



SB516 – Equitable and Inclusive Transit–Oriented Development Enhancement Act

Testimony before

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

February 16, 2022

Position: Favorable

Mr. Chair, Mr. Vice Chair and members of the committee, my name is Richard Deutschmann, and I represent the 750+ members of Indivisible Howard County. We are providing written testimony today in support of SB516, to encourage more Transit Oriented Development in areas that have thus far not benefited from this equitable and environmentally preferred type of development in the state. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members). We appreciate the leadership of Senator Augustine for sponsoring this important legislation.

Since 2008, Transit Oriented Development (TOD) has been incentivized by a state designation allowing projects near transit sites be eligible for state financial support. But because of a variety of factors, there are now only 17 state-designated sites in Maryland. TOD's have the benefits of creating jobs and investment in the areas that are accessible to a transit stop, encouraging the use of transit, taking polluting automobiles off the road, and providing employment to those who do not have an automobile.

SB516 helps to alleviate this and encourages more TOD. It does this in 3 ways: 1) It expands the More Jobs for Marylanders program, with tax credits for those that create new jobs in the TOD zones; 2) it creates a TOD Capital Grant and Revolving Loan Fund, with mandatory funding in the state budget, to provide assistance for design, planning and other upfront funding project needs; 3) increases accountability by requiring the MDOT Secretary to report on the program annually, with emphasis on TODs in overburdened areas of the state.

This legislation will increase the kind of dense development around our transit centers that helps with our climate goals, increasing employment opportunities for those that have struggled with steady employment, and improving air quality in our cities. For these reasons, we support the goals of SB516, as critical in building an equitable and healthy Maryland for all. Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

We respectfully urge a favorable committee report.

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