



October 15, 2025

Testimony on ZRA 218 from The People's Voice and the Howard County Citizens Association

The People's Voice is a civic/political entity with over 5,000 members in Howard County and 500 in Montgomery County. Our Board is sending testimony regarding the zoning regulation changes proposed by the Administration regarding duplexes and ADU's. The Howard County Citizens Association Board also voted to approve this same testimony, so I am delivering this on behalf of both organizations.

It is certainly true that Howard County is in need of more affordable housing, for lower incomes and moderate incomes. Missing middle housing, of smaller structures, throughout the County will be a focus of zoning changes in the next Comprehensive Rezoning. In the meantime, House Bill 1466 has noted some ADU requirements. Counties will be making plans to be in compliance, that will run across a spectrum because HB1466 allows restrictions of ADU's in local jurisdictions for parking issues and for adequate public facilities.

Howard County is clearly on one extreme of the reaction to HB1466. Not only allowing ADU's as a matter of right across many residential zones, but also adding the ability to create duplexes in those zones on current single parcels. There should be duplexes allowed in more places than there are now, but neighborhoods in Howard County are not all one size fits all. Creating areas to allow more duplexes should be a separate issue from that of regulating ADU's. To turn one parcel into three is going to create LESS affordable housing, not more.

Combining these two issues will increase the incentive for investors to purchase properties and keep rents high. That is why it is imperative to have these additional unit creations only allow rentals when they are owner-occupied on the original structure. That will reach the stated goal of allowing homeowners to obtain rental income, and create supply of lower priced rents due to smaller, spread out unit supplies. If we do not require owner occupancy,

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investors will buy up properties and rents will stay high. I am seeing this personally in Philadelphia, where family members are trying to buy a duplex, and cannot, due to investors

grabbing them at inflated prices, so quickly. We don't want that here. We want to do the right thing from the beginning and create the middle income supplies that are needed.

We support ADU's as a conditional use, because if they are by right, then the County loses the ability to control numbers and address varying issues across different neighborhoods, such as differing amounts of room for parking, emergency vehicle ingress and egress, storm water management, apfo issues, etc. If a lot get proposed in one area, conditions can get set. HB1466 absolutely allows conditions to be set, for APFO and parking specifically. Public facility issues include parking, transportation, safety, etc. You will hear plenty of concern about those issues as well, which highlights the need for the County to be able to exert some differentiation and control, which HB1466 absolutely allows.

Please recommend conditional use for ADU's, and duplexes, and owner-occupied primary residence for ADU's and duplexes.

Thank you,

Lisa Markovitz

President, The People's Voice

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