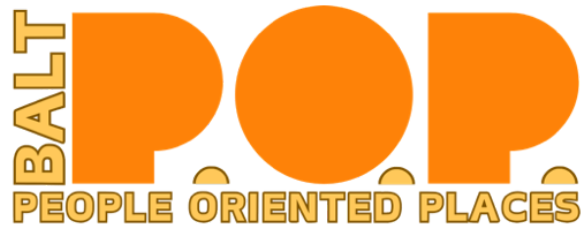


Bill: HB0548

Bill Title: Land Use - Permitting - Development Rights (Maryland Housing Certainty Act)

Position: **Favorable**



Members of the House Economic Matters Committee,

As a group which believes that encouraging traditional, higher-density development patterns in Maryland will deliver us appealing, affordable, fiscally-sustainable communities, we support HB0548.

Housing affordability has gradually and all at once become a top concern for Marylanders. [1] Younger residents/voters, in particular, are overwhelmingly feeling the effects of this in an acute way, with 75% of **all** Marylanders agreeing that there is too little housing for them. [2]

One of the principal reasons for this is that we are not allowing enough smaller, affordable housing to be built, period. In many cases, the culprit here is parochial community opposition. The scenario is familiar - a community (frequently affluent, desirable, and well-established) catches wind of a development proposal within their vicinity and galvanizes against it.

One tactic they may employ is to pressure their local elected official(s) to enact/change governing laws and regulations in a way that effectively kills the development proposal. The resultant law/regulation is frequently so narrowly-written and specific that it can only possibly apply to the one property which is the subject of the proposal (without actually admitting as much).

This amounts to a party changing the agreed-upon rules of the game when things start going a way they don't want. Not only is this not fair, this results in the most well-resourced and well-connected communities being able to stymie new development and delay them into oblivion. This strategy allows these communities, frequently our most desirable, to remain bastions of exclusivity for the privileged few who are already there.

On the other side of the playing field, this tactic allows only the most well-connected, deep-pocketed developers to compete. It squeezes out smaller developers (who lack the resources to hire lobbyists, retain land use attorneys, and hold onto unproductive property through the course of application delays) and their smaller projects (which don't yield the economies of scale necessary to fight through the politicking and bad faith negotiations).

We need to move away from the never-ending battle of neighbors vs. developers and, instead, position neighbors **as** developers. One necessary ingredient for getting there is certainty in the form of a stable set of rules.

We would have preferred to see Maryland's counties pursue this sort of initiative themselves, but they have not. And there isn't any reason to believe that they will do so anytime soon. As such, we believe that the bold action called for in this bill is warranted.

We hope the committee finds these points helpful and convincing and we urge its members to **vote in favor of HB0548**. Thank you for your efforts and the opportunity for us to testify on this legislation.

[BaltPOP - Baltimoreans for People-Oriented Places](#)

References:

[1] Hallie Miller. The Baltimore Banner. "Poll: Maryland voters cite housing as top concern". February 12, 2025.

<https://www.thebaltimorebanner.com/politics-power/state-government/maryland-housing-costs-poll-TCX7O2ZX5NELBFQYUBXD7VMKFE/>

[2] Maryland REALTORS. "State Of Maryland Housing 2025". As of February 27, 2025.

<https://www.mdrealtor.org/Portals/22/adam/Content/NbGwqQoHZ0-GWM27fpnrVA/Link/2350-MDR-LobbyDay-Infographic-2025-WEB-M.pdf>