

## **Montgomery Gazette Op Ed Page Letter**

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The Gazette's editorial in support of workforce housing (Our Opinion, July 21) was well founded, yet it could have mentioned a funding source that has been presented before the Council several times in the form of academic research, public testimony and a Washington Post op-ed column. In the last few years, the Council has approved zoning text amendments (ZTA's) that have boosted the allowable building density of numerous commercial real estate parcels—particularly in Bethesda and Shady Grove. The ZTA's increased the underlying property values by hundreds of millions of dollars. In exchange, the County received moderately priced dwelling units (MPDU's), workforce housing subsidies, cash payments and other public amenities worth about 15% of the enhanced property values. The remaining 85% enriched wealthy landowners and developers, many of whom represent the contribution base of the Council members' reelection campaigns. If the Council had appraised the ZTA's before approving them, and then devised a compensation policy that captured just 50% of the increased land value, we estimate that the County could have funded 2,000 workforce housing units immediately.

Jeffrey Hooke  
Chairman  
Maryland Tax Education Foundation  
Office (703) 761-4591