



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 7, 2024

Testimony in SUPPORT of HB 1309 - Transportation - State Highways - Project Approval

Summary: HB 1309 requires the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) to provide comments on an application for a development project within 30 days after the complete project application is received.

Overview: As part of the General Assembly's 2023 legislative session, as an alternative to proposed legislation, the Montgomery County Delegation of the House of Delegates referred to the issue of streamlining and updating the development review process to an informal workgroup for further study, chaired by myself. The Workgroup was created as a mechanism for a comprehensive group of stakeholders to discuss the critical role development plays in housing, employment, and entertainment and tourism for Montgomery County. The processes undertaken by state and local governments as well as private business and community members were reviewed to update and streamline the development timeline.

The group, dubbed the Montgomery County Development Review Process Workgroup, consisting of representatives from various County executive branch offices including the Department of Environmental Protection and the Office of Racial Equity and Inclusion, representatives from the State Highway Administration and Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission, developers, community members, and others.

Over the course of many months, the Workgroup held three Public Listening Sessions and nine Public Workgroup Sessions. The listening sessions included witness testimony from over 45 individuals and organizations.

The extensive nature of the group's work and the resulting comprehensive [report](#) and recommendations, dated October 13, 2023, considered a vast amount of information and perspectives.

Currently, there are no codified timelines for SHA to provide comments on an application. Originally, the purpose of the workgroup's recommendation was to align the SHA review time with the Montgomery County Department of Transportation review time and ensure the applicant has all transportation comments at the same time so they can address them efficiently while staying on schedule.

While this bill started as Montgomery County-specific, the State Highway Administration brought to our attention that having different requirements across the state would be cumbersome. Therefore, the language has been changed to apply state-wide and the benefits of an expedient review process can be a benefit across the state.

Conclusion: HB1309 will codify the language in State Law limiting State Highway Administration review time to 30 days which, in turn, will contribute to the streamlining of the development review process as a whole.

Thank you and I ask for a favorable report on HB 1309.