



To,
The Montgomery County Planning Board
2425 Reedie Drive, 14th Floor
Wheaton, MD 20902

February 3, 2020

Reg: Zoning Text Amendment 20-07

Dear Chairman Anderson and members of the Montgomery County Planning Board,

Sierra Club Montgomery County group ***enthusiastically support efforts to provide more Missing Middle housing*** in the county! Thanks to Councilmember Jawando for introducing ZTA 20-07 intended to move Montgomery County forward in creating more Missing Middle housing!

Sierra Club's top priorities are to ***address climate change*** and to ***address racial justice and equity***. We understand that these two goals are intertwined.

As Sierra Club sees it, a critical route to achieving these two goals is an aggressive and thoughtful approach to producing more housing in the county.

In short, Montgomery County needs to produce ***more housing***, with an emphasis on ***affordable housing*** and an emphasis on housing that's ***walking distance to transit***. And we especially need to focus on ***affordable housing that's located near transit***.

Enabling the creation of Missing Middle housing, especially within walking distance of transit stations, is a critical and significant piece of the puzzle. ZTA 20-07 will permit Missing Middle housing in many county neighborhoods where it is now prohibited.

We want to emphasize that Missing Middle housing is ***not a new idea***. A few months ago, Sierra Club held a Zoom public forum where we presented examples of dozens of Missing Middle units currently located harmoniously in the county in predominantly single-family neighborhoods. Pl see pictures below:





We also want folks to be clear that, under current law, redevelopment of a single-family lot is permitted. The problem is – today the **only choice** is to replace the existing small house with **one unit** (that is most likely an excessively large house on small lot). This approach does **not** increase the housing supply and does **not** address the need for more affordable housing.

We are not here today to endorse the **specific details** of ZTA 20-07 but to **enthusiastically endorse the Missing Middle framework** that this bill is built upon.

Let me address the concerns of those who fear sudden and dramatic changes in their neighborhoods. Several US jurisdictions have opened up the option for more Missing Middle housing in recent years. In places like Minneapolis and Portland (OR), the creation of new duplexes and other Missing Middle housing has been **slow and gradual**.

We thank Councilmember Jawando for stepping up to help **lead the way toward a better stronger** Montgomery County – a county with more housing and more affordable housing options, especially in walkable transit-served neighborhoods.

More Missing Middle housing will be **good for the planet** – and good for the county's **quality of life!**

Thank you for the opportunity to present Sierra Club's strong support for Missing Middle housing.

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Founded in 1892, the Sierra Club is America's oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization. The Montgomery County Sierra Club represents nearly 6000 members and supporters, and the Sierra Club Maryland has approximately 70,000 members.