



April 9, 2026

**Montgomery County Council  
Council Office Building  
100 Maryland Avenue, 6th Floor  
Rockville, MD 20850**

## **RE: FY 2027 Budget for Housing Programs**

Dear Montgomery County Councilmembers,

Good afternoon, my name is Mitch Crispell, Director of Real Estate Development at True Ground Housing Partners, a leading nonprofit affordable housing developer in the DC region. We currently operate just over 250 affordable homes in Montgomery County with the potential to build nearly 1,000 more on our Woodside Place property near the Silver Spring transit center. That's why I'm here today to urge you to support affordable housing investments above and beyond the levels proposed in the County Executive's draft FY 27 budget. First, we thank you for the investments already included in the draft budget. The substantial sums allocated for housing acquisition and preservation will lead to many more affordable units for existing residents.

But we need more than that. The county continues to face a dramatic shortage of new homes for those who want to move to the county but cannot afford to. The county's latest Housing Needs Assessment in 2020 identified a need for more than 47,000 additional homes affordable to those making 50% AMI or below.<sup>1</sup> Since then, the county has built on average only a few hundred new affordable homes annually. At this rate, we estimate that it will take more than 70 years to meet the county's own identified housing shortage. In the meantime, this shortage means that many Montgomery County workers, such as health care assistants, retail workers, and childcare providers, have to commute back and forth from several counties over to find a place to live. Making more room for these people is critical not just for the value of inclusiveness but also for the functioning of the local economy.

To speed up production and meet the need for affordable homes, we urge you to invest more in the county's Housing Investment Fund and Affordable Housing Opportunity Funds. The Montgomery Housing Alliance, an association of nonprofit developers in the county, has already identified projects containing more than 3,500 homes that are just waiting on funding to become reality. To meet the immediate needs of these projects, we ask that, at a minimum, the county increase affordable housing funding by \$20M to equal the funding levels of previous years.

We understand that you have a difficult job in deciding how to allocate the county's limited financial resources. Adequate housing is foundational to many of the county's social and economic goals,

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/housing/housing-needs-assessment/>, pg. 33



such as access to education, healthcare, community resources, and jobs. For that reason, we humbly ask that you prioritize affordable housing in this budget.

Before I close, I would like to highlight several non-budgetary measures you can take to help solve the county's housing shortage and affordability issues. This is principally through supporting zoning and permitting changes to allow for more diverse housing types by right across the county. We encourage you to follow through on the Thrive 2050 vision by adopting the Attainable Housing Strategies identified by Montgomery Planning. These recommendations would allow more naturally attainable housing types across the county to be built with private capital without the need for additional public subsidies. We also encourage you to support zoning for more housing in the Eastern Silver Spring Communities Plan, Friendship Heights Sector Plan, and other Master Planning efforts from Montgomery Planning. By zoning for more housing in these plans, the county can help streamline housing approvals, which can save money and make a more efficient use of scarce public resources.

Thank you for your time and continued attention to housing current and future residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carmen Romero". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Carmen Romero  
President & CEO