

Testimony in support of HB 819

## Off-Street Parking Requirements Near Mass Transit Stations

Hello,

I am writing to provide my writing testimony in support of HB 819 Delegate David Moon's bill to reform parking requirements near transit. The bill would prevent Montgomery County from enforcing any law that requires the creation of new off-street parking for a residential development that is located near a current or planned Metro or Purple Line station.

This bill is a simple, but important step, in addressing rising housing costs in our region for a basic reason. Requiring parking adds to the cost of developing housing, and requires space that could go to additional housing instead go to parking spaces that may or may not be needed, both of which further increase already high housing prices.

It also passed the house unanimously, and I look forward to this straightforward, common sense bill receiving similar treatment in the senate.

I understand the Montgomery County Planning board expressed it's opposition, but, as much as I respect the planning board and staff, that stance shows \*exactly\* why we need this reform, and is not an effective argument against it

Local control is not progressive, just like "States rights" are not progressive in opposition to good federal reforms. We got our housing crisis because we defer too much to local people and authorities that like things the way they are, and are focused on a small scale, however good their intentions. Deferring to "local control" for its own sake, and not on the merits of the bill, is the best way to perpetuate the status quo of expensive, exclusionary housing.

If you want to support that problem, go ahead and vote against this bill, but I hope that is not your goal here.

To be clear, banning the enforcement of parking minimums does not ban the \*parking\*. Developers and property owners will still be able to provide parking if they feel it is needed at a site. This reform would simply allow them the flexibility to allow less than current minimums. . Further, since the bill is limited to properties near rail transit, where less parking is needed, and artificially inflating parking, as current standards do, makes the area more car dependent than it would otherwise be. That's bad for traffic, the environment, pedestrian safety, economic development, and any number of other issues that the county needs to make strides on.

You will hear complaints that there won't be enough parking. Again, parking can still be provided, this just eliminates an artificial floor.

You will hear complaints that this usurps local control. To be honest, this concern doesn't bother me very much. Housing policy in general has suffered too long by a focus on deferring to the interests of those that have already cleared the economic hurdles to living in an area. Shaking that up a bit in this modest way is a good thing, not a bad thing. It is inherently conservative to defer to local authority over state authority for its own sake, just like it is inherently conservative to defer to state over federal power for its own sake. We should do progressive things, not defer to hyper local, often status quo defending mindsets.

We wouldn't even be the first place to do this. California, further along in the same housing shortage we face here, recently passed a bill that would eliminate parking minimums (while again, still allowing parking) within a half mile of transit, in part because developers noted that it can cost tens of thousands of dollars for each parking space, and parking requirements have forced them to build fewer homes than they otherwise could, or avoid building homes altogether ([California to ban parking minimums near transit - Los Angeles Times \(latimes.com\)](https://www.latimes.com)).

This bill isn't revolutionary. It's a common sense first step towards making housing near transit more walkable, more abundant, and more affordable. Please support it.

As a side note, I encourage you to once again allow virtual testimony. I am thankful for this written option, but I am not sure I will be able to attend tomorrow in person, and this is a needless barrier to participation that not all have the same ability to overcome.

Thank you for your time and attention. Vote for the bill. We need it.

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