



WES MOORE
Governor
ARUNA MILLER
Lt. Governor
JACOB R. DAY
Secretary
JULIA GLANZ
Deputy Secretary

DATE: January 21, 2026
BILL NO.: Senate Bill 197
TITLE: Land Use – Comprehensive and General Plans – Alteration of Elements
COMMITTEE: Senate Education, Energy, & the Environment Committee

Letter of Support

Description of Bill:

Senate Bill 197 amends the required elements of a comprehensive plan found through Title 1, Subtitle 4 and Title 3, Subtitle 1 of the Land Use Article to align with the State Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Policy. Further, the bill requires certain state agencies, including DHCD, to provide updated datasets to support local governments in the development or amendment of their comprehensive plans.

Background and Analysis:

During the 2025 Session the General Assembly passed SB 266/HB 286 which overhauled the State Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Policy (Growth Policy), replacing what were formally known as the 12 “Planning Visions” with a new set of 8 “Planning Principles.” These 8 Principles are the pillars of sustainable growth in Maryland, helping direct the state and its localities towards the Moore-Miller administration’s priorities surrounding economic and housing development, resource conservation, and equity.

Now, with SB 197, the Department of Planning is aiming to align these Principles with the required elements of a comprehensive plan. This proposed alignment will provide clarity in statute surrounding the relationship between the Principles and the required elements, directing planning commissions and local governments on the best path for sustainable planning. It will also ensure consistency in plan development and adherence to sustainable growth best practices by engaging local communities to dedicate sections of their comprehensive plan to housing development and affordability, resiliency, ecological protection, placemaking, land use, and other matters important to sustainable growth. With the State Data and Analysis Center projecting a million more Marylanders by 2055, it is DHCD’s mission to promote and support policies that not only help steer us out of our current housing crisis but also meet the needs of all who will eventually call Maryland their home. SB 197 requires 10- year comprehensive plans to adhere to the State’s Growth Policy and taps agencies, including DHCD, to inform locals with the best available data in relation to each element of their comprehensive plan. This approach will lead to more meaningful plans that provide communities with a sustainable data supported vision of how their community will stay healthy, grow, and foster a thriving community for current and future residents.

DHCD Position

The Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development respectfully requests a **favorable** report on Senate Bill 197.

