



Irene Lane, *Mayor*  
Barney Rush, *Vice Mayor*  
Rich Brancato, *Treasurer*  
Stephanie Martz, *Secretary*  
Joy White, *Community Liaison*

July 12, 2024

Planning, Housing, and Parks (PHP) Committee  
Montgomery County Council Office Building  
100 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, MD 20850

Re: Attainable Housing Strategies

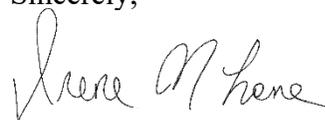
Dear Council President Friedson, Councilmember Fani-Gonzalez, and Councilmember Jawando,

We thank the PHP Committee for taking the time to thoroughly study the detailed rezoning recommendations provided by the Planning Board in its Attainable Housing Strategies Report. As deliberations proceed, we request that the following clarification questions be answered before drafting a Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA).

- Will residential zones such as R-60, R-90, and R-200 still be legally classified as single-family residential under the Governor's new housing law? This clarification is crucial because, under the new state law, multi-family residential zones may permit mixed-use developments.
- Under the Governor's new housing law, density bonuses are awarded for certain qualified projects. How will these density bonuses be accommodated for small-scale housing when a pattern book must be followed to receive County and, where applicable, municipal building permits?
- Is there a plan to introduce a new residential or CRN/CRT zone specifically for Growth Corridors? Clarity is needed as many single-family lots within 500 feet of a Growth Corridor could potentially see much more density and commercial activity than initially envisioned.
- Seattle, Eugene, Charlotte, and Minneapolis were mentioned during the June 24 presentation regarding rezoning initiatives around the United States. Post-rezoning in Seattle and other areas, what is the data showing about the impact on housing prices and affordability? Have individual owners or hedge funds been the primary buyers of these properties?
- Can you clarify whether the minimum lot sizes for subdivisions, which would allow each housing unit its own land, will be established outside the current R-60 lot size ranges?

- Can you clarify whether only one Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) will be allowed per lot? (e.g., could a developer effectively construct a quadplex from an approved duplex construction or an eight-unit multiplex from an approved quadplex construction?)
- How much increased density can the County's current electric, gas, water and sewer infrastructure, particularly in older neighborhoods, accommodate?
- Under AHOM, medium-scale housing could mean an apartment building of up to 19 units near Growth Corridors, potentially approved administratively by the Planning Department Director unless a valid community concern is raised. What criteria does the County Council consider a "valid community concern"?
- Under AHOM, will medium-scale housing still consist of one main residential structure per building site? If not, how many separate structures will be allowed?
- Despite the Planning Department and County Council's best efforts to incentivize development throughout the County, developers seem to favor the Bethesda area. Should Bethesda's local housing target be treated as a cap until transportation and school impacts (Bethesda being a red zone area with overcrowded schools like Bethesda Elementary) are better understood?
- The passage of a Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) is expected to increase both land values and property taxes. Will the County make any efforts to mitigate this impact on senior citizens with fixed incomes?
- When will the County release its Racial Equity & Social Justice (RESJ) study to analyze the probable impacts of these changes? When will the PHP Committee seek commentary from small developers and residential realtors regarding their views as to what economic impacts might occur with these rezoning changes?
- Given that the AHSI recommendations may impact both housing stock and tax revenue, will there be any consideration of assessing an impact tax on teardowns that are replaced with larger single-family homes?
- The Planning Board's AHSI document states, "Affordable housing goals could be reached by a number of mechanisms beyond mandatory inclusionary zoning requirements, including bonus density, additional height, public benefit points, impact tax waivers, or financial subsidies." What analysis supports that increased density achieved through additional housing types within current zones is the best approach for Montgomery County to reach its housing goals?

Sincerely,



Irene N. Lane  
Mayor