



Montgomery County's Advocates for Better Transportation

P.O. Box 7074, Silver Spring MD 20907 • admin@actfortransit.org

Testimony on SB 0389, Transit and Housing Opportunity Act

Favorable with Amendment

Finance Committee, February 17, 2026

presented by Benjamin Ross

The Maryland Transit and Housing Opportunity Act (SB 0389) will be good for Maryland's economy, our transit system, and our environment. It will also help relieve the heavy burden of high housing costs.

Our one concern is that in the current draft of the bill, Montgomery County is unable to take advantage of one of its key provisions. We therefore propose a simple amendment that will help Montgomery without in any way lessening the benefits other jurisdictions will get from this bill.

Specifically, we ask you to amend the bill to **extend the treatment of development on state-owned land next to stations (basically, parking lots and bus loops) to WMATA-owned land as well.**

Mixed-use transit-oriented development does many good things.

It is a win-win-win for affordability. Residents of new homes can ride the train and escape the high cost of buying, insuring, and fueling an automobile. The fares they pay – and the

roads they don't drive on – lower the burden on taxpayers of transit operations and highway maintenance. New housing supply lowers the cost of finding a home for everyone.

It's good for the environment. Maryland cannot possibly reach our climate goals without reducing the use of the automobile. And taking cars off the road reduces congestion for those who still must drive.

It builds communities. When you walk to the train station and the store every day, you get to know your neighbors. It promotes health. Research shows that the everyday exercise of walking to stores and train station makes transit riders healthier and longer-lived.

SB 0389 promotes this kind of development at rail stations with all-day service in five principal ways:

1. Eliminates minimum parking requirements within 1/4 mile of a station.
2. Requires counties to allow residential & mixed use development on property currently zoned commercial or multifamily residential within 1/2 mile of a station.
3. Delays payment of impact taxes until a project is built.
4. Empowers MDOT to exceed local zoning limits for new building on state-owned land at the station in coordination with the local government.
5. Makes these TOD projects eligible for certain state loan programs.

The first three of these changes will have limited effect in Montgomery County because we have already moved our zoning rules in these directions.

Where Montgomery misses out in the bill as currently drafted is the fourth point. There are no state-owned parking lots at eligible rail stations in Montgomery because the parking lots at Metro stations are owned by WMATA. Prince George's, where development at Metro stations is a high county priority, is in a similar situation. (Prince George's does have eligible state-owned parking lots at two MARC stations.)

We therefore request that you give SB 0389 a favorable report with an amendment to include WMATA-owned land adjacent to stations on the same basis as state-owned land adjacent to stations.