

SB 266 MDP Written Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Andrew Wilson

Position: FAV



Maryland

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

HEARING DATE: January 21st, 2025

BILL NO: SB0266

COMMITTEE: Education, Energy, and the Environment

POSITION: Support

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: Andrew Wilson (443) 721-6789

TITLE: Local Comprehensive Planning and State Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Policy – Planning Principles

BILL ANALYSIS:

SB0266 amends the state’s current twelve Planning Visions and the State Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Policy with an updated set of eight Planning Principles.

POSITION AND RATIONALE:

The Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) supports SB0266. This bill replaces the state’s current 12 Planning Visions and the State Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Policy (Policy) with an updated set of Planning Principles. This amendment seeks to further evolve past smart growth policy toward a more comprehensive sustainable growth model. It also adds clarity, improves alignment and simplifies the core planning principles for sustainable growth.

Originally adopted in 1992, the legislatively endorsed Policy and Planning Visions have been amended two times before, in 2000 and 2009. After MDP’s series of regional roundtables in the summer of 2024 with planning commissions and departments from across the state, MDP concluded, via feedback from attendees and additional engagement with local officials and their planning staff, that the current 12 planning visions were overly complicated and difficult to assess alongside the required comprehensive plan elements. As a result, the visions are not always used in the preparation of local plans, and when they are, they are often only added as a perfunctory measure to meet the letter of the law rather than truly embrace and implement the intent of the visions. This bill rebuilds these visions, making them more concise, consolidating redundant and overlapping visions as needed, and renaming them as planning principles. MDP will develop tangible methods which counties and municipalities can use to implement the principles. Further, this rebuilding aims to align the Policy with Governor Moore’s administrative priorities, particularly with its focus on equity, housing, transportation, economy, ecology, and land use. It is the goal of MDP that this rebuild of the Policy will help realize the Governor’s priorities and allow planners and local governments to more easily align their practices and projects with them.

The addition of equity as a Planning Principle brings focus to the need for inclusive planning processes and plans that prioritize underserved populations and areas most in need for capital investment and the development of plans and policies. Further, the rebuild of the Policy, and the implementation of the planning principles, is aimed to address and redress issues of equity in the areas of life that most deeply impact

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The legislative framework to implement the Planning Principles remains unchanged in §5-7A-02 of the State Finance & Procurement Article (SFPA) and §1-201 and §3-201 of the Land Use Article (LUA). MDP will be working with our state agency partners to ensure State public works, transportation, and major capital improvement projects further the Planning Principles. Local planners and jurisdictions will be encouraged to align their planning projects and practices with the new principles laid out in this bill, and this will cause an operational shift for local governments on planning related matters. MDP is committed to providing any assistance desired to make the transition to the new principles one that will not impact local government finances and minimize impacts to operations. Updating of local comprehensive plans to incorporate the updated Planning Principles will incrementally occur during the mandated 10-year review (per § 1-416(a) LUA for charter counties and § 3-301(a) LUA for non-charter and municipalities).

MLU Support Letter - SB266.pdf

Uploaded by: Carlos Orbe, Jr.

Position: FAV

January 17, 2025

The Honorable Senator Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Support for Senate Bill 266 – Local Comprehensive Planning and State Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Policy – Planning Principles

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

On behalf of Maryland Latinos Unidos (MLU), I am writing to express our strong support for Senate Bill 266 (SB0266), “Local Comprehensive Planning and State Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Policy – Planning Principles.” This legislation offers a critical opportunity to strengthen Maryland’s planning frameworks by prioritizing equity and sustainability in development efforts, principles that are fundamental to empowering the state’s Latino and immigrant communities.

Latino and immigrant populations in Maryland, who comprise over 12% of the state’s residents, have consistently been left behind in development decisions that shape the communities where they live and work. SB0266 ensures that future growth will account for diverse community needs, particularly in under-resourced neighborhoods where systemic inequities have long created barriers to economic opportunity, affordable housing, and access to essential services.

This bill sets the stage for local governments to adopt a more inclusive approach to comprehensive planning, ensuring that the voices of historically marginalized communities are incorporated into decision-making processes. By embedding equitable principles into planning visions, SB0266 paves the way for actionable changes, such as increasing access to community services, enhancing infrastructure in underserved areas, and creating spaces that reflect the cultural diversity of Maryland’s Latino residents.

MLU has firsthand experience with the transformative power of equitable planning. Through our advocacy, we have supported local efforts to improve infrastructure and ensure housing equity, and we have seen how inclusive planning can foster safer, healthier, and more vibrant communities. SB0266 builds upon these principles by promoting a forward-looking planning framework that holds local governments accountable for addressing disparities and investing in equitable growth.

We strongly urge the members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee to support SB0266 and advance this vital legislation. Maryland’s future must be one where every resident, regardless of their background or socioeconomic status, has an equal opportunity to thrive in their community. This bill is an essential step in realizing that vision.

Sincerely,
Carlos Orbe, Jr.

Communications and Public Affairs Specialist
Maryland Latinos Unidos
corbejr@mdlatinosunidos.org

SB 266 MDP Written Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Charles Boyd

Position: FAV



Maryland

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

HEARING DATE: January 21st, 2025

BILL NO: SB0266

COMMITTEE: Education, Energy, and the Environment

POSITION: Support

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: Andrew Wilson (443) 721-6789

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SB 266 Comprehensive Planning Principles (Favorabl

Uploaded by: Humna Sharif

Position: FAV

Tuesday, January 21, 2025

TO: Brian Feldman, Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee, and Committee Members

FROM: Humna Sharif, The Nature Conservancy, Climate Adaptation Manager; Cait Kerr, The Nature Conservancy, State Policy Manager

POSITION: Support SB 266 Local Comprehensive Planning and State Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Policy – Planning Principles

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) supports SB 266, Local Comprehensive Planning and State Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Policy – Planning Principles. TNC is a global conservation organization working to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. In Maryland, our work focuses on delivering data-driven, on-the-ground solutions that secure clean water, air, and healthy, secure living environments for our human and natural communities today and in the generations to come. We see SB 266 as a positive addition to the suite of climate-conscious legislation that Maryland has already passed and will need to pass to prepare our state for the future.

SB 266 incorporates principles of sustainable growth and planning that will help our state meet future challenges related to environmental risks, shifting growth patterns, and new development needs. Maryland's [Climate Pollution Reduction Plan](#) calls on the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) to accelerate sustainable growth in the state. MDP's recent [Climate Implementation Plan](#) also identifies sustainable growth as a strategic approach to equitably consider economic, social, and environmental implications for existing and future generations' wellbeing. SB 266's proposed changes to Maryland's Comprehensive Planning and State Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Policy are key to building and sustaining a society that can adapt to future hazards and uncertainties.

SB 266 introduces eight additional principles into existing Maryland law that aim to help local governments improve comprehensive plans for their jurisdictions in ways which enhance quality of life and protect natural resources. TNC recognizes that local comprehensive plans are a powerful tool to advance our state's long-term resilience. We support the new principles of sustainable growth included in this legislation.

TNC is particularly enthused that these principles include clean and affordable transportation, equitable and community-focused development planning processes, resilience measures that will help Maryland adapt to climate change and associated environmental risks, access to public spaces, and a focus on ecological restoration and protections for sensitive habitats. Guidance from [US Environmental Protection Agency](#) (EPA), [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#) (NOAA), [Federal Emergency Management Agency](#) (FEMA) all reference comprehensive plans as an important avenue for hazard resilience and smart growth.

Our state faces many challenges to mitigating climate emissions, building ecosystem and community resilience, and delivering environmental justice to our overburdened and underserved residents. These challenges require diligent coordination from all sectors of the government and MDP's role in this coordination effort cannot be over-stated. Our legislators and state agencies have continued to demonstrate your commitment to identifying and implementing collaborative approaches to address these challenges, and SB 266 seeks to advance those efforts. We commend MDP's leadership in putting forth this legislation, and urge a favorable report on SB 266.

SB266_DHCD_SUPPORT.pdf

Uploaded by: Jake Day

Position: FAV



WES MOORE
Governor
ARUNA MILLER
Lt. Governor
JACOB R. DAY
Secretary
JULIA GLANZ
Deputy Secretary

DATE: January 21, 2025

BILL NO.: Senate Bill 266

TITLE: Local Comprehensive Planning and State Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Policy – Planning Principles

COMMITTEE: Senate Education, Energy, & the Environment Committee

Letter of Support

Description of Bill:

Senate Bill 266 amends the state's current 12 Planning Visions and State Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Policy with an updated set of 8 Planning Principles.

Background and Analysis:

Maryland's Planning Visions and Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Policy were last amended in 2009. This list of 12 visions lays out the general principles to be followed by local planning commissions when developing comprehensive plans and addresses a range of topics from public participation and quality of life to housing, economic development, and resource conservation.

Senate Bill 266 updates this list to reflect the evolution of state policy to support sustainable growth goals, rather than the outdated smart growth policy reflected in the existing list. The new list of 8 Planning Principles was developed by the Maryland Department of Planning after engagement with, and feedback from, local planning commissions across the state. The updated Planning Principles also align more closely with the Moore-Miller Administration's priorities such as equity, housing, transportation, and economic development. More closely aligning state and local planning goals and priorities will help DHCD and other state agencies address issues such as the affordable housing shortage, the racial wealth gap, and anemic economic growth.

In particular, the addition of equity as a Planning Principle will require local planning authorities to use inclusive planning processes that prioritize underserved populations and areas most in need of capital investment. Local planning authorities have significant power to address issues of equity in areas of life that most impact Marylanders -- such as housing -- and prioritizing equity in planning closely aligns with DHCD's recently adopted Just Communities framework. Similarly, the addition of resilience as a Planning Principle helps to address and mitigate the potential impacts of climate change and other natural and human-caused threats, allowing Maryland to continue to be a leader both in righting the wrongs of the past and addressing future risks.

DHCD Position

The Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development respectfully requests a **favorable** report on SB 266.



SB266 AudubonMidAtlantic_LocalComprehensivePlannin

Uploaded by: Jim Brown

Position: FAV



Maryland Office
2901 E. Baltimore St
Baltimore, MD 21214

January 18, 2025

To: Chairman Brian Feldman and members of the Maryland Senate Committee on Education, Energy and the Environment

From: Jim Brown, Policy Director, Audubon Mid-Atlantic

Subject: Favorable Testimony for Maryland SB 266 Local Comprehensive Planning and State Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Policy – Planning Principles

Audubon Mid-Atlantic submits this testimony in support of Senate Bill 266. Audubon Mid-Atlantic is the regional office of National Audubon Society, representing over 35,000 Marylanders who advocate for the protection of birds, bird habitat, and policies aiming to protect both birds and human communities in the face of increasing environmental challenges, habitat loss, pollution, and climate change.

Updating Maryland's planning principles offers the ability to use the lenses of climate preparedness, quality of life, and natural resource conservation to strengthen planning efforts equitable growth while protecting vulnerable bird habitat. Special Maryland landscapes such as forested land, meadows, wetland marshes and other undeveloped land provide critical habitat to threatened bird species while improving the livability and quality of life for all of Maryland's residents. These proposed planning principles promote the efficient use of public resources in planning for growth and community building by leveraging infrastructure investments in transportation and housing to maximize returns on efficiencies in spending and land use. This investment in ecologically sensitive and socially inclusive planning is an investment in Maryland's future.

Science tells us birds are in decline due to habitat loss and climate change. 1/3 of all Maryland bird species experienced significant population declines in the past 50 years. SB 266 will enable Maryland to slow this habitat loss while also protecting the priceless natural climate solutions that undeveloped spaces and preserved land offer.

The transportation, water resource availability, ecology, environmental protection and economic growth aspects of this bill define planning principles which will support the coexistence of thriving human communities alongside an ecologically diverse, and climate resilient Maryland. These recommendations show that planning for economic growth and preserving special natural places for the value they bring do not need to happen separately. With thoughtful consideration and a well-resourced Planning Department, they can be mutually supportive of each other.

Audubon believes the provisions within the bill will enable planners to address the state's most pressing environmental, economic, and climate challenges by:

- Encouraging the concentration of growth in or adjacent to existing population and business centers, and transportation networks, thus preventing the loss of important natural habitat and minimizing the fragmentation of such habitat

- Emphasizing that a high quality of life is achieved through universal stewardship of the land, water, and air resulting in sustainable communities and protection of the environment
- Considering environmental protection of land and water resources; conservation and restoration of natural systems, waterways and living resources in planning processes
- And providing for public spaces that encourage social interaction and promote the value of cultural, historical and natural resources.

SB 266 will lay the framework for creating more climate-resilient communities for our residents and visitors. It will also continue to hold Maryland up as a leader in climate action, inclusive growth, ecosystem preservation, and the protection of birds now and in the future.

Audubon Mid-Atlantic respectfully urges a favorable review of this legislation.

Thank You,

Jim Brown

Policy Director
Audubon Mid-Atlantic
410.558.2473 x101
Jim.brown@audubon.org

_SB266- MDP Planning Principles SUPPORT.pdf

Uploaded by: Kristen Harbeson

Position: FAV



January 21, 2025

Kim Coble
Executive Director

2025 Board of
Directors

Patrick Miller, Chair
The Hon. Nancy Kopp,
Treasurer
Kimberly Armstrong
Caroline Baker
Joe Gill
Lynn Heller
Charles Hernick
The Hon. Steve Lafferty
Bonnie L. Norman

SUPPORT: SB266 - Local Comprehensive Planning and State Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Policy - Planning Principles

Chairman Feldman and Members of the Committee:

Maryland LCV supports SB266: Local Comprehensive Planning and State Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Policy - Planning Principles. We appreciate the Department's thoughtful examination of the state's planning policies and efforts to update and align the policies with other state goals, including climate mitigation as an essential component of thriving communities.

Our state's "Policy and Planning Visions" were first adopted in 1992, and while they were amended in 2000 and again in 2009, it has been fifteen years since the policies have been revised. The Maryland Department of Planning conducted a series of regional roundtables to collect feedback from stakeholders on the 'planning visions' and the challenges for implementation. As a result of these conversations, the Department of Planning has refined twelve planning visions into eight planning principles, providing greater clarity and focus for local and county planners. Each of the eight principles are clearly expressed, with additional guidance on how the principle can be applied to meet three overarching goals: Improving human well being, mitigating climate change, and growing economic opportunity.

Maryland LCV believes that this revision to our state's planning program will provide essential guidance to local and county planners in their efforts to meet state goals, which will help Maryland achieve a goal of cleaner water, healthier air, and more resilient communities for everyone in Maryland. We are pleased to support this legislation and urge a favorable report.

MBIA Letter of Support SB 266.pdf

Uploaded by: Lori Graf

Position: FAV

January 16, 2025

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: MBIA Letter of Support SB 266 Local Comprehensive Planning and State Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Policy – Planning Principles

Dear Chairman Feldman,

The Maryland Building Industry Association, representing 100,000 employees of the building industry across the State of Maryland, appreciates the opportunity to participate in the discussion surrounding SB 266 Local Comprehensive Planning and State Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Policy – Planning Principles. MBIA supports this measure.

We believe the new planning principles proposed will serve as a proper guide for local jurisdictions to promote economic growth and offer a diverse range of housing options for people in Maryland. By allowing a mix of quality housing types and affordability, the planning principles address the demands of today's homebuyer. Prioritizing transportation networks that provide reliable access to jobs and allowing for mixed-use and context appropriate new development will give people in Maryland more opportunities to live near or easily commute to their workplace. The effort to modernize the Maryland Department of Planning is an important step toward addressing the state's 100,000-unit housing shortage.

However, as always, we do have concerns about how the principals will be used in practicality. It is imperative that there is thoughtfulness with implementation and integration in to the Comprehensive Plan process.

For these reasons, we respectfully request the Committee give this measure a favorable report. Thank you for your consideration.

For more information about this position, please contact Lori Graf at 410-800-7327 or lgraf@marylandbuilders.org.

cc: Members of the Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

SB 266 - FAV - MDEM.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Michael Hinson

Position: FAV



🌐 mdem.maryland.gov

☎ 877-636-2872

📍 7229 Parkway Drive, Suite 200 | Hanover, MD 21076

Governor | Wes Moore Lt. Governor | Aruna Miller Secretary | Russell J. Strickland

FAVORABLE - SB 266

Local Comprehensive Planning and State Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Policy- Planning Principles

Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Maryland Department of Emergency Management

Hearing Date: 21 Jan 2025

The Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM) writes in support of **SB 266 – Local Comprehensive Planning and State Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Policy- Planning Principles**. The bill seeks to remove the existing Planning Visions and replace them with the newly formed Planning Principles.

The Department of Emergency Management and the Office of Resilience urge support for this legislation that includes resilience as a core planning principle in all local comprehensive plans. In an era of increasing hazard impacts, such as more frequent and intense heat waves, severe storms, and rising sea levels, the need for resilient communities has become paramount. Climate change and other hazards pose significant threats to our infrastructure, economy, and public health, and those impacts are already felt across our state. By explicitly incorporating resilience into their planning documents, local governments can proactively address these challenges.

Failing to address these challenges through proactive planning will leave our communities increasingly vulnerable to the impacts of various hazards. We can help our communities prepare to thrive in the face of these challenges by including resilience as a planning principle in local comprehensive plans.

In conclusion, MDEM urges a favorable report of **SB 266 - Local Comprehensive Planning and State Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Policy- Planning Principles**. If you have any questions, please contact Anna Sierra, MDEM legislative liaison: anna.sierra1@maryland.gov.

SB 266 MDP Written Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Rebecca Flora

Position: FAV



Maryland

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

HEARING DATE: January 21st, 2025

BILL NO: SB0266

COMMITTEE: Education, Energy, and the Environment

POSITION: Support

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: Andrew Wilson (443) 721-6789

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Testimony in support of SB0266 - Local Comprehensi

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

1/21/2025

Richard Keith Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON SB#0042 – AVORABLE

Local Comprehensive Planning and State Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Policy - Planning Principles

TO: Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#0266, Local Comprehensive Planning and State Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Policy - Planning Principles

As a resident of Frederick County, I am very proud that my county has the Livable Frederick plan to guide us in how we manage the growth and development in our county.¹

This bill will facilitate helping other jurisdictions and counties within Maryland to alter the planning visions for local comprehensive planning to consist of certain planning principles. It will further alter the State Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Policy to consist of certain planning principles letting best practices be implemented. This bill will also require the publisher of the Annotated Code of Maryland, in consultation with the Department of Legislative Services, to correct cross-references and terminology in the Code that are rendered incorrect by the Act.

It is time for Maryland and all levels of government in the state to use the best possible principles in planning to meet conditions dictated by the critical need to respond to 21st century conditions and problems. This bill offers Maryland a chance to be a national leader in how this can and should and will be accomplished.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB#0266.

¹ <https://frederickcountymd.gov/7977/Livable-Frederick-Planning-and-Design>

SB 266 - Comprehensive Plan - Visions - Planning P

Uploaded by: Tom Ballentine

Position: FWA

NAIOP

MARYLAND CHAPTERS



THE ASSOCIATION FOR
COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

January 21, 2025

The Honorable, Brian J. Feldman, Chair
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Support w Amendments: SB 266 – Comprehensive Plans - Planning Principles

Dear Chair, Feldman and Committee Members:

The NAIOP Maryland Chapters represent approximately 700 companies involved in all aspects of commercial, industrial, and mixed-use real estate. On behalf of our member companies, I am writing to support SB 266 with amendments.

SB 266 replaces twelve *smart growth* visions, most of which date back to the Economic Growth, Resource and Planning Act of 1992, with eight planning principles.

The *smart growth* visions were designed to help jurisdictions achieve higher levels of economic growth, resource protection and better planning outcomes by directing population and employment growth to designated growth areas where infrastructure and public services were also to be located. Local jurisdictions are required to implement these visions in their comprehensive land use plans and incorporate them into land use and development policies, regulations and decisions.

NAIOP believes it is appropriate to reconsider and revise the planning visions to make them more relevant and responsive to the land use needs and challenges of today. While we support what we believe is the intent of the legislation we are not convinced that the text of the planning principles in the bill as introduced provide a sufficient foundation for the future.

We have referred the bill to our land use, planning and zoning review group and would like to work with the Department and other stakeholders on constructive changes to the proposed planning principles.

For these reasons, NAIOP respectfully requests your favorable with amendments report on SB 266.

Sincerely,



Tom Ballentine, Vice President for Policy
NAIOP – Maryland Chapters, *The Association for Commercial Real Estate*

cc: Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee Members
Nick Manis – Manis, Canning Assoc.