

Testimony in support of Zone Texting Amendment (ZTA) 20-07: Missing Middle Housing

Thank you to Council President Hucker and councilmembers for the opportunity to submit testimony on this important issue. My name is Anne Catherine Sen and I am a homeowner in the Forest Estates neighborhood in Silver Spring, which is within a one-mile radius of the Forest Glen metro stop. I support having more “missing middle housing” such as duplexes, townhomes and small apartment buildings in Montgomery County. I think it is especially important to build multiunit dwellings in my neighborhood and other neighborhoods close to metro stops, and therefore I am writing in support of Zone Texting Amendment 20-07.

There are several reasons why I support this amendment. First, I feel that Montgomery County needs to have much more affordable housing than it currently does. Housing is very expensive throughout the DMV, and it is difficult for low-income people to find affordable places to live. It is also difficult for people looking to buy their first home. Multiunit buildings provide less expensive options to buy and to rent. They can also provide an opportunity for someone to purchase a duplex or triplex and to live in one part of it and rent the other units out. That is how my husband was able to purchase his first home in Boston. If he had not purchased that home and been able to sell it, I don't think we would have ever been able to purchase a home in Montgomery County.

Having more options for affordable housing also increases diversity, which is very important to me. My family is racially mixed and we really value living in a diverse area. Exclusivity makes life quite bland, and diversity makes life much more interesting! There is also the issue of equity. There has been a terrible history of redlining and other means of keeping low-income people and people of color out of certain neighborhoods. I believe that equity is vitally important and think that we should do everything we can to correct the injustices of the past.

I also feel that building multiunit dwellings close to metro stations and other forms of public transportation is a great way to support low-income people and to combat climate change. We need to be doing everything possible to reduce our county's use of fossil fuels, and this legislation provides a smart way to do that. It also makes it possible for people to get to work, school, errands, etc. without a car, which is vitally important to low-income people who cannot afford one. I lived for years in Boston without a car because I couldn't afford one and I didn't need one due to my ability to rent near subway stops.

Thank you for considering my testimony in favor of Zone Texting Amendment (ZTA) 20-07: Missing Middle Housing.

Thank you,
Anne Catherine Sen
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