



Senate Bill 166 – Housing and Community Development - Adaptive Reuse

Position: Support

Maryland REALTORS® supports efforts to increase the supply of housing options in Maryland through legislation like SB 166. This bill would open existing DHCD programs to adaptive reuse projects.

Adaptive reuse involves the repurposing of obsolete commercial spaces to provide much needed housing. It has been used successfully in many other states and cities to provide housing options in already developed areas in a way that maintains the scale and look of the neighborhood.

However, because they are retrofits, these developments have challenges that new construction does not. For instance, there may be asbestos or lead paint in need of remediation, means of egress established, or structural reinforcements added to make the property viable as housing. This can make financing for such projects more difficult to obtain and, particularly if the project is intended to be maintained as affordable housing, financial assistance can be necessary at the outset.

While some adaptive reuse projects have been completed in Maryland, much more could be done in this area. Maryland currently faces a shortage of nearly 120,000 housing units and growing. It encompasses not only what has been traditionally considered as “affordable housing” but also “missing middle” housing types.

There is no single answer to this housing shortage. Rather, it will take many modest actions that when taken together begin to make a difference. Maryland officials at both the state and local levels will need to work closely with one another and seek new ways of providing the housing that our residents need. The status quo is no longer an option.

Maryland REALTORS® applaud efforts to ease our housing crisis and reduce our current 120,000-unit housing shortage. We thank the sponsors of this bill and ask for your support of Senate Bill 166.

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