

Dan Reeder FAV

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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>

HB 819 Moon FAV.pdf

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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB 819

**Montgomery County Off-Street Parking Requirements Near Mass Transit Station
MC/PG 106-23**

Primary Provisions of HB 819:

- HB 819 prohibits the establishment of parking minimums within a quarter mile of a Metro station or proposed Purple Line station in Montgomery County.
- HB 819 does not prohibit developments from providing parking; the bill simply eliminates the legal requirement to offer a minimum amount of parking.

Why HB 819 is Needed:

- Parking minimums drive up the cost of development, and in turn, the cost of housing.
 - Requiring one parking space per unit increases development costs by roughly 12.5%, the equivalent of tens of thousands of dollars.¹
 - Parking rarely pays for itself, meaning residents absorb the higher costs of development through increased housing prices, regardless of whether they own a car or not.
- With only 4% of Montgomery County readily available for development, the County must maximize available space and stop constructing unneeded parking.²
 - Excessive space used for parking decreases urban density, driving up housing prices in downtown areas.
- Urban areas like downtown Silver Spring and Bethesda already have excess parking.
 - Over 40% of Silver Spring's downtown parking spaces are perpetually vacant.³
- Developers have a financial incentive to meet demands for parking; Montgomery County does not need a law requiring them to build excessive amounts of parking.
- A 10% increase in minimum parking requirements is associated with a 5% increase in vehicles per square mile and a 6% decrease in housing density in urban areas.
- Parking requirements undermine the State's investment of millions of dollars in the Metro and Purple Line and disincentivize their use by creating more sprawl.

¹ [Whatcom Housing Alliance](#) (2022)

² [Greater Greater Washington](#) (2013)

³ [Greater Greater Washington](#) (2014)

Positive Results from Other Jurisdictions

- Seattle relaxed or eliminated their parking requirements in downtown and transit-adjacent neighborhoods in 2012, a policy still widely popular a decade later (64 percent of King County residents approve).⁴
 - From 2012 to 2017, Seattle developers saved \$537 million dollars and constructed 31 percent fewer parking spaces than required under the previous rules.⁵
- Buffalo eliminated their minimum parking requirement in 2017 with strong public support, leading to 47% of developments offering less parking.
- Minneapolis, St. Paul, Raleigh, Hartford, Ann Arbor, San Francisco, South Bend, Bridgeport, and a growing list of other municipalities have eliminated their citywide minimum parking requirements.⁶

What HB 819 Accomplishes:

- Provides developers with a new tool to construct residential developments at a lower cost.
- Reduces unnecessary sprawl and the cost of residential development in areas near mass transit, ending two factors causing upward pressure on housing prices.
- Ensures valuable space near mass transit need not be wasted on parking spaces that people will not use.
- Ends a policy that incentivizes the use of cars rather than mass transit for people living near the Metro or Purple Line.
- Upholds the State's investment of millions of dollars in the Metro and Purple Line.

⁴ [Sightline Institute](#) (2022)

⁵ [State Smart Transportation Initiative](#) (2021)

⁶ [Lincoln Institute of Land Policy](#) (2022)

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P.O. Box 278
Riverdale MD 20738

Committee: Environment and Transportation

Testimony on: HB819 – “Montgomery County - Off Street Parking Requirements Near Mass Transit Stations MC/PG 106-23”

Position: Support

Hearing Date: March 9, 2023

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club supports HB819 that would prohibit the Montgomery County District Council from adopting or enforcing a local law that requires the creation of new off-street parking for a residential development that is located within a 0.25-mile radius of a present or planned Metro or Purple Line Station.

Such a policy is consistent with the planning for the Purple Line which intentionally did not provide parking adjacent to stations to encourage greater use of transit and walking to the stations. The bill would help maintain that policy and extend it to Metro stations in Montgomery County. The prohibition on requiring new off-street parking for developments would:

- promote compact, walkable and bikeable neighborhoods near transit stations;
- actively combat car dependency;
- lessen climate-damaging greenhouse gas and other health-damaging emissions from private vehicles that would travel to and from new off-street parking, and
- reduce vehicle miles traveled.

Other benefits from not requiring new off-street parking for developments near transit stations include:

- improving safety for pedestrians and bicyclists living nearby or going to and from stations;
- ensuring more land is available for development of compact, walkable housing and job creation near transit;
- reducing the cost of development which would make it easier to build more affordable housing near transit; and
- reducing air pollution impact on people who live near or access the stations.

In summary, passage of HB819 makes sense for the environment, the health and safety of current and future residents, and promoting economic development near transit stations. We urge a favorable report on this bill.

Brian Ditzler
Chapter Transportation Chair
Brian.Ditzler@MDSierra.org

Josh Tulkin
Chapter Director
Josh.Tulkin@MDSierra.org

Founded in 1892, the Sierra Club is America's oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization. The Maryland Chapter has over 70,000 members and supporters, and the Sierra Club nationwide has over 800,000 members and nearly four million supporters.

Local Support Letter

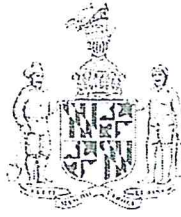
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401
MONTGOMERY COUNTY DELEGATION

February 10, 2023

The Honorable Kumar Barve
Chair, House Environment and Transportation Committee
House Office Building, Room 251
Annapolis Maryland 21401

RE: MC/PG 106-23 Montgomery County – Off-Street Parking Requirements Near Mass Transit Stations (HB 819)

Dear Chair Barve,

The Montgomery County House Delegation has voted Favorable on HB 819 (MC/PG 106-23) Montgomery County – Off-Street Parking Requirements Near Mass Transit Stations. The vote in the Montgomery County House Delegation was unanimous. The Delegation voting list is attached.

We request that your committee give HB 819 a Favorable report. We thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Julie Palakovich Carr, Chair
Montgomery County House Delegation