
February 25, 2025

The Honorable Ben Barnes
Chair, House Appropriations Committee
121 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Letter of Information – House Bill 1061 – State-Owned Property – Inventory and Disposition – Housing and Solar Energy Production

Dear Chair Barnes and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) takes no position on House Bill 1061 and offers the following information for the committee’s consideration.

HB 1061 requires State agencies to submit to the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) an inventory of their land holdings for MDP to analyze the viability of the land for housing, mixed use development, or solar. The bill further requires any land which MDP deems to be suitable for those uses to be disposed of to a developer or non-profit organization for such development.

While the MDOT supports the intent of HB 1061, it may be duplicative of and impact MDOT’s ongoing efforts to develop its land holdings for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) and solar development.

TOD is the concept of mixed-use, dense development constructed around transit to increase transit ridership. The Moore-Miller Administration has identified TOD as a key tool to address the state’s housing affordability and economic challenges. TOD is identified as a transportation purpose for MDOT.¹

MDOT is implementing TOD through various activities, including efforts to reenvision MDOT-owned, transit-adjacent land as dense mixed-use development that is integrated with transit facilities, referred to as Joint Development. MDOT is evaluating over 300 acres of transit-adjacent land for Joint Development and has several on-going projects including Reisterstown Plaza, the Odenton MARC Station, and Bowie State University MARC Station.

In evaluating its sites for Joint Development, MDOT prioritizes the provision of housing as part of the mixed-use potential. However, MDOT must balance this use with the needs of the transit service to the site and the attendant infrastructure.

¹ See Article – Transportation, § 7-102.

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MDOT also considers uses such as solar when determining how these transit-adjacent sites should be developed. Requiring MDP to evaluate this land for solar or housing would be duplicative of MDOT's efforts and may not support the broad viability of TOD. as it would not consider the needs of the transit infrastructure.

Beyond Joint Development efforts, MDOT actively works with its modal units to evaluate and dispose of land no longer needed for transportation uses. As an example, in February of this year, MDOT disposed of 4.4 acres of land no longer needed by the State Highway Administration to be developed as part of a mixed-use development near the Savage MARC Station. These disposals allow for land that may not be developable on its own to be obtained and developed as part of an adjoining development project.

MDOT remains committed to developing its sites for housing and solar development. As part of its TOD efforts, MDOT signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development to coordinate efforts on TOD. As part of that partnership, DHCD will prioritize MDOT's Joint Development sites for their housing investment. This will ensure that viable, affordable housing will be included within TOD being developed on State land.

Further, MDOT is actively advancing an effort to develop solar on its land. MDOT has identified a priority set of properties that would generate 100 MW of solar capacity, offsetting roughly one-third of MDOT's emissions. In partnership with the Maryland Energy Administration, MDOT is looking to leverage Maryland Strategic Energy Investment Fund resources to accelerate the development of solar and to secure favorable electricity rates for Maryland government for years to come.

For these reasons, the Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the committee consider this information on House Bill 1061.

Respectfully submitted,

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