



Maryland Municipal League
The Association of Maryland's Cities and Towns

TESTIMONY

March 4, 2020

Committee: House Environment & Transportation

Bill: HB 1406 – Land Use – Development – Middle Housing (Modest Home Choices Act of 2020)

Position: Oppose

Reason for Position:

The Maryland Municipal League opposes HB 1406, which would force local governments to allow triplexes and other “middle housing” structures in areas that are not currently zoned for such development. This bill would also require each jurisdiction to adopt land use regulations or amend its comprehensive plan in accordance with the bill’s requirements.

The league appreciates the legislation’s intent but is concerned with its prescriptive nature. **Not only would HB 1406 be a drastic reduction of local zoning authority, but it would also require municipalities to build the infrastructure necessary to accommodate densification without assessing the residents’ ability to pay for upgrades and without their input.**

Just last year, MML supported a bill (HB 1045) to require a “housing element” in local government comprehensive plans that to address the need for affordable housing, both workforce and low-income. Our staff is currently working with the Department of Planning to develop guidance to better help our municipalities satisfy the requirement and intent of the legislation. We believe this planned development approach, with community input, is the best method to expand affordable housing options.

Finally, it’s important to remember that local comprehensive master plans are updated on a ten-year cycle with a five-year interim “check-up”. It is extremely time consuming and costly to amend a comprehensive master plan if it is out of the regular five-year and/or ten-year plan update cycle.

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For these reasons, the League respectfully requests that this Committee provide HB 1406 with an unfavorable report.

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