



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

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HB 80 – Land Use - Transit-Oriented Development - Alterations

DATE: January 30, 2025
COMMITTEE: House Environment and Transportation Committee
POSITION: Favorable with Amendments
FROM: Michael Wilkins, Director, Department of Development Review & Planning, Frederick County Government

As the Director of Development Review and Planning for Frederick County, I urge the committee to give **HB 80 – Land Use - Transit-Oriented Development - Alterations** a favorable with amendments report.

This bill will make various changes to the regulatory framework governing Transit-Oriented Developments (TODs). While the intent of this legislation is to assist in making public transportation more accessible, this legislation removes important land use decisions from local authority without considering the ways some communities may require different frameworks.

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) has developed a set of amendments that assist in accomplishing the intent of the legislation while maintaining important local authority. Frederick County is supportive of public transportation and making this transportation more accessible and appealing to our residents. However, we agree with MACo in their assessment that this can be accomplished without removing local control or using a one size fits all approach.

MACo is proposing an amendment to narrow down the definition of a rail transit station when prohibiting counties from imposing off-street parking requirements. This is particularly important to Frederick County as our rail service is limited to one-way commuter use. This means that living close to a rail station does not replace the need for car-dependent transportation, particularly during non-commuter hours, weekends, and holidays. MACo is also proposing an amendment to mitigate concerns surrounding restricting a local government from using zoning restrictions to deny development if the land is subject to a TOD plan. This is especially important for Frederick County as we rely heavily on our APFO ordinances to ensure that our current school overcrowding is not exemplified.

Frederick County is proud to continue working towards making the county and state more accessible by public transit. However, we must ensure that this is done in a measured way, protecting our County livability. The amendments proposed by MACo help to alleviate these concerns and encourage the building of TODs.

Thank you for your consideration of HB 80. I urge you to advance this bill with a favorable with amendments report.

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