



The Honorable Kumar Barve, Chair
and Members, Environment and Transportation Committee
House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

March 8, 2023

Dear Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein, and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

My name is Dan Reed and I serve as the Regional Policy Director for [Greater Greater Washington](#), a nonprofit that works to advance racial, economic, and environmental justice in land use, transportation, and housing throughout Greater Washington. GGWash supports House Bill 819, as it will uphold our county's and our region's housing, transportation, and climate goals.

The premise of this bill is simple: it says that Montgomery County cannot require off-street parking for residential developments within a quarter-mile, or about a five-minute walk, from our 22 Metro and Purple Line stations. It does not ban parking, and it does not preclude the county's zoning authority. What it does is make it easier to provide something we need more of—houses—in places where it's really needed—places where people have the choice to easily get around without a car. Over two hundred places around the United States and counting have enacted similar reforms¹.


Why is parking the problem? Parking is expensive to build, costing upwards of \$30,000 per space in a parking structure², and even more for underground parking. Those costs get passed along to renters and homebuyers, even if they don't own a car. Rents in the DC area grew nearly 16 percent between the first quarter of 2021 and the first quarter of 2022³, and additional costs from parking requirements risk pricing people out of neighborhoods with access to jobs, shopping, and transportation. The result is fewer transit riders, and more suburban sprawl and pollution as people are pushed out to the fringes of the region where they have to drive more.

In addition, higher construction costs due to parking make it difficult to provide affordable housing because each unit requires a greater subsidy, which in turn means that limited funds for affordable housing can't support as many homes. In some cases, it may mean building new homes doesn't

¹ Parking Reform Network, <https://parkingreform.org/resources/mandates-map/>

² Victoria Transportation Policy Institute, <https://www.vtpi.org/tca/tca0504.pdf>

³ Axios DC, <https://www.axios.com/local/washington-dc/2022/07/11/dc-rents-increasing>

The Washington, DC region is great  and it can be greater.



make financial sense at all, a crucial problem at a time when Montgomery County needs to provide at least 3,200 new homes each year⁴ over the next 20 years for our growing population—far more than we’re currently building each year.

So why is this the state’s problem? There has been an ongoing relationship between the state of Maryland and local governments in shaping land use policy. Nearly a century ago, the state established the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission to ensure that the growing DC suburbs in Montgomery and Prince George’s counties grew in a coordinated fashion. And thirty years ago, Maryland’s Smart Growth legislation created incentives for cities and counties to focus development in existing communities.

In addition, the state has made considerable investments in transit for Montgomery County, from the creation of the original Metro system to the Purple Line. When policy barriers like parking minimums prevent new construction near transit, we’re losing out on new residents, new businesses, new transit riders, and the tax revenue they bring. It is in everybody’s interest that we take full advantage of this underutilized opportunity.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to working with you in the coming months to expand access to housing and ensure that the people who make Montgomery County great have the chance to stay here.

Sincerely,

Dan Reed
Regional Policy Director
Greater Greater Washington

⁴ Montgomery County Planning Department,
<https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/MoCo-HNA-July-2020.pdf>