



June 11, 2020

Montgomery County Planning Board
Casey Anderson, Board Chair
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Subject: 2020-2024 Subdivision Staging Policy/County Growth Policy – Housing Moratorium

Montgomery County Planning Board,

My name is John Paukstis and I am the President and CEO of Habitat for Humanity Metro Maryland. We are a nonprofit provider of affordable housing, working to provide equitable access to homeownership in Montgomery County since 1982.

Habitat enthusiastically supports the recommendation of eliminating the automatic housing moratorium. While intended to address the important issue of overcrowding in our schools, the moratorium restricts much needed housing at all affordability levels and has not solved school overcrowding.

As you know, 12% of the County has been under moratorium since July of 2019. Unfortunately, this includes large parts of Wheaton, Silver Spring and North Bethesda, some of the most transit-oriented areas with large concentrations of jobs. By restricting new housing in these desirable, higher density areas, we are hampering our ability to address critical housing shortages in our County and limiting development impact taxes used to support school expansion.

Moreover, the Student Generation Rates by Housing Type Study by Montgomery Planning shows that less than 30% of student generation comes from new housing. Highest generation rates are due to turnover of existing single-family homes from adults with no school-aged children to families with younger children.

Habitat is also concerned that the automatic housing moratorium encourages disproportionate investment in schools under moratorium, typically in wealthier neighborhoods, while overlooking other schools with inadequate and substandard facilities, typically in lower income communities. This is inequitable and unacceptable. We must create a policy that encourages equitable and adequate investment in all schools across our County while also encouraging investment in housing that is affordable.

We thank the Planning Board for their time and leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely,


John Paukstis
President & CEO