

## HB0239 Cherrywood Homeowners Association, Inc. - Unfavorable



The Cherrywood Homeowners Association is a 606-unit homeowners association located in Olney, Maryland. We are a County Master Plan planned community that includes single-family detached (SFD) homes, townhouses, and MPDUs. In our SFD sections we have narrow streets without curb and gutters. With more housing and street parking, our roadways become one-way to impassable for trucks and emergency vehicles. We oppose HB0239 because our SFD sections were designed by civil engineers to only accommodate lower density housing.

Virtually every single family development in the State of Maryland over the last 50 years was designed by civil engineers to maximize the return on investment for the developer while providing desirable homes for future residents with the proper infrastructure and amenities for the zoning present at the time of construction. To go back decades later and allow the density to as much as triple is certain to create serious infrastructure problems especially when you consider that the original infrastructure is likely decades older than when the community was first built. Houses could be crammed into the community like the one in the picture overwhelming the existing design of the community. Under HB0239 these communities will begin to experience infrastructure failures and it will be too late to go back and undo the over-density. Is the State going to pay for these infrastructure failures? It would seem best to leave these zoning issues in the hands of the counties who will be responsible for the infrastructure.

In the Governor's press release, he stated he wanted to "unlock 300 acres of State-owned land" to build new housing. This plan makes sense. The purpose of Planning is to build attractive communities from the ground up with the required infrastructure for the planned density. HB0239 does NOT do this and actually removes the most popular form of housing choice in the State by trying to cram more housing into our SFD communities not designed for higher density. Different families have different needs and desires for housing based on their job and family situation. SFD housing should remain a choice for people who desire more climate friendly

trees, green spaces, and room for their children to play in the yard. The new Starter and Silver communities should be built on vacant parcels of land (e.g. vacant malls/parking lots/undeveloped land) where they can be designed with the proper infrastructure and amenities for higher density and older residents. To attempt to add these new homes to overload our existing communities will only chase more people out of Maryland in search of stable neighborhood zoning.

Lastly, the need for housing is likely overstated especially since the Comptroller's report uses 2023 data that are no longer valid (see addendum at the end). In Montgomery County, the County executive has already certified in 2025 that there is already enough housing in the pipeline until well past 2050. Since that time, layoffs and deportations have even further reduced the demand for housing. Page 3 of a January 2026 County report shows that median home sales prices dropped in 2025 and that "the County's population growth is estimated to be muted for the foreseeable future."

[https://montgomerycountymd.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view\\_id=169&event\\_id=16694&meta\\_id=209763](https://montgomerycountymd.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=169&event_id=16694&meta_id=209763)

In short, HB0239 dramatically rezones and over develops EXISTING communities where people have invested their life savings in a house and community that suits the needs of their family based on the zoning and restrictions at the time of their purchase. This plan does not guarantee that houses will be owner-occupied or provide any affordable housing realizing that teardowns involve additional costs (demolition, rubble removal, sewer/water reconfiguration) that drive up the cost of these smaller replacement homes making them EACH more expensive than the home they replace. It is far more cost-efficient to design those smaller homes on new parcels of land such as the ones the Governor suggested in his press release. **We join nearly 500 others that have already written to you in asking that you give an unfavorable report on HB 0239.** Let the Counties take care of zoning and advise the Governor to start building his Starter and Silver communities on vacant State land as he suggested in his original press release.

We are happy to participate in further discussions.

Paul F. Jarosinski  
President, Cherrywood Homeowners Association, Inc.

Addendum:

On page 10 of the Comptroller's report at the bottom of the page you will see that this outdated report was based on 2023 figures.

(<https://www.marylandcomptroller.gov/content/dam/mdcomp/md/reports/research/housing-economy-print.pdf>). At that time 3-5 million people were crossing the border every year (2021-2024) creating an enormous housing demand. In 2025, however, those 3-5 million people crossing the border had been completely stopped and, according to DHS figures, an additional 2.69 million people left the County. That is a difference of 5-8 million people JUST from 2023. That 2023 crisis no longer exists and if DHS continues at the current pace, the housing demand will disappear on its own by the end of 2027. Housing numbers are already changing with houses sitting on the market longer and prices decreasing or at least moderating. We also had an NYU Professor of Economics with an MA in statistics review the Comptroller report and disclose several critical flaws in that report. This report should not be the basis for eliminating SFD neighborhoods in Maryland. The main reason residents are fleeing Maryland, especially seniors, are the rising taxes and fees.