



7 February 2022

The Honorable Paul Pinsky
Chair of the Education Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Letter of Support for Senate Bill 0608
Report on the Public or Private Conversion of State Property to Affordable Housing

Dear Chairman Pinsky and members of the EHEA Committee:

I am writing to voice AIA Maryland's support for Senate Bill 0608 and to suggest a friendly amendment that may broaden issues considered in the report. AIA Maryland represents nearly 2,000 architects in the state of Maryland and advocates for the profession and the quality of the built environment. Based upon our member experiences in designing for and meeting with communities to help design affordable housing, we welcome the notion that state surplus property may be considered for conversion to housing, but we would like to expand upon criteria of proximity to transportation that may be considered when the research and report is developed. While access to convenient transportation is critical to residents of affordable housing to connect to their community and service their needs, there are often other needs of residents of affordable housing that could also be met when considering building types and project locations.

Under section 1 article (c) (3):

"recommendations to facilitate the public or private development and use of surplus real property and excess real property retained for possible future use by the State as affordable housing, including identification of specific properties;"

We suggest adding item (i) Consider prioritizing properties if they may be able to accommodate spaces often needed parallel to affordable housing such as:

- Potential to convert the first floor to a grocery store

- Potential to accommodate a daycare program on site

- Potential to accommodate enriched services on site, such as healthcare and social services

Under section 1 article (d) (2):

"The report shall highlight properties and emphasize recommendations that facilitate the development of affordable housing near public transportation, existing commercial developments and commercial developments for which all permits have been issued."

We suggest adding: The report shall also identify properties that may be well suited to serve parallel needs of affordable housing and communities such as those identified in section 1 (c) (3) i.

AIA Maryland and its membership commends the effort to use surplus property to meet the needs of affordable housing across the state. We ask for your support of this bill and we ask that you consider our suggested amendments to further support needs of communities and individual residents when housing is built.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. P.', with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

Chris Parts, AIA, LEED AP
Director, Past President