

Smarter Growth Alliance For Howard County

October 16, 2020

The Honorable Howard County Council
George Howard Building
3430 Court House Drive
Ellicott City, MD 21043

RE: Support for CB57-2020, Replace the recommendation requirement with an analysis requirement for the Department of Planning and Zoning's Technical Staff Reports

Dear Council Members:

We, the undersigned members of the Smarter Growth Alliance for Howard County, an alliance of local and state organizations working together to foster healthy, equitable and sustainable communities through smarter development and transportation decisions and improved protections for the county's natural, historic and cultural resources, would like to offer our support for Council Bill 57-2020, which proposes to replace the recommendation requirement of the Department of Planning and Zoning's Technical Staff Reports (TSRs) with an analysis requirement.

We believe that the Department of Planning and Zoning's (DPZ) role should be that of impartial regulator. The adoption of this legislation would require the Department to provide objective analysis in the TSRs instead of the current requirement that the Department provide a recommendation on what action to take. Providing an analysis would encourage independent thinking, allowing the Planning Board to consider the merits of each petition and not default immediately to adopting the DPZ recommendation.

The changes made in this legislation would help create a fairer and more independent planning process for Howard County, and we therefore urge you to support CB57-2020. This would be beneficial for all advocacy groups, in that it would require further analysis of criteria and data from DPZ to decision-making groups. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

cc: The Honorable Calvin Ball, County Executive