and in Montgomery County, between Bethesda and Friendship Heights, for over 28 years.

The draft Attainable Housing Report's consideration of parking (pp. 37-39) is totally inadequate. The Planning Board recommends reducing minimum parking requirements for attainable housing types within the R-200, R-90, R-60 and R-40 zones under both the standard and optional methods of development, with the deepest reduction in parking requirements for attainable housing within the Priority Housing District. p. 37. The draft report fails to address very significant impacts on people pertaining recommended reductions in parking requirements in the zoning code.

Why do people have motor vehicles

The need for parking spaces is closely related to the transportation needs of Montgomery County residents. Many need to use and therefore have motor vehicles. The report does not fairly deal with this fundamental reality.

A basic need is getting to work.

Let's start with not working from home (working in person) vs. working from home. The draft strategy does not examine this, but needs to. A March 16, 2024 New York Times Business Section article, based on U.S. Census Bureau data and entitled "Who is still working from home?" does. The vast, vast majority of people in the United States work fully in person. Out of 143 million people, 115 million work fully in person, 14 million have hybrid schedules and 15 million are fully remote. Attached (via E-mail to [mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org](mailto:mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org)) as exhibits are copies of graphics from that article.

Many people, including people in the trades such as construction workers, painters, plumbers and landscapers, need trucks to get to job sites. The lack of adequate, assured parking would preclude them from living in numerous areas as a practical matter and otherwise adversely affect

them. As the numbers of buildings with inadequate parking grows so too would the problems that working people who must drive to work face.

It goes beyond the trades. Take, for example, MCPS schools. Many if not most schools are not near mass transit. Teachers and other school staff must drive to work, and park at home.

One cannot assume a broad-scale mass transit buildout. Much of the county road network was not built to enable mass transit. Massive expenditures to create wide-scale, local mass transit are not simply unlikely; they are not going to happen. In my decades in the county, before elections candidates for office have said that they are for mass transit, but it has not been designed or implemented. And seemingly the situation has gotten worse. With pandemic era federal funds drying up, WMATA/Metro is in need of and will consume massive subsidies from the State, which affects whether there will be other projects. The Purple line keeps costing much more than projected, and will have a relatively narrow service corridor. BRT is in substantial part dependent of State funding and, so far, ridership is low.

The Attainable Housing Report needs to address with real data how people in the county will get to work and, if there is a significant probability that it is by motor vehicle, where they will park.

A basic need is getting food.

People need food. Food prices are high and cramping people's resources. The economic way to buy food is at a supermarket or a mega store such as Walmart or Costco.

The Attainable Housing Report needs to take a hard, County data-based look, be honest and say, this distance in our view is a fair distance to walk to a supermarket and return with multiple bags of groceries, including on hot summer days. This needs to be discounted based on the reality of what people will do. Next, the report needs to use the mapping systems that the planners have and estimate the number of people living within that distance and outside that distance. This needs to be discounted from 100 percent who live relatively near a supermarket based on the reality of what people will do. This should be based on actual pedestrian paths, determined by an existing sidewalk and shared use path connections. (This is referred to as a measured distance on pedestrian infrastructure approach in a National Capital Planning Commission document. [Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements – Amendments to the Transportation Element and Submission Guidelines Update \(ncpc.gov\)](#) p. 9.)

Next, the Attainable Housing Report needs to explain how people beyond that distance (and within it based on discounting a 100 percent walking figure of people within the planners feasible walking range) will travel to and from a grocery store and where they will park their vehicles at home (if that is the mode of transport).

An important aspect of life, family activities

Many people have families, including children. Regardless of whether they work from home or take mass transit to work, they still need a motor vehicle. The following is a real-world example. While a student in MCPS, our son, like many other county children, played in MSI soccer, played on a Montgomery County Recreation league basketball team and swam on a non-

exclusive team based at the Bethesda County pool. It was not possible to go to the games or meets without a car.

In addition, my wife and I have driven to county regional parks and Seneca Creek State Park. We frequently drive to buy items other than food and to meet friends to socialize, to name a few purposes of trips.

The Attainable Housing Report needs to explain how people engaging in these family activities will travel to and from them and park their vehicles at home.

### Parking for Elderly

Montgomery County has a large and expanding elderly population. Many elderly have very limited mobility. In meeting their needs, which include shopping for food, medical appointments and some social activities, they often drive short distances. How are they going to be assured of a place to park when they get home? That may not be a dollars-based, market place interest to the real estate developer, but it is an important social interest.

In Thrive 2050, and the Pedestrian Master Plan, the amount of concern paid by the planners to the needs of the elderly was inadequate. That must not be repeated.

### Handicapped Parking

As a practical matter, there could be an insufficient parking spaces for handicapped people. This is a civil rights matter.

### Redistribution of Parked Vehicles and Consequences

Regulators, including the Planning Board, need to consider unintended consequences and “what-ifs”. In the context of the draft attainable housing report, the fundamental concern is that there will be more vehicles that need to be parked than spaces in garages, driveways and on the street. Regulators need to preclude and mitigate problems.

The draft report refers to Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) where the council agreed to reduce parking requirements within a mile of transit or where adequate on-street parking was available. p. 37. But it was recognized that as a practical matter ADUs would not be widespread.

If a lot or building does not have sufficient parking spaces to satisfy the need, a naive assumption may be that those who do not have a parking space there will not have a motor vehicle. But some or many will.

What will happen is that, in the rental market place when there is a shortage, people with money will pay to get available spaces. Others, of lesser means, will not get spaces in the building. And, market based – supply and demand-based pricing – will increase the price for all.

If there are inadequate numbers of parking spaces or no spaces in a building or on a lot, numerous people will park elsewhere, often on the street. Particularly in older urban areas (such as the street where I live which has parking on only one side) can the parking infrastructure handle it? (The limitation to “no onstreet parking on the block”, report p. 38 is wholly

inadequate to address my concerns.) This may stress an already over utilized local parking space situation where demand is high and spaces are scarce, particularly as to on-street parking. The aggregate stress will multiply when, with time, multiple buildings and/or lots do not have sufficient parking to meet demand.

People will park in driveway entrances, etc. There will be competition for and blocking of parking spots. The situation may turn ugly and vile, which will create civic strife.

The developer saves money on parking spaces and people in the neighborhood suffer the consequences.

The draft report says:

While the Planning Board is supportive of reducing parking minimums and has recommended the above strategy, the Board is also supportive of working with the Council on other options to modify parking requirements. These include: 1. Basing the amount of required off-street parking on the width of street frontage available. 2. Allowing the required parking to be based on overall parking, which includes both on- and off-site, instead of just what is required on-site. 3. Using the existing multifamily parking minimums for attainable housing types, which ties parking to the number of bedrooms. 4. Allowing tandem parking, which would allow two parking spaces that are configured like a single spot, one in front of the other. This means that the car in the front spot has to move in order to allow the back spot to move out of the space. (p. 38)

While this might be a start, it is totally unclear how this would be done and implemented, which is highly problematic. This is particularly the case given the conclusion that “ultimately one of the goals of this initiative is to make housing more attainable and reducing parking requirements has the potential to help achieve that goal.” p. 39.

IT WOULD BE TOTALLY IMPROPER TO ADDRESS PARKING AVAILABILITY A SWEEPING CHANGE TO THE ZONING ORDINANCE. INDIVIDUAL NEIGHBORHOODS NEED TO BE EXAMINED INDIVIDUALLY.

### Economic Development

The Planning Department and the Planning Board have economic development responsibilities.

Governor Wes Moore has recognized that Maryland is a slow growth state, which is a problem. Adjusted for inflation, Maryland’s economy grew by a measly 0.2 percent between 2018 and 2022, compared with 3.1 percent in neighboring Pennsylvania and 7.5 percent nationwide. “There has been no growth,” Gov. Moore has said, adding: “There’s no excuse. And we’re falling behind. ... We have to make a choice that we actually want to win.” Washington Post, August 18, 2023.

As reflected in the Montgomery County Council President Andrew Friedson’s recently proposed J.O.B.S. (Jobs, Opportunities and Business Support) Initiative, which includes a \$20 million appropriation for the County’s Economic Development Fund to jumpstart the local economy and



create high-paying jobs in Montgomery County (March 11, 2024 press conference; [https://www2.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcgportalapps/Press\\_Detail.aspx?Item\\_ID=44890](https://www2.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcgportalapps/Press_Detail.aspx?Item_ID=44890)), the County is in need of economic development. And Thrive Montgomery 2050 pointed out the economic needs of the East County.

Parking is highly related to economic development. If people can't reasonably park near where they reside or can't park near where they work or shop, that will adversely affect the economy, and businesses including small businesses.

### Economics - No Assurance that Cost Savings Will Benefit Owners or Renters

I have several concerns. First, the draft attainable housing document is sweeping. It would apply in effect to a range of forms of buildings. The cost savings for parking spots for them in various typical situations is not properly established for many likely scenarios.

Second, as to rentals, the rent charged is likely to be the market rate rent in the area. The cost of the building including parking is not mathematically determinative. I have seen prevailing market pricing in searches for an apartment for a family member in our County and DC. This applies, too, to the other side of building rents – rents in old buildings. For old buildings, the cost of construction was a small fraction of what it cost to build a new building, but the real estate interests charge market rate rents.

Third, the draft attainable housing document assumes that the cost savings will be passed on to the buyer or renter. This reminds me of trickle-down economics. There is no assurance that cost savings will benefit renters, and if they do, by how much.

Fourth, it is disappointing that the Planning Department report does not quantify in dollars the projected rent reductions and purchase price savings for various residential use building types in a range of locales in our County, or information on this impact on housing affordability. (Attainable Housing is defined on p.2 of the draft). Two possible consequences that have not been addressed are whether and the extent to which this would increase affordable housing.

### Electric Vehicles and Transition to Electric Vehicles

The transportation sector is one of the three major sources of greenhouse gases. Nationally and in Maryland, the transition to electric vehicles (EV) is facing significant expansion challenges. Apart from the cost of an EV, the major problem is charging (more so than battery life). Many people do not want to transition to an EV unless they can be assured of convenient charging. Charging is most convenient at single family homes and townhouses where people are assured of parking next to a charging electrical cord. It also is convenient in multi-unit building with dedicated parking spots. Charging is a huge problem for people who park on the street.

People who do not have assured parking spots in or near buildings will not have assured parking spots with chargers. They are still going to have motor vehicles and will make do parking them. They are going to stick with gasoline powered vehicles to avoid the very time-consuming

headaches of charging EVs. The lack of (a) assured parking spaces (b) with chargers is an unintended consequence of this draft housing document.

*Lloyd Guerci*  
4627 Hunt Ave.  
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

**ALL WORKERS**

In 2023, about 143 million people between the ages of 18 and 64 were working in the United States. Roughly **80 percent** of those worked **fully in person**. The remainder, about 29 million people, worked either a hybrid schedule or fully remote.

**TOTAL:**  
**143 million people**

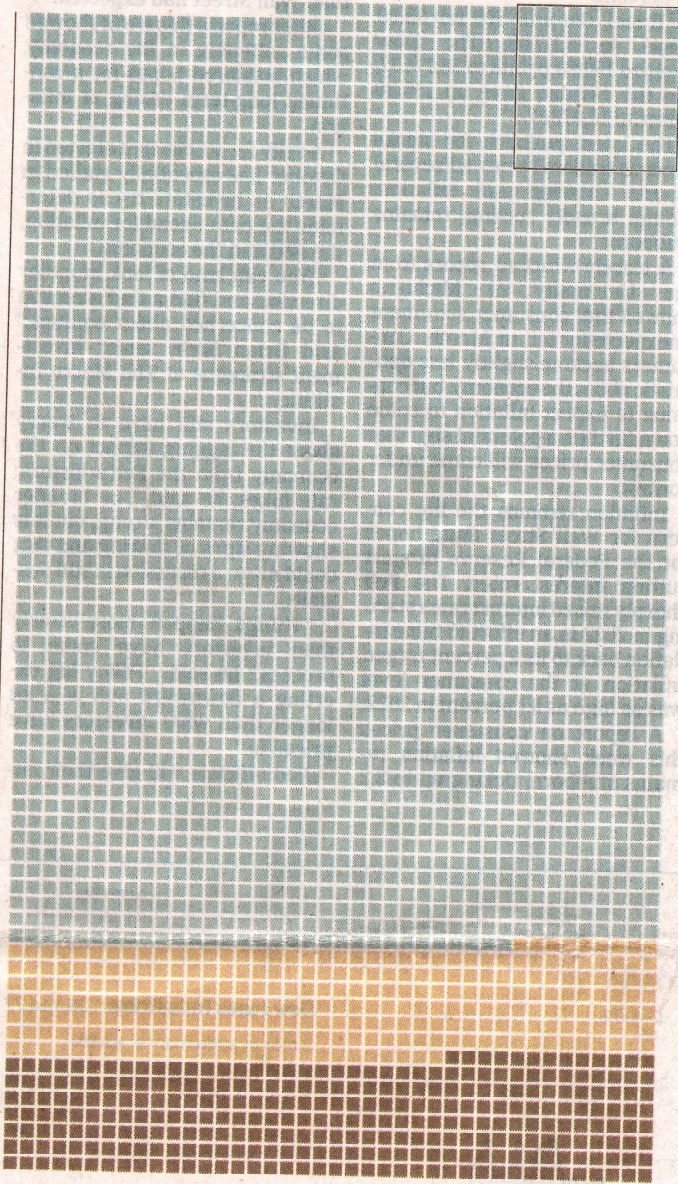
5 MILLION PEOPLE

EACH SQUARE REPRESENTS 50,000 WORKERS BETWEEN THE AGES OF 18 AND 64

**Fully in person**  
115 million

**Hybrid schedule**  
14 million

**Fully remote**  
15 million



**BY EDUCATION LEVEL**

If we look at all workers by their level of education, the biggest group of workers have **no college education**, and these are the most likely to work in person.

But if we focus on just those who work at home all or some of the time, **college educated** workers become the most prominent.



**From:** [Todd Hoffman](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Cc:** [Andrew.Friedson@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:Andrew.Friedson@montgomerycountymd.gov); [Councilmember.Stewart@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:Councilmember.Stewart@montgomerycountymd.gov)  
**Subject:** Town of Chevy Chase Testimony on Attainable Housing Strategies Initiative  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 20, 2024 10:30:24 AM  
**Attachments:** [TOCC Testimony AHSI \(3-21-2024\).pdf](#)

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL]** Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Please see the attached testimony from Town of Chevy Chase Mayor Irene Lane. Thank you.

---

Todd Hoffman  
Town Manager  
Town of Chevy Chase, Maryland  
[4301 Willow Lane](#)  
[Chevy Chase, MD 20815](#)  
[301-654-7144](tel:301-654-7144) (P)  
[301-718-9631](tel:301-718-9631) (F)  
[thoffman@townofchevychase.org](mailto:thoffman@townofchevychase.org)



Irene Lane, *Mayor*  
Barney Rush, *Vice Mayor*  
Rich Brancato, *Treasurer*  
Stephanie Martz, *Secretary*  
Joy White, *Community Liaison*

**Testimony by the Town of Chevy Chase  
Montgomery County Planning Board  
Attainable Housing Strategies Initiative (AHSI)  
March 21, 2024**

Chair Harris and Members of the Planning Board,

I appreciate the opportunity to address the attainable housing initiative today -- an effort that the Town of Chevy Chase supports in principle and, if implemented correctly, in practice. Given the importance of the issue, our Town Councilmembers have sought an open dialogue with residents to gather comments. The recommendations and questions provided in this testimony reflect our initial thoughts on the proposed AHSI recommendations. We look forward to receiving feedback to further inform our future testimony.

First, the Town of Chevy Chase is committed to fostering inclusivity within our community. We believe that our existing setback, height, and massing regulations will facilitate the development of multi-family housing in accordance with the County's plan while still providing for welcoming entryways, a vibrant tree canopy, effective stormwater management, and important emergency vehicle access. To garner support among our residents for the development of neighborly multi-family homes, the Town intends to consistently apply our municipal building code regulations to both single and multi-family housing developments.

The Planning staff has acknowledged this interest in confirming regulatory consistency. During its February 22 presentation, staff displayed several visuals that called for "more options, generally same character." These compelling images juxtaposed a modern teardown/rebuilt single-family home, permitted by right, next to an altered depiction showcasing a duplex with identical setbacks, height, and massing. Implicit in these images is the concept that multi-family housing will adhere to the same building envelope as currently allowed for single-family homes. For the attainable housing initiative to work, it must be undertaken in a manner that is adaptable to local building regulations. Again, this regulatory consistency would not hinder multi-family housing development.

Within this testimony, we outline two recommendations and pose six questions in Appendix A for your consideration during your upcoming work sessions. Simultaneously, we advocate for additional incentives to stimulate the development of highly desirable and more affordable residential housing within existing unoccupied or underoccupied commercial buildings so that this attainable housing initiative comprehensively addresses the housing shortage. These properties,

conveniently located near urban centers, already boast infrastructure that can support high-density housing.

**Recommendation #1: Include a Pattern Book for Triplexes that Conforms to Local Building Codes in the Final Recommendations Report**

Given that the Town's existing municipal building codes will be applied to multi-family housing, we believe there is widespread support for duplexes, and an opportunity to gain support for triplexes, within the Town. As we formulate our final position on the desired level of multi-family housing density to support, we request that the final recommendations report to the County Council include a proposed pattern book for triplexes and that all pattern books be developed based on conformance with local building requirements. Such a resource would enable our residents to visualize the appearance of triplex housing.

**Recommendation #2: Determine Priority Housing Districts & AHOM Eligibility Through Minor Master Plan Amendments**

County residents should play a vital role in the designation of Priority Housing Districts and AHOM along growth corridors. Leveraging residents' local knowledge can enhance the achievement of housing goals. Instead of imposing "one size fits all" policies, we advocate for a more nuanced approach. We propose that accommodating denser forms of construction be achieved through minor master plan amendments to different regions in the County.

A prime example of our concern with a "one size fits all" approach is the proposal for Priority Housing Districts. Under the proposal, these districts are defined as areas where quadplexes would be permitted by right within a specified distance of a rail station. However, this approach lacks consideration for neighborhoods with non-grid street layouts, narrow streets with limited on-street parking, and no current or planned BRT stops nearby. Also, there is also no compelling rationale for the stipulation of a one-mile radius. If the intent is to include areas from where residents might walk to a commercial center or transit stop, we encourage consideration of the views of other authorities. According to the Federal Highway Administration, "most people are willing to walk for five to ten minutes, or approximately ¼- to ½-mile to a transit stop." Moreover, both the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments and WMATA utilize a ½-mile walking route, not radius, for determining transit accessibility.

Similar concerns arise regarding the feasibility of AHOM along growth corridors. Specifically, the current recommended base density of 13 units per acre for R-60 lots seems inconsistent with the suggested density of 10 units per acre for larger R-90 lots even though some of these lots may be adjacent or across the street from each other. Moreover, a previous draft of the proposal document seemed to suggest that a few lots could be combined under AHOM, underscoring the need for further clarity regarding lot combinations and lot chaining.

The Planning Department has acknowledged that AHOM requires additional input from local communities and municipalities before implementation. Our recommendation of following a minor master plan amendment review for Priority Housing Districts is simply a further evolution of this principle. This approach would allow neighborhoods greater input on alternate and

additional centers of activity conducive to quadplex development. By engaging in deliberate and intentional decision-making, this approach would enable communities and municipalities to become partners in making more impactful attainable housing improvements.

We commend the diligent work of the Planning staff and express our gratitude for the Planning Board's thoughtful consideration of our comments.

Thank you.

Irene N. Lane, Mayor  
Town of Chevy Chase



## Appendix A: Questions for the Planning Department

1. Regarding the Local Housing Targets and Attainable Housing Strategies chart presented on February 21, why must Bethesda/Chevy Chase accommodate additional housing, despite already having 28 ongoing projects slated to deliver 6,978 units (including 942 MPDUs) in the next several years, which exceeds the target of 3,425 units? It is unclear why other transit-oriented areas like Wheaton, Silver Spring, and Takoma Park near Red and Purple Line stations appear to bear less housing burden. Could you provide insights into this apparent disparity?
2. How does the Planning Department intend to apply the pattern book to adaptive reuse projects, particularly considering the unique challenges posed by conversions and additions to existing structures, and what implications does this hold for small-scale developments?
3. Can the Planning Department provide clarity on the lot subdivision process for multi-family including whether ADUs can be constructed by right as a part of the multi-family development project?
4. Could the Planning Department provide illustrative examples of AHOM developments at various density levels within both the R-60 and R-90 zones, including the limit for lot combination or chaining?
5. As private equity investment becomes more prevalent in residential neighborhoods, should the County explore imposing restrictions on such ownership or implementing an excise tax specifically for multi-family properties owned by private equity investors? Currently, legislation has been introduced in the US Senate ([S3402](#)) and in California ([SB1212](#)) to address this concern.
6. Considering the emphasis on constructing more housing for purchase or long-term rental, should the County examine the prohibition of short-term rentals within new multi-family housing developments in residential neighborhoods?

**From:** [Graham Reid](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** March 21 Attainable Housing Strategies Public Listening Session Testimony  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 20, 2024 7:56:33 AM  
**Attachments:** [Reid Planning Board Attainable Housing Testimony.pdf](#)

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL]** Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Planning Board,

Attached please find testimony for public comment for the March 21 Attainable Housing Strategies Public Listening Session.

Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,  
Graham Reid  
132 Fenwick Ln #404  
Silver Spring MD 20910

Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board,  
2425 Reddie Drive,  
Wheaton, MD 20902

### Attainable Housing Strategies Testimony

Thank you. My name is Graham Reid and I live in Silver Spring.

I think Montgomery county will greatly benefit from the proposed Attainable Housing Strategies initiative through the creation of more diverse, welcoming communities throughout the county.

I've benefited greatly from the variety of housing options available in Silver Spring, enabling me to afford my modest home as a relatively young person. I hope future county residents can benefit from the wide variety of housing options created through the Attainable Housing initiative in more parts of the county.

The wider variety of housing options created through the initiative will be a great benefit to younger residents, making the county more welcoming and accessible for new residents. Montgomery county is a very diverse place, but especially in the places where we've built housing new housing in a variety of size options. Planning for new housing will help foster diversity in more parts of the county.

I also support the plan's prioritizing housing near rail and BRT stations to allow more people the chance to live near transit and to make better use of our transit investments. Finally I'll close by saying that increasing the availability of diverse, lower cost housing options benefits everyone looking for housing in our highly constrained housing market.

In conclusion I ask you to support the Attainable Housing Strategies initiative. Thank you.

**From:** [Skaidra Waggoner](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** item March 21 – Public Comment Item – Attainable Housing Strategies Public Listening Session  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 20, 2024 6:50:41 AM

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL]** Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Hello,

**I am strongly AGAINST upzoning.** This upzoning push does not take into account the many available units, green space, light, schools, and livability.

Kindly,  
Skaidra

**From:** [Amanda Farber](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#); [Sartori, Jason](#)  
**Subject:** Attainable Housing Public Hearing Testimony - Submission EBCA  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 20, 2024 2:29:08 AM  
**Attachments:** [EBCA - Attainable Housing Testimony - March 2024 .pdf](#)

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL]** Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Good morning -

Please see the attached comments from the East Bethesda Citizen's Association for the Attainable Housing Public Hearing on March 21, 2024.

Thank you,

Amanda Farber

March 20, 2024

To: Jason Sartori, Montgomery Planning Director; Artie Harris, Montgomery Planning Board Chair; and Members of the Montgomery Planning Board

From: Amanda Farber, President, East Bethesda Citizens Association

**RE: Attainable Housing Strategies – Public Hearing – March 21, 2024**

Dear Chair Harris and Montgomery Planning Board Members:

I am writing on behalf of the East Bethesda Citizens Association (EBCA) regarding the recommendations proposed by the Planning Staff with regards to the Attainable Housing Strategies Initiative and recommendations.

The entirety of the East Bethesda neighborhood is within one-mile of Metro and would be designated as a “Priority Housing District” impacted by the recommendations as proposed - including allowing duplexes, triplexes, and quadruplexes with reduced on-site parking requirements on R-60 lots.

In 2021, nearly 3 years ago, EBCA took part in the initial discussion regarding the Attainable Housing proposals. We submitted written comments at that time as well. During that time Montgomery Planning and the County Council were also deeply enmeshed in the development of the Thrive 2050 Plan, and the overlap of Thrive 2050 and the Attainable Housing Initiative led to considerable public confusion.

Due to the fact that we have a set EBCA general membership meeting schedule, we have not yet been able to have a discussion and gather additional feedback regarding the re-introduction of the Attainable Housing initiative even though it will potentially have significant impacts on our neighborhood. Montgomery Planning planners are scheduled to attend our next meeting on April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024 to first present this re-introduced initiative to neighbors. This timing makes it difficult for us as an organization to participate in the public hearing. However, many of the comments we submitted in 2021 continue to be applicable and require your consideration:

- **Public Outreach** – We look forward to having planners present to the neighborhood in April. Additional public outreach by the Planning Department is clearly needed regarding the proposed Attainable Housing recommendations.
- **Definition of Attainable** - The Planning Department has shifted between using the terms affordable housing, missing middle housing, and now attainable housing, which

has led to some confusion about what is being proposed. It appears the current Montgomery Planning definition of “attainable housing” means units in buildings that are not single-family homes and not high-rises, regardless of whether they may or may not be less expensive than other new or existing units. Montgomery Planning should make it clear to the public that there is no regulatory or market guarantee that units built under this proposal will be more “affordable.”

- **One Size Fits All Approach** - The current Attainable Housing recommendations appear intended to create a one size fits all ZTA approach, which does not account for differences within areas of the county. For example, thousands of units are already under construction or approved for development within .5-mile of East Bethesda, and yet other goals and promised new infrastructure projects in the area have lagged behind development. A one-size fits all ZTA approach does not fully acknowledge the language in master plans, such as the recent 2017 Bethesda Downtown Plan.

<https://montgomeryplanningboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/BDP-Annual-Monitoring-Report-2023.pdf>

- **Distance from Transit** - The use of a one-mile radius from Metro for proposed zoning changes appears to be an arbitrary distance. In fact, the Metropolitan Council of Governments has determined a .5-mile walkshed from major transit facilities to be an accepted distance for walkable density and development and has acknowledged that local walksheds vary considerably within that .5-mile radius. In addition, WMATA utilizes a .5-mile distance when determining transit accessibility.

<https://www.mwcog.org/newsroom/2019/07/16/walksheds-show-planners-how-easily-people-can-walk-to-transit/>

- **Parking** - A one size fits all reduction in required on-site parking in infill areas does not address differences in neighborhoods, streets, or projects. Some blocks in East Bethesda have space for additional on-street parking; other blocks do not. While residents in walkable transit-oriented areas may not use their cars for all trips, they often still must park them somewhere.


- **Development Standards** - Any additional by-right infill density approved within existing neighborhoods should align with current development standards regarding heights, setbacks, and lot coverage. There must be additional discussion regarding compatibility as it relates to the potential to develop on assembled lots in R-60 areas (and other R-zoned areas).

- **Additional Considerations** -

- Any additional units on lots may require additional utilities, HVAC units, trash and recycling space, etc. which should be accounted for in pattern books and development plans.

- It is also worth noting that portions of East Bethesda are located within or are immediately adjacent to the 2017 Bethesda Downtown Plan area, which is about to undergo a Minor Master Plan Amendment this year to potentially allow even greater density and development in that immediate area.

Thank you for your careful consideration of these comments and we look forward to being part of the continued discussion.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amanda Farber". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Amanda Farber, President, EBCA



**From:** [Daniel Marcin](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Attainable Housing: Support with reservations  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 19, 2024 9:29:49 PM

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL]** Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Address:  
1910 Westchester Drive  
Silver Spring, MD 20902

On Tue, Mar 19, 2024 at 9:28 PM Daniel Marcin <[dsmarcin@gmail.com](mailto:dsmarcin@gmail.com)> wrote:

Hello, I'm Daniel Marcin, millennial homeowner and parent in beautiful Wheaton, MD. I support attainable housing in general but have reservations about the plan as described on the website. Here are my suggestions:

- **Allow more.** The plan is timid and puts caveats and exceptions on what's allowed. Just allow things. It'll be fine.
- **Simplify.** I'm fairly plugged in, but I read the FAQ and the presentation a few times trying to understand why one said it would happen in BRT corridors only and the other didn't. Eventually I realized that the BRT section was specifically talking about apartment buildings. Stop putting things into 48 different building classes with 5 overlapping geographic zones intersected with 4 zoning categories. I'm exaggerating, but come on, do you want this to be accessible to small-scale developers, or do you want to implicitly require a team of 20 lawyers to understand what's allowed?
- **Stop micromanaging.** No offense to anybody who worked on the pattern book, but throw that in the garbage. If you want to regulate curb cuts or excessive paving, fine, but stop prescribing what's "attractive" or creates "social interaction."

Recommendations for future work:

- **Speed up.** You were asked to do this in 2021. Three years for this? Is it a housing crisis or not?
- **Rethink zoning in general.** What is the public interest in even having zoning? What are you protecting me from? Maybe I don't want to be protected from it.
- **Rethink planning in general.** I get that you're not going to be a sympathetic audience for this point, but maybe trust the market a bit more and try to plan less. Maybe wing it a little bit. Maybe just loosen zoning everywhere for a little while and see what happens. While you're studying what might happen for 3 years, things are out there happening, and most of what's happening is that things are getting way more expensive because you're still planning.

Kindest regards,  
Daniel Marcin

--

Daniel Marcin  
Economist  
[dsmarcin@gmail.com](mailto:dsmarcin@gmail.com)

| [Homepage](#)

--

Daniel Marcin

Economist

[dsmarcin@gmail.com](mailto:dsmarcin@gmail.com)

[Homepage](#)

**From:** [Jacob Goldberg](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Thank you for your message  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 19, 2024 7:55:15 PM

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL]** Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

(Including my address below)

Good morning,

I hope to present testimony at Thursday's planning board meeting and submit the following remarks for review should I not make it onto the schedule.

Thank you for inviting residents to speak on such an important matter. My name is Jacob Goldberg, and I have rented in Bethesda and North Bethesda for 6 years. My fiancée and I live in an apartment in downtown Bethesda and love the area, but we know that if we want to own a house, we'll have to move out of our current neighborhood. I work in data science and risk management for a housing lender and volunteer as a Crew Leader for Habitat for Humanity Metro Maryland. Despite this expertise, I deliver this testimony as a renter in the county who wants to own a home in which to build a life and a family in this county.

I'd like to share a few numbers. The median household income in Bethesda (zip code 20814) is [\\$185k](#). If you spend more than 30% of your income on housing, it's considered a cost burden. Following that logic, the median family in Bethesda can spend no more than \$4,650 a month on housing costs if they are to meet the rest of their needs without financial strain. According to Zillow, the median house price in Bethesda (20814) is [\\$1.15 million](#). With a 7% interest rate mortgage, the median home will cost families about \$9,500 monthly, which is more than double the amount the median family can reasonably afford. If the median family already living in Bethesda would be severely cost burdened in the current environment, what hope is there for us? As a young couple early in our careers with no current home to provide equity, it is simply not possible for us to own a home where we currently live.

Last year, local author Richard Kahlenberg published *Excluded: How Snob Zoning, NIMBYism, and Class Bias Build the Walls We Don't See*, which highlights Montgomery County's very successful housing policy, which requires a specific number of units in new, large-scale projects to be reserved for families with low and moderate incomes. We should continue to build on this success with the current proposal to ease zoning restrictions. Allowing more dense housing near metro stations improves affordability and reduces the environmental impacts of urban sprawl. Denser housing can be achieved through zoning

easement, permitting simplification, lot subdivision, and Accessory Dwelling Unit construction (an approach [California has taken](#) to address their ongoing housing crisis). In January, Habitat for Humanity of Metro Maryland completed a project in Takoma Park that converted a single family home into a duplex, providing homes to two families with low incomes. There are plenty of houses in Bethesda within walking distance to the Metro that could easily support similar projects. While that project was a success, the permitting process delayed the timeline of renovations, which took over two years to complete. It is worth considering which steps are necessary to ensure safety of dwellings, and which are red tape that make renovations prohibitively expensive or time-intensive.

My fiancée and I cannot afford to buy a home where we live, and we're two young professionals with Master's degrees and above-average household income. If we can't afford to buy a home here, this county is pricing out the majority of potential homeowners. Removing zoning restrictions is an important step to making housing more attainable.

Thank you for your time,

Jacob Goldberg  
7131 Arlington Rd, Apt. 343  
Bethesda, MD, 20814

On Tue, Mar 19, 2024 at 6:59 PM MCP-Chair <[mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org](mailto:mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org)> wrote:

Thank you for this message. If you have submitted written testimony for a Planning Board item, please be sure to include your mailing address to satisfy proper noticing requirements. You may provide this to [MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org](mailto:MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org)

For all other e-mails, Chair's Office staff will respond as soon as possible. If you need immediate assistance, please call our office at (301) 495-4605.

**From:** [Andy Leon Harney](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Attainable Housing Testimony  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 20, 2024 4:53:08 PM  
**Attachments:** [Attainable Housing Testimony Sec.3 Ch Ch.pdf](#)

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[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Attached please find a copy of my testimony for tomorrow. I note that groups are given 6 minutes, and I assume a municipality qualifies as a group. However, these remarks should only run about 3 minutes as that was the original instruction. Thank you for holding this important listening session.

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Andy Leon Harney  
Village Manager  
(301) 656-9117

# SECTION 3 OF THE VILLAGE OF CHEVY CHASE

P.O. Box 15070

Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815

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Members of the Planning Board. My name is Andy Leon Harney and I am speaking on behalf of Section 3 of the Village of Chevy Chase where I serve as Village Manager. Section 3 supports efforts to bring additional attainable and affordable housing to Montgomery County.

It is important that attainable housing be successfully integrated into existing neighborhoods. For Section 3, successfully integrating new types of housing stock will require respecting the common-sense setbacks, height and massing requirements we already mandate. The same rules that apply to current residents should continue to apply, including to anyone building more dense housing options.

Section 3 is already one of the densest municipalities in Maryland. Most of our streets are only 16' wide. We have about 60 households who share a driveway. And we have minimal or no storm drains.

As you contemplate changes, we have a number of questions and concerns:

1. Has the collaborative master plan process been abandoned in favor of Zoning Text Amendments? It appears that way. The text amendment approach is quicker, certainly, but fails to give residents a true voice. The master plan process involves greater public engagement and will lead to better, more workable outcomes.
2. The proposal to place 3-4 story apartment buildings on Connecticut Ave. would be incompatible the existing height and massing of the homes that line the street. Any multi-family structure should be the same height and massing as the existing homes. One sensible and environmentally-responsible approach would be to create incentives to renovate large older homes into multi-family residences—essentially an adaptive re-use of existing structures.

There is an assumption that people who will move into smaller attainable housing units will have few or no cars. To be blunt, I think that is wishful thinking. Connecticut Ave. has no on-street parking except on Sundays, and our community is more than a mile from any Metro station. The planning process should include realistic parking provisions.

3. The proposed pattern books presenting model housing solutions seem to offer the promise of compatibility for many down-county communities. But what is the process of public acceptance of these pattern books? Such pattern books should be subjected to public scrutiny and debate, particularly if you want public buy-in and appreciation for this extra effort.

4. Finally, stormwater management must be considered. For example, Connecticut Ave. has no storm drains. Increased density will create more impervious surfaces and runoff. We cope with a high water table combined with already high density. Virtually every home in Section 3 has a sump pump. Stormwater management must be a factor in approval of any project or zoning change.

If programs promulgated to incentivize developers to build attainable housing are well executed and communities buy in because the changes are compatible with existing neighborhoods, we all win.

We respectfully ask that you consider these issues as you move forward.