



## **POSITION STATEMENT**

**Bill:** HB 1364 Maryland – National Capital Park and Planning Commission – Montgomery County – People’s Counsel for Land Use Planning (PG/MC 112-24)

**Position:** Informational

**Date:** March 21, 2024

**Contact:** Debra Borden, General Counsel

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The Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC or “the Commission”) is submitting this information. This bill was recently amended by the Montgomery County Delegation. The amended version of this bill still raises several logistical concerns regarding reporting structure, supervision, benefits, retirement system, administrative support system and duties. Therefore, the Commission respectfully requests that the Environment and Transportation Committee consider this information and include it in the record.

**What this Bill Does.** This bill as amended requires the Montgomery County Council (County Council) to appoint a People’s Counsel for Land Use Planning establishing the qualifications and responsibilities of the People’s Counsel. This bill also requires the County Council to approve adequate funding for this position within the M-NCPPC’s budget. Additionally, this bill also seeks to establish qualifications and responsibilities for the People’s Counsel.

**We Value Meaningful Community Engagement During the Planning Process but This Position as Proposed May Cause More Confusion than Clarity.** Although the County Council appoints and can remove this person, they are funded through the Commission’s budget but they may or may not be a Commission employee. Further, it is not clear where this person would physically sit, whose electronic system would they be on, who would provide administrative support, who hosts their web page and outreach efforts, who conducts performance reviews, whose retirement or other benefits system would they subscribe to, do they impact our budget levels, etc.?

For these reasons, the Commission requests more information.