

The People's Voice, LLC

Ethics Ballot TM

8815 Centre Park Drive, Suite 245, Columbia, MD 21045

The People's Voice -

Testimony on CB4-2026 – Requested Amendment

CB4 regarding activity centers, TOD and TNC

CB4 amends the Moderate Income Housing Unit (MIHU) requirement in these zones, for Age-Restricted housing, removing the requirement to have on-site and not pay a fee-in-lieu of providing. Given that this legislation seeks to move Age-restricted housing therein to a matter of right, and given that this type of housing has larger density allowances, these benefits given should be balanced by NOT making it even less likely to have the required MIHU on these projects.

Please remove that part of the legislation so that the age-restriction changes in these zones to matter of right, given the larger density allowances does not also lessen the availability of MIHU required actual units in these projects.

Thank you,

Lisa Markovitz

President, The People's Voice



**County Council Public Hearing
January 20, 2026**

CB 4-2026; ZRA 219: Activity Centers

The Housing Affordability Coalition supports the intent of ZRA 219 to expand opportunities for diverse housing in Transit Oriented and Traditional Neighborhood Center zoning districts, which would provide new affordable housing options for moderate and low income households. We urge, however, that CB 4 be amended to change from 15 percent to 20 percent the number of dwelling units required to be Moderate Income Housing Units (MIHUs). This change is consistent with the HoCo By Design affordable housing target and with the Council's October 6 decision for a 20 percent target in the Gateway (Activity Center) Master Plan.

As we have said before, since the General Plan was approved in 2023, the absence of rezoning or other guidance for implementation of Activity Centers has created a no man's land for the Planning Board and County Council when presented with ZRA requests that could significantly erode the opportunity to use Activity Centers to develop work force and other affordable housing options. Though still a piecemeal rather than comprehensive approach, CB 4's Activity Center definition and requirement of more than one housing type on five (5) or more gross acres in TOD and TNC districts assists in building the framework for all Activity Center zones. CB 4 can help contribute to realizing the significant increases in missing middle housing envisioned in HoCo By Design.

Land use decisions often come with trade-offs. CB 4's exclusion of age-restricted developments' Fee-in-Lieu requirements could actually help optimize the number of housing units that are produced in TOD and TNC districts as age-restricted developments require significantly more land than do multi-family projects. However, requiring a second (age-restricted or not) housing type will diminish the total number of housing units that could be developed in the TOD/TNC districts. To help compensate for this loss, the Coalition would ask your consideration of exploring other opportunities to generate affordable—including senior—housing units. As an example, there are many townhouse communities built in the 1980's and 90's within a mile of TOD and TNC activity centers where an appropriate number of townhouses could be purchased by an Activity Center developer as a CB 4 pre-requisite, rehabbed- including universal design- and sold at MIHU prices to income qualified seniors. We would be pleased to bring this idea and others to a brainstorming session or a workgroup conversation.

We appreciate your consideration of the Coalition's perspective and urge that the County Council approve CB 4 with an amendment that increases the MIHU requirement to 20 percent in TOD and TNC zones.

Respectfully submitted,

Jackie Eng

Jackie Eng
Coalition Coordinator

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Please remove that part of the legislation that EXEMPTS age-restricted housing from the part that REQUIRES MIHU to be provided on site. This is especially important since Activity Centers are located throughout the County and we have long been trying to get MIHU's spread out, and exempting them from providing on site is going to just exacerbate the problem of them being so concentrated.

A long time ago, we testified that a shopping center overlay NOT be exempt from providing MIHU's, which was requested at the time. Now, having apartment buildings coming to activity centers, please do not have them providing MIHU off site, especially for older residents, who really need to be able to stay in their communities. For new residents and especially those moving within Howard County, who maybe for financial reasons have to sell their homes, have their MIHU spread out and more available.

Thank you,

Lisa Markovitz

President, The People's Voice