



BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL

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The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis MD 21401

**RE: *Support –Senate Bill 389 – Land Use – Transit-Oriented Development – Alterations
(Maryland Transit & Housing Opportunity Act)***

Dear Chair Beidle and Committee Members:

I am writing to offer my support for the Maryland Transit & Housing Opportunity Act (Senate Bill 389) to help implement successful transit-oriented development (TOD) in the State.

I serve as the Chair of the Baltimore City Council's Land Use and Transportation committee and have dedicated nearly a decade to advancing policies similar to this bill and others aligned with its aims. In 2025 Baltimore City entirely repealed its off-street parking requirements, such that the parking provisions of this bill will have no further impact on the city. And our zoning code and map already create significant opportunity for mixed use development near TOD such that there will be little if any impact to the city from this bill. My support for this bill stems from my strong belief that Baltimore City has already led the way, and that we will all be better off if the rest of the state is able to make similar progress.

Underutilized land adjacent to transit presents the opportunity to build transit-oriented communities, creating spaces where Marylanders can affordably live, shop, travel, and work. As such, the bill has the potential to yield significant economic benefits for the Baltimore Region and beyond:

1. **Increased property values:** Research shows that transit-oriented development (TOD) typically leads to property value growth around transit hubs due to the convenience and accessibility they provide. This rise in property values can increase tax revenues for local governments, which can be reinvested into infrastructure, public services, and amenities.
2. **Fiscal savings:** By concentrating development around transit stations, TOD maximizes land use in areas where infrastructure and services are already in place, reducing the need for extensive new infrastructure investments. This helps lower development costs for both the public and private sectors and can also reduce the strain on road systems, which can be expensive to maintain.
3. **Reduced transportation costs:** TOD encourages people to rely less on private vehicles, which lowers household transportation expenses. This can lead to more disposable

income for residents, stimulating local businesses and promoting local economic activity, among other benefits.

4. **Job creation:** TOD projects stimulate job creation through the construction of infrastructure, housing, and commercial space, and from ongoing operations (e.g., public transportation, retail businesses, and other services near transit hubs). This has a multiplier effect, supporting additional employment opportunities in the surrounding area.
5. **Increased business activity:** TOD typically combines residential, commercial, and recreational spaces in close proximity to one another, creating dense economic ecosystems of businesses and consumers. Such concentration encourages spontaneous interactions that can benefit local businesses.
6. **Attraction of workers and investment:** Areas that are well-connected to transit systems are often seen as more desirable places in which to live and work, attracting both talent and private investment. This in turn can foster the development of new firms, housing, and retail establishments, all of which contribute to economic growth.

This legislation addresses two of the principal barriers in achieving this growth in Maryland: local zoning and project financing.

First, the bill addresses zoning challenges near high-frequency rail transit by adding flexibility to parking solutions for new development, encouraging mixed-use development, and allowing the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) to lead on the development plan for Department-owned land contiguous to transit, working alongside local jurisdictions.

Second, the bill addresses project financing challenges and risks by creating new incentives for TOD development. The legislation incorporates locally designated TOD areas into the State's Enterprise Zone (EZ) program, positioning sites' job-generating developments for financial incentives. The legislation will also delay the imposition of impact fees until construction of a TOD project is complete. This shift in timing will reduce upfront costs to development. The bill would also affirm that TOD on State-owned transit-adjacent land is a priority for funding under the Strategic Infrastructure Revolving Loan Fund.

In a time of tremendous need for economic growth and affordable housing, the benefits of leveraging the over 300 acres of State-owned land near transit are immense. MDOT estimates that its land in the Baltimore region and along the MARC Penn Line could generate 7,000 housing units and \$1.4 billion in state and local tax revenue. However, the barriers around zoning and finance are real. MDOT estimates that current restrictive zoning on transit-adjacent, state-owned land in the Baltimore region alone is preventing 2,700 housing units from being built.

For these reasons, I respectfully request the Committee grant Senate Bill 389 a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,



Ryan Dorsey
Chair, Land Use and Transportation Committee
Baltimore City Council