



March 20, 2019

Montgomery County Council  
Stella B. Warner Building  
100 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

***Re: Support ZTA 19-01, Accessory Residential Units – Accessory Apartments, with Amendments***

Dear Council President Navarro and Members of the Council,

I am writing you on behalf of the Greater Capital Area Association of REALTORS® (“GCAAR”) – the voice of Montgomery County and the District of Columbia’s more than 11,000 REALTORS®, property managers, title attorneys, and other real estate professionals. GCAAR respectfully asks you to support ZTA 19-01, Accessory Residential Units – Accessory Apartments, with amendments.

With our population growing and our community becoming more economically diverse, Montgomery County is facing a housing shortage. Compounding this is the increasing senior population looking to age in place. Easing some of the restrictions on ADUs could add to the affordable housing stock in areas that have seen increasing cost barriers to entry. It will also provide an additional revenue source for home owners looking to make their own housing more affordable.

ZTA 19-01 would also update regulations to bring them in line with a market reality – many of the current ADUs in our County are operating outside the law. This legislation would help bring those units out of the shadows, and allow those units to be registered, regulated, and ultimately brought up to code. These units may remain hazardous to their residents and owners without many of these changes.

While GCAAR does support ZTA 19-01, we have a number of concerns. Our members see how this new law could become a backdoor to development in areas already facing burdensome traffic and school overcrowding. Adding to these concerns is the easing of parking requirements on ADUs. The prospect of additional vehicles not parked on the property is worrisome for neighborhoods that currently face on street parking issues.

Enforcement is also a concern. As we have seen from the recent efforts by the Council and County Executive to step up code enforcement, there is a gap between ideal enforcement and the inspection force our constrained resources can provide. It raises the question of how an additional stock of properties and projects needing proper inspection and enforcement will affect (and possibly strain) the Department of Permitting Services and Department of Housing and Community Affairs.

GCAAR believes if the aforementioned concerns are specifically addressed, ZTA 19-01 can strengthen the housing landscape in Montgomery County. We see the PHED Committee is in the process of reviewing options regarding our concerns. We are happy to follow-up on these options.

We thank you for your consideration of our Association’s perspective and look forward to continued discussions.

Sincerely,

Koki Adasi, GCAAR, President