



March 11, 2025  
Montgomery County Council  
100 Maryland Ave  
Rockville, MD 20850

**More Housing N.O.W. Package**

*ZTA 25-02, Workforce Housing - Development Standards*

*ZTA 25-03, Expedited Approvals - Commercial to Residential Reconstruction*

*SRA 25-01, Administrative Subdivision - Expedited Approval Plan*

*Expedited Bill 2-25, Taxation - Payments in Lieu of Taxes - Affordable Housing Amendments*

Thank you for the opportunity to share testimony on the More Housing N.O.W. package on behalf of the Coalition for Smarter Growth. CSG advocates for building walkable, bikeable, transit-oriented communities with housing all people can afford is the most sustainable and inclusive way for the D.C. metro region to grow.

I am here today to offer our support for the More Housing NOW package and to say thank you to the sponsors for stepping up and showing Montgomery County is ready to do what is needed to address our housing crisis.

It is a plain and simple fact that our county needs more housing. People want housing that they can afford, and they do not want to have to spend their lives sitting in traffic just to get to work.

Nothing demonstrates the strong support for these simple ideas more than the broad, diverse coalition that showed up in support of the announcement of the More Housing N.O.W. package.

I was immensely proud to stand alongside teachers, firefighters, CASA, leaders from the business community, faith leaders from Action in Montgomery, affordable housing providers, and more—all of whom have felt the toll our housing affordability crisis is taking on our communities, and all of whom are ready for the Council to take action.

Montgomery County has a strong record of supporting subsidized affordable housing, including making historic commitments to funding for affordable housing these past few years. This is critical work that makes our county a better and more inclusive place.

We have not been innovators in the same way in making sure our county has homes that are affordable to our middle class—or to young people, or to people looking to downsize and stay in the county—and I can go on. We all know people who struggle to afford housing, and I am one of them.

I am 25 years old. I moved here after college for work, and I love it here. I work in this county, I have built a community here, and I want to stay. But as I made the transition from living in a group house with three roommates to looking for a place of my own, it was nearly impossible to find an apartment I could afford.

I made the choice to stay in this county and try to save in other areas of my life so that I can afford rent, but that is not the choice that everyone makes when facing the undeniable structural issue of the lack of affordable homes we have to offer near transit and jobs.

People end up looking for homes farther out from jobs with longer commutes, generating more traffic and the accompanying personal frustrations and environmental pollution. Or they may simply turn away from our county and choose to live and work elsewhere, where they can find housing they can actually afford.

Losing people to other places hurts our ability to retain a strong workforce—and it diminishes our tax base, and our ability to fund critical social services and programs, *including* affordable housing and rental assistance.

What kind of a place are we if we look around us and see people who desperately want to live and work here and be part of our communities—but *can't* because we are refusing to build the kind of housing they need? What does that say about us?

Here is why this legislation matters: because every sponsor, and every vote, for this package is a declaration that this county is not okay with being the kind of place that turns people away because they can't afford it.

Instead, we are ready to do new things. We are ready to build housing in a way that works for our economy, that supports diversity, and that preserves and protects the health of our environment. We are ready to acknowledge that there are housing needs that our existing policies do not meet. We are ready to do the right thing.

Are there ways I think this legislation could be even stronger? You will not be surprised to hear that the answer is yes. Namely, including more areas around transit, and continuing to work with partners in affordable housing development to make sure we're reducing as many barriers as possible to building homes that more people can afford.

These refinements are important—but I also don't want to lose sight of what we're doing here. I think this legislation is a watershed moment for our County that we will look back on with pride as the moment we finally decided that it is time for a new approach to provide people the housing that they need. And I am extremely excited and grateful for that.



I want to thank all the sponsors and all who will vote for this legislation—and hopefully make it even stronger—for doing what needs to be done to realize a more sustainable and inclusive county.

You have more support than you know. And I ask you to support this package, and keep going.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Carrie Kisicki'.

Carrie Kisicki  
Montgomery County Advocacy Manager