

April 8, 2024

Montgomery County Council  
100 Maryland Ave  
Rockville, MD 20850

### **Testimony - FY25 Operating Budget**

Good afternoon. My name is Carrie Kisicki and I am testifying on behalf of the Coalition for Smarter Growth, the leading organization advocating for walkable, inclusive, transit-oriented communities as the most sustainable and equitable way for the D.C. region to grow and provide opportunities for all.

#### **Affordable housing production and preservation**

We are glad to see record levels of funding for affordable housing production and preservation in this year's capital and operating budgets, and thank the Council and County Executive for consistently increasing funding for affordable housing year over year.

Affordable housing providers are ready to help meet our county's housing needs—but the number of additional homes they are able to provide is strongly determined by the level of funding available. CSG is a proud member of the Montgomery Housing Alliance, whose member organizations alone have affordable housing projects in the pipeline in need of over \$170 million.

When projects are delayed, their costs only rise. If we hope to meet our housing targets—especially for affordable housing, which is both essential to making our county a welcoming and inclusive place, and more costly to produce than market-rate housing— we must significantly increase the scope of funding for affordable housing in this budget and in the years to come.

#### **Funding for crucial Planning efforts**

Meeting our housing targets will also require significant work by M-NCPPC (Planning) staff to update master plans, perform timely reviews of proposed developments, and identify targeted recommendations to produce more housing.

Many of these efforts are time-sensitive and urgently require funding—or we risk missing relatively brief windows of opportunity to realign our housing, transportation, and land use decisions with our climate and equity priorities in key areas of our county. Most notably, the Purple Line Corridor Coalition has recognized that we must not only invest in affordable housing production and preservation, but also reassess housing and land use around planned Purple Line stations *before* the line opens to prevent resident displacement and capture opportunities to build affordable and attainable housing (see PLCC's [Housing Action Plan](#)).

During recent master plans, Planning has done great work to prioritize equitable engagement to marginalized residents, but this also means that Planning efforts now take more resources than they did before. Providing enough funding for Planning to program time-sensitive master plan updates like those around the Purple Line while continuing equitable, in-depth engagement efforts—and then to be able to review proposed housing developments in a timely and cost-effective way—must be a priority. We ask the Council to restore Planning’s full budget request to support this essential work.

**Fast, frequent, and reliable transit service**

Lastly, we appreciate the Council and County Executive’s commitment to funding our county’s public transit network; supporting fast, frequent, and reliable service; and fairly compensating the transit operators who keep our system running at a time when many systems are struggling with hiring and retention. Thank you for your continued commitment to this vital public service.

Thank you,



Carrie Kisicki  
Montgomery County Advocacy Manager