



Statement of the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 689

SB 190– Land Use - Transit-Oriented Development - Alterations

January 27th, 2025

TO: The Honorable Guy Guzzone and Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee

FROM: Matthew Girardi, Political & Communications Director, ATU Local 689

ATU Local 689 supports SB 190 and urges the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee to issue a favorable report. This bill would be a valuable reform for land use and transportation that would benefit working class Marylanders, and help usher in more livable and accessible communities.

At Local 689, we represent over 15,000 transit workers and retirees throughout the Washington DC Metro Area performing many skilled transportation crafts for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), MetroAccess, Fairfax Connector, and DASH among others. Our union helped turn low-wage, exploitative transit jobs into transit careers. We became an engine for the middle-class of this region.

Transit workers effectively serve as the frontline workers to the frontline workers. Likewise, many of our members are blue-collar people, Black or brown, and immigrants. Unfortunately, we have seen time and time again that the places where climate pollution hits the worst are the places where we live and our riders live. It is a cruel irony that too many healthy, walkable, and transit accessible communities are too often out of reach for the people who power those systems: transit workers. In fact, per a report by the Central Maryland Transportation Alliance, only 8.5% of jobs in Maryland are within an hour of public transit.

Overwhelmingly, this is not because individuals do not want to ride transit, but rather because our limited transit systems are not located close enough to them and the robust transit infrastructure they want is in communities with scarce housing supply. In turn, this scarce housing supply has driven up costs, especially for young people, Black, brown, and working class Marylanders in those communities.

SB190 thankfully takes necessary steps to address that and extend transit oriented development to more people throughout Maryland, thus putting those communities further into reach of working-class Marylanders. By creating incentives for building transit-oriented development (TOD), changing land use so that more individuals are able to live around transit, and creating TOD corridors with new potential special revenue, this bill expands the ability of Marylanders to live in walkable, healthy, and accessible communities.

This proposal is an exciting opportunity for Maryland to alter its landscape and encourage better lifestyles, create more housing, and provide greater transportation options for more working Marylanders.

Local 689 thanks MDOT for this worthy measure and urges the committee to issue a favorable report.