

CITIZENS COORDINATING COMMITTEE ON FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS

LEANNE TOBIAS, CHAIR

WRITTEN TESTIMONY: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

BRING BACK MAIN STREET ACT, HB 1137

MARCH 5, 2026

The Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights, CCCFH, is a non-profit organization representing 20,000 Montgomery County residents on land use and housing.

Like you, CCCFH is committed to genuine housing affordability statewide and the creation of robust districts that support combined commercial and residential uses. We support the development of multi-family and residential mixed-use projects in downtown areas and support the intent of the Bring Back Main Street Act, HB 1137. That said, we urge amendments to the legislation that will enable local governments to fine-tune multi-family and residential mixed-use projects to local conditions, including infrastructure and environmental needs. Counties should also be able to regulate to expand affordable housing supply in mixed-income projects and to adjust projects to users' parking needs.

Accordingly, we recommend amendment of the Bring Back Main Street Act to allow local discretion with respect to:

- Permitted residential density. Residential density should be tailored to the capacity of available infrastructure, including transportation, water and sewer and school capacity. In addition, residential density should be regulated to address environmental concerns, such as stormwater management and retention of tree canopy. Allow counties to adjust residential density based on these factors.
- Allowable percentage of affordable units. Mixed-income projects with significant percentages of affordable units should be encouraged where appropriate. To unduly restrict the percentage of affordable units in mixed-income residential projects undercuts the implementation of innovative mixed income housing initiatives, such as Montgomery County's Housing Production Fund program.
- Minimum parking requirements. The elimination of minimum off-street parking requirements may be appropriate for projects in mass transit-rich areas, especially rail-served locations, but is not appropriate for all projects. Other multi-family and mixed-use projects might need off-street parking to be successful. Allow counties the discretion to set parking requirements that reflect location- specific considerations.

In sum, successful multi-family and mixed-use development projects respond to local conditions. Amend the Bring Back Main Street Act so that counties can fine-tune projects to reflect community needs, rather than defaulting to a one-size fits all approach.