



December 8, 2020

## **Sierra Club Montgomery County Press Statement on Missing Middle housing ZTA introduced by Montgomery County Council Member William Jawando**

On behalf of Sierra Club, Thank you, Councilmember Jawando for introducing a bill to move Montgomery County forward on 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 a bold 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 within *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. Councilmember Jawando's bill will permit Missing Middle housing in many county neighborhoods where it is now prohibited.

We want to note 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.

We also want folks to be clear that, under current law, the problem is – that the *only choice* is to replace the existing small house with *one unit* (which, as we all have seen, is usually a \$1-2 million McMansion). This approach does *not* increase the housing supply and does *not* address the need for more affordable housing.

We *enthusiastically endorse the Missing Middle framework* that this bill is built upon and look forward to working with Councilmember Jawando in the months ahead on the details of the bill to ensure its success.

We thank Councilmember Jawando for stepping up to help *lead the way toward a more inclusive and stronger* Montgomery County – a county with BOTH 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*!

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