



February 10, 2026

**Bill:** HB 402: Common Ownership Communities – Ombudsman Unit, Governing Document Database, and Local Commissions

**Position:** Support w/Amendments

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Mayor and City Council of Gaithersburg, thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 402. The City appreciates the intent of the bill to improve education, transparency, and dispute resolution for residents living in common ownership communities across Maryland.

Gaithersburg is unique in that, effective April 27, 2025, our City-based common ownership communities are no longer required to register with or participate in the Montgomery County Commission on Common Ownership Communities (CCOC). Since that time, the City has embarked on establishing its own Commission on Common Ownership Communities (GCOC), with locally tailored staffing, fee collection, and enforcement mechanisms that fit Gaithersburg's municipal structure and our residents' needs.

As currently drafted, HB 402 defines a "local commission" as one "established by a county" and then prescribes membership, registration, jurisdiction, and operational requirements solely in terms of county government. The City is concerned that this county-only framework could preempt or exclude a municipal commission like Gaithersburg's GCOC, or to require our common ownership communities to be subject only to a county-based commission, contrary to the City's adopted ordinance and home-rule authority.

Gaithersburg respectfully requests an amendment to recognize and protect municipal commissions that perform the same functions. Specifically, we request that:

1. The definition of "local commission" be revised to include commissions established by a county or municipal corporation; and
2. Any provisions that impose requirements on "local commissions" or on common ownership communities within "a county" be clarified to allow a municipality that has established its own commission to serve as the relevant local commission for communities within its boundaries.

We appreciate your consideration of this requested amendment.

Respectfully submitted,

Jud Ashman, Mayor  
City of Gaithersburg

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