



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL  
Park and Planning Commission

## **POSITION STATEMENT**

**Bill:** HB 243/SB 197 Land Use – Comprehensive and General Plans – Alterations of Elements

**Position:** Support with Amendment

**Date:** February 12, 2026

**Contact:** Debra Borden, General Counsel

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Chair Kriselda Valderrama,

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC or “the Commission”) has not voted to take a position on this bill. However, staff have prepared informational comments on this bill.

**Summary.** Altering the required elements of comprehensive and general plans for charter counties and other local jurisdictions; establishing requirements and guidelines for each element; and requiring certain State agencies to provide charter counties and other local jurisdictions with assistance and information relevant to the preparation of each element.

**What this Bill Does.** This bill clarifies and states specific elements that must be included and studied as part of a comprehensive planning process.

### **SUGGESTED RECOMMENDATION**

**Page 6, Lines 23-30 and Page 7, Lines 1-10.** The bill states that plans should identify the “most appropriate and desirable patterns for the general location, character, service areas, and extent of public and semipublic buildings, land, and facilities” as pertains specifically to “places of worship.” This presents a potential to run afoul of the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA), a federal law which protects religious institutions from substantial governmental burdens caused by land use regulations.

Therefore, we urge this committee to vote favorably with amendments on this bill.