

March 28, 2023

Committee: Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

Testimony on: HB 819, “Montgomery County - Off Street Parking Requirements Near Mass Transit Stations MC/PG 106-23”

Position: Support

Hearing Date: March 29, 2023

Dear Chair Smith and Committee Members,

My name is Carrie Kisicki and I am speaking on behalf of the Coalition for Smarter Growth in support of HB 819 to eliminate parking requirements within a quarter-mile radius of Metro and Purple Line stations in Montgomery County.

This bill will support increased development of affordable housing near transit in our county and will help Montgomery County reach our climate goals by creating opportunities for more people to live car-free and car-lite lifestyles.

In the Thrive 2050 General Plan, Montgomery County committed to reducing vehicle miles traveled and increasing non-auto-driver mode share. We decided to move away from decades of policies that favored investments in cars over people. These policies have imposed a disproportionate share of pollution and health risks, injuries and deaths on our roads, and inadequate access to public transit on low-income communities and people of color.

With Thrive, we recognized that eliminating parking requirements near transit is not only an essential tool for moving *away* from car dependence and *towards* our equity and climate goals, but also for building more of the housing that our county desperately needs.

Thrive states that reducing the supply of parking and eliminating minimum parking requirements for new developments will promote mixed-use development, improve pedestrian-friendly design, and perhaps most critically, *reduce the cost of development*. That means more units for more people, and more opportunities to build affordable units in high-amenity, transit-oriented communities where affordable units are most lacking today.

This bill is smart climate and housing policy—and it would be enough to support it for that reason. But even more than that, it is an opportunity to advance the housing, climate, and equity goals Montgomery County has already set for itself. Over and over again, what I hear from

community members, advocates, and members of the Council is that we need more affordable housing, and especially affordable housing near transit, *now*, and that we cannot afford to keep making excuses about why now is not the right time to do it.

This bill is a chance to meet the urgency of the climate crisis and housing crisis with the action that we know they deserve. For this reason, we ask that the committee support this bill and take a step towards building the transit-oriented, affordable housing that we need in Montgomery County.