

MoCo residents expressed differing points of view regarding the proposed workforce housing legislation at the Council hearings on March 11, 2025.

[These notes/excerpts are taken from the [Bethesda Today article](#), published 3/11/2025.]

Supporters who spoke at the hearing in general praised the legislative package's aim to increase the county's housing supply and create realistic homeownership opportunities for more county residents.

"The Montgomery advocacy manager for the Coalition for Smarter Growth, a Washington, D.C. metro region nonprofit focused on housing affordability and transit access said that "It's a plain and simple fact that our county needs more housing...People want housing that they can afford, and they do not want to have to spend their lives sitting in traffic just to get to work."

A board member of the Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce said passage of the legislative package would encourage residents to stay in the county.

A longtime resident with adult children said she...supports the More Housing N.O.W. legislation because her children cannot afford to live in the county unless she and her husband subsidize their rents..."There isn't a single one of our friends whose recently college-graduated children [are] able to afford to live here on their own without some kind of assistance."

One resident said he supports the legislative package. He and his fiancé are currently renting in Gaithersburg and don't anticipate being able to buy a home in the county under the current housing conditions. "As young adults not yet on the property ladder, and amid ever-growing housing costs, our prospects for purchasing a home of any kind here seem depressing... What's bleak is that we have well-paying jobs...yet the unyielding high price of housing in MoCo pushes us to look elsewhere for a place to settle down."

The Planning Board, which initially proposed the Attainable Housing Strategies Initiative, also supports the legislative package.

"In the past 20 years, we've lost over 26,000 middle income residents. These are our teachers, first responders and more who can no longer afford the type of housing they are seeking in our county," Planning Board Chair Artie Harris testified . "We've also seen a continuing decline of housing affordability throughout the whole region. Over the past 20 years, every ZIP code in the county has lost affordability."

But critics said they are concerned that more development would encroach on existing neighborhoods without producing housing that is actually affordable for county residents.

“It remains unclear whether the proposal’s implementation will provide for increased opportunities for affordable workforce home ownership or just provide more affordably priced workforce rental units,” said a Village of North Chevy Chase Councilmember

Detractors also worry it could negatively impact their own neighborhoods.

A resident of Silver Spring’s Kemp Mill neighborhood, said she is concerned the proposed zoning changes would displace her family and impact her lifestyle as an Orthodox Jew.

“Our family depends on being within walking distance of our local Kosher market and our close-knit communities. Rezoning would displace families like mine.”

A resident testifying on behalf of the Montgomery County chapter of the NAACP, expressed concerns that the proposed zoning changes would disproportionately impact marginalized communities. “If redevelopment makes affordable communities attractive to higher wealth households, residents in those communities, especially renters, could be displaced as housing costs rise from an influx of wealthier households moving into redeveloping communities.”

A member of the Somerset Town Council also was skeptical about whether the proposals would help, voicing concern that single-family homes would be torn down to create duplexes. “What this legislation will provide for is vastly more market-rate housing that will be a developer’s dream, but what they will be able to do is buy houses and tear them down and instead of creating triplexes or larger, they will build duplexes and therefore avoid having to build any lower-income units. I doubt the goal of 15% workforce housing will ever be achieved. I envision our corridors filled with market-rate duplexes.”