

**Testimony in Support of Zone Texting Amendment (ZTA) 20-07
2/8/2021**

Dear Montgomery County Councilmembers,
I urge you to support Zone Texting Amendment (ZTA) 20-07 to allow development of multifamily housing within a mile of Metro stations.

As Climate Policy Director at the Institute for Policy Studies, I focus on solutions to climate change that advance racial and economic equity. ZTA 20-07 is a significant step in the right direction on all three counts.

Transportation is the single largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in [Maryland](#) and [nationwide](#). The trend of growth in [Vehicle Miles Traveled \(VMT\)](#) can offset gains in fuel efficiency and penetration of zero-emissions vehicles, and successfully reducing transportation emissions requires addressing and eventually reversing VMT growth.

Building more [housing](#) (especially housing that is [affordable](#) for low to moderate income households) close to [public transportation](#) is a proven strategy to increase [transit usage](#) and [control VMT growth](#).

Increasing access to transit for low to moderate income households (who are disproportionately people of color) is also a racial and economic equity issue.

One, it increases ease of access to households with lower vehicle ownership rates. According to [Census data](#) on nationwide vehicle ownership, only 12.5% of white households nationwide do not own any vehicles, compared to 22.4% of Latinx households and almost 33% of Black households. Also, while less than 8% of households in the highest income quintile don't own vehicles, this number rises to almost 38% for the lowest income quintile.

Two, for households who do own vehicles, increasing transit access reduces their expenditures on transportation fuels, which is particularly beneficial for lower income households. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics [Consumer Expenditures Survey data](#), households in the lowest income decile spend 15.7% of their household income on transportation fuels, compared to 1.1% for the highest income decile.

For all of these reasons, I strongly urge you to support Zone Texting Amendment (ZTA) 20-07 as a commonsense measure to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and advance racial and economic equity.

Sincerely,
Basav Sen
Climate Policy Director
Institute for Policy Studies