

February 8, 2021

Roberta Faul-Zeitler, Silver Spring MD

TO: Letter to the Montgomery County Council

RE: Agenda Item ZTA 20-7 by Councilmember Will Jawando – February 11 Council Meeting

I am writing to oppose ZTA 20-7 as proposed by Councilmember Will Jawando as a stand-alone planning provision for Montgomery County R60-zoned residential property. This sort of ad-hoc thinking and action is not an appropriate mechanism to identify how the county addresses long-term housing needs, inclusivity and equity for all residents; or how to deal with future community growth simply by pinpointing “missing middle” housing opportunities on R-60-zoned property closer (1/2 to one mile) to Metro or other transit hubs.

Masterplans for individual communities/areas in Montgomery County are the guardrails for appropriate future development and community preservation that are protection against inappropriate development for those who own and invest in their homes and condo apartments and also address long-term growth needs of the county for all residents.

This is no planning process. It is fixed and arbitrary. The masterplan process welcomes community participation, allows for give and take, invites substantive feedback, and provides for draft-plan modification. ZTA 20-7 appears to be an opportunity to advance an agenda without the benefit of countywide community input. **It is overreach.**

I want to point out ongoing housing and concomitant economic development opportunities available to the Planning Department, County Council and Executive Office in two close-in areas of the county to take action on the largely unmet potential for redevelopment and long-term future growth :

- The current downtown (CBD) of Silver Spring at 300+ acres (minus the recent “boundary expansion”) with 9 underutilized parking garages and largely unimproved Fenton Street Village streets; and
- The 3,000-acre White Oak masterplan area (formerly known as the Science Center) with some 300 acres under ownership by Percontee in a joint agreement with the county.

Downtown Silver Spring (Fenton Village) is close-in walking distance to Metro, Flash, and the hoped-for Purple Line stations. White Oak is a huge blank canvas ready to plan for multiple diverse communities and appropriate transportation options to provide access to several transit hubs including Langley Park, Ft Totten and downtown Silver Spring.

Mr. Jawando’s ZTA amendment is a solution in search of a “problem” in well-established Montgomery County neighborhoods.

The real answer is to take advantage of **hundreds of acres** of available land and real-estate in downtown Silver Spring (the CBD) and White Oak with intelligent, far-reaching, thoughtful economic development and housing masterplans.

Thank you, Roberta Faul-Zeitler